



Welcome to Plymouth!
Welcome Home!



Plymouth

CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH



Plymouth Congregational Church has long welcomed all, including LGBTQ people. Above, Plymouth members at a past Pride parade.

At Plymouth Church, we are:

Spiritual—Creating sanctuary for the soul, seeking the sacred in all ways.

Loving—Living out the courageous and compassionate love of Jesus.

Relevant—Rooted in our heritage, engaging the ancient teachings to bring them alive today.

Transforming—Nourishing and expanding hearts and minds to become the change we want to see in the world.

We welcome you!

This book introduces our worship services, spiritual formation programs for children, youth and adults; outreach and community life staff.

Find out more by visiting www.plymouth.org, where you may:

Listen to sermons

Read our monthly newsletter, the *Flame*

Sign up for weekly e-blast updates

Register for programs—youth and adult

Find a place to fit in and get involved

And more



Sunday Mornings

- Sunday Forum—9:00 a.m., September–May
- First Service—9:45 a.m. in the Chapel, September–July, especially for families with young children
- Sanctuary Service—10:30 a.m.
- Child Care
- Church School, Junior High programs, Senior High programs, Confirmation classes for 9th-grade students—10:30 a.m., September–May
- Parent discussions

Visit our Welcome Table in Guild Hall following the 10:30 service.

Worship, Music and Art

Plymouth's worship life moves the heart with a spirit that reaches deep—touching our lives in meaningful ways. Worship each week draws some 700 people to Plymouth church for two services.



The First Service, designed especially for families and held in the Chapel, engages the energy, creativity and spirituality of young children and brings older children forward to serve. The 10:30 Sanctuary service features challenging preaching, thoughtful prayers and extraordinary music.

Plymouth's music program is known widely for its excellence—its Senior Choir that sings every Sunday 11 months of the year (Plymouth's five soloists sing in August), offering a wide range of anthems from the Renaissance to the present day. Also, the wonderful Youth Choir and Children's Choirs, and the Plymouth Handbell Choir are equally renowned.

Plymouth also shines in the arts. The Plymouth Embroideries, designed especially for Plymouth and created by our own Needlers, are displayed in Guild Hall. Plymouth hosts a Literary Witnesses program with acclaimed poets and writers in special programming.

In addition, Plymouth has beautiful stained glass windows in many parts of the church, an extensive art collection and a gallery for art exhibitions—all guided by the Plymouth Fine Arts Board.

Membership

The life of the congregation is the responsibility of individuals who join in membership by publicly saying our covenant—

“We covenant with you, O God, and one with another, and do bind ourselves in your presence to walk together in all your ways, according as you are pleased to reveal yourself to us in your blessed word of truth.”

—Based on the Salem
Covenant of 1629

Members agree to attend worship as often as possible, to give themselves wholeheartedly to the work of the church and to support the church financially in proportion to their ability. Through their membership, people find a deepened sense of community and spiritual growth. Plymouth has approximately 2,000 members, and we strive to grow in membership so that together we can nourish our compassion for others, elevate our understanding of contemporary life through deep reflection and open our hearts and minds to see how we might change the world. .



New member events are offered several times during the year. Contact Emily Venell (emilyv@plymouth.org, 612/977-1281) in the church office to find out the details and register or speak to Jeff Sartain

(612/977-1274). Attending these interactive seminars is a great way to learn more about Plymouth. There is no expectation that those who attend will necessarily join the church.

Children and Youth

Young people have a very special place at Plymouth. In programming for children, the emphases are on teaching the Biblical story while maintaining a progressive and global perspective; incorporating the arts into classes, worship and events; and involving children in areas that support social justice from a young age.



The First Service in the chapel at 9:45 each Sunday is especially for families with young children with a brief message that speaks to all ages, active participation throughout for little (and not so little) bodies that need to move, music that often makes us want to dance and quiet time to settle our hearts into prayer. The service is 30 minutes long.

—**Children (infant through 5th grade)** participate throughout the year in Church School. More than 300 children join in throughout the year. Classes and activities for children age three through 5th grade include:

- Sunday morning Church School classes and childcare
- Choir School: vocal, handbell and dance
- Special activities: Halloween Party for all ages; Thanksgiving Family Food Drive; Christmas Festival
- Third Grade Bible presentation
- Summer Theater Playshop (4th grade and up) and more

—**Junior High students** (Grades 6, 7 & 8) focuses on fostering communication and community between

students; class discussions are on topics including spirituality and religion, Jesus' life and teachings, global events and social justice issues.

—**Confirmation** (9th grade) explores the origins of the universe