

Waymarks

Plymouth Church | Helena Montana

October 2021

A Message from Dedicated Pastor, Rev. Charles Wei

After weeks of anticipation, I am finally making my way to Helena! It's a cliché in our culture to say, "God works in mysterious ways," and I am hesitant to ascribe all of the events in my life to the direct interference of God, but you have to admit that the order of events here are pretty strange. I accepted the call to be the pastor at Plymouth Congregational Church, wrapped up what I was doing at the church that I was working at, then started making preparations to move. And then, the accident happened. A crazy, weird, freak accident that put me out of commission for a month and a half. Right when I was supposed to be packing, and moving, and starting my new job.

Everyone around me would joke about how maybe it was a sign that I wasn't supposed to move. Maybe I was supposed to stay in California. And, it's easy to see why they would say that. I think a lot of people might interpret these events in that way. One might even say that would be the "traditional" way to interpret what happened. But, that's not the kind of God that I believe in. I don't believe in a God that hurts us, even if it's to help us learn something or to send us a message. And, believe me when I tell you, I was in a lot of pain. I also believe in a God that has given us the gift of free will, and that idea just doesn't fit with a God that's always intervening in our lives.

So, how am I supposed to understand this event that happened to me? Not just to me, but to my family and to the congregation of Plymouth Congregational Church. To be honest, I'm not sure yet, but I can feel the life-lessons bubbling under the surface. Because, while I don't believe in a God who sends us adversity, I do believe in a God who uses every single moment to bring goodness and love into our lives and into the world. I think it's going to be a long time before I feel that I really understand all of this and am ready to move on.

I look forward to being with you all soon, worshipping and building community together. I ask you to please pray for traveling mercies for me and my parents, as well as for my continued recovery.

Grace and peace,

Pastor Charles





I am glad to report that Plymouth Congregational Church members donated \$500 to the NAMI Walk on September 19, 2021. In years past we have had walkers, but we remembered this important effort to raise money to support and celebrate **Mental Health for All.**

Thank you everyone!

~ **Carol McKerrow**

Columbarium Meeting and Cleanup

Columbarium meeting on October 19th at 10 a.m. in the Fireside Room.

Columbarium Niche Owners: In accordance with our flower guidelines, will be cleaning the Columbarium area and removing the flowers near loved ones niches in October. Please pick up your pots, etc. if you want to save them. Placing appropriate fresh arrangements can return in November. Thanks for your help.

~ **Dick Mayer**



In Our Prayers Today

At Home: Ed Canty and Giles Walker. Margy Kohl and Nathan Schreder as they go through cancer treatment. Peggy Coggeshall and Lorraine Hopgood, for continued recovery. Margaret Miller, bereaved. Connie Erickson, bereaved.

Touchmark: Evelyn Nelson and Art and Clara Gilreath

Hunter's Point: Marlyce Taylor

Continued prayers for Ali and Corey, Ron, Shasta, Pat, Greg, Pete McKinley, Jay Shelden, our interim pastors, Steve Brehe and Mark Wilson, and our dedicated minister, Rev. Charles Wei, especially as he unpacks and settles into Helena.

To add someone to the prayer list, please call the church office at 442-9883 or email pccofficemgr@gmail.com

Moderator's Message: Yes...But

We've enjoyed an exceptionally long, dry autumn, with gorgeous, brightly-colored trees and gloriously warm afternoons; but the smoke of wildfires lingers. Montana's winter wheat is in the ground, but it needs moisture to sprout this fall and a snow blanket this winter. We cherish the balmy, late fall evenings, but our soil needs rain.

We're social beings. We relish breaking bread together, visiting friends and family, hugging, meeting new people, smiling and laughing; but people continue to suffer and die from COVID 19. *No Ordinary Time*, a short documentary film, explores the tragedy of history repeating itself. The film, which premieres at the Myrna Loy on October 12, features high school students reflecting on their experiences with COVID while studying the Spanish Flu, which killed 5,000 Montanans. Like these students, we must make some sacrifices to end this pandemic.

We value our church--our beautiful building, our expansive grounds, our members, our volunteers, our staff, our music, our services, and our pastors; but they all need our continued support. We must continue to invest in maintenance of the building and grounds and to express our appreciation for the volunteers and staff who keep Plymouth working for the good of our community.

As I write, the Reverend Charles Wei travels to Helena. We will hear his first sermon on October 17. We all look forward to welcoming him as he begins a new ministry; we have faith that his messages will resonate with this congregation. But, we will be saying goodbye to Stephen Brehe and Mark Wilson, who have provided fresh perspectives, loving care, and attention to the administrative business of the church.

The forecast calls for a chance of rain, snow and freezing temperatures next week. **Yes**, that's actually a blessing; **but**, Charles has never lived where it snows!

~ Jan Clinard



Holy Halloween!

Well, maybe it's not so "holy" as it is fun. This year the last Sunday of October is the 31st or All-Hallows Eve. If you plan to have pumpkins, gourds, or squash at home and would be willing to share something for a day or two, bring them to the church on Saturday afternoon, October 30, between 1 and 2 PM. (They do not need to be carved.) You can place them on the table just inside the front door; they will be used to decorate the altar. You are encouraged to mark your produce and then retrieve your pumpkins after worship. If you have questions, call Carol at 443-2671.

Treasurer's Report: What does it take to run Plymouth Church?

Plymouth UCC is a well-run organization, relying on paid professional staff and many volunteers to do everything it does. The council thought it would be appropriate to share budget information with you occasionally through Waymarks rather than overwhelming you with it all at once at the annual meeting.

The table below shows the breakdown of our expenses on an annual, quarterly, and monthly basis. Our annual budget is just under \$200,000. By far our largest expense is personnel; sixty percent of our budget goes for salaries, benefits, and payroll taxes. Our beautiful church requires nearly a quarter of our funds in the form of insurance, property taxes, utilities, and repairs and maintenance. (Large repairs and capital improvements come from other accounts, not our general operating budget.)

What I am referring to as “overhead” includes supplies, technology, and our support of our UCC conference – which supports our region’s pastors, churches, and wider mission. Plymouth pays a relatively small amount to the city and county to cover care and maintenance of streets, storm water, water quality and open spaces.

While the category “ministries” seems small, at \$1,843 a quarter, our programs are mostly carried out in the building by our staff and volunteers, so in a sense *everything* we spend money on contributes to programs and ministries!

What it takes to run the church

Expense	Annual	Quarterly	Monthly	% of budget
Personnel (salaries, wages, benefits, payroll taxes)	\$121,017	\$30,254	\$10,085	61.05%
Building (utilities, insurance, property tax, repairs and maintenance)	\$46,919	\$11,730	\$3,910	23.67%
Overhead (administrative, conference, supplies, misc.)	\$22,906	\$5,727	\$1,909	11.56%
Ministries (worship, programs, education)	\$7,370	\$1,843	\$614	3.72%
Total	\$198,212	\$49,553	\$16,518	100.00%

Respectfully submitted,

Pat Christian, Treasurer



New Address for David Donaldson

David Donaldson
15-2660 Paha Village Road
Ste. 105 Unit 3
Paha, HI 96778



Bridging Divides: Opportunities to Learn



AUSTEN HARTKE

AUTHOR OF *TRANSFORMING*

THE BIBLE AND THE LIVES OF TRANSGENDER CHRISTIANS

PUBLIC LECTURE • SATURDAY, OCTOBER 16 • 7:00 PM
ST. PAUL'S SANCTUARY • JOIN US!

Let's Talk About It: Creation Care

Matt Elsaesser, owner of 406 Recycling, will be the second speaker during this fall's "Let's Talk About It" series, Thursday, November 4 at 7:00 PM in the lower level of Plymouth. Matt is originally from Priest River, Idaho, and came to Helena to attend Carroll College. He has been involved in expanding recycling opportunities in Helena now for two decades and served on the Helena City Commission from 2008 to 2015. 406 Recycling provides data-secure electronics recycling, household and business collection of food scraps and other compostable items, and provides "ZERO waste" event services to minimize waste at events ranging from small weddings to music festivals. Matt will provide an overview of challenges and opportunities of recycling and remind us of the choices we make daily that impact planet Earth.

If you like and are able, bring something you currently try to recycle or have questions about recycling, and we will make an interesting centerpiece for Matt to explore.

The third and last presentation is scheduled for December 2 when landscape photographer, Jeff Van Tine, will provide stunning images of his work. Jeff has graciously allowed Plymouth to exhibit some of his work throughout the building for a period of time this fall. More about that in the next Waymarks.

Reservations can be made by calling the church, 442-9883. Masks and social distancing are valued as long as the pandemic threatens the health of the community.

Plymouth Church, U.C.C.

400 S. Oakes St.

Helena, MT 59601

Plymouth's Mission is to nurture our congregation and the wider community with acts of love and a vision of God's image in all things.

God is still speaking.
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST** 

Plymouth Church

400 S. Oakes St.

Helena, MT 59601

Office Hours

- Interim Pastors: 9:00 a.m.—noon and by appointment:
Mon/Wed—Steve Brehe; Tues/Thurs—Mark Wilson
- Office Manager Gloria Soja: 9:00 a.m.—1:00 p.m. (Wed.-Thur.)
- Bookkeeper by appointment.

Sundays
10:00 a.m. Worship Service
In Person and Online

Contact Us

Church Office: 406.442.9883

Web: www.plymouthmontanaucc.org

Email: pccofficemgr@gmail.com

Also: www.facebook.com/plymouthcongregational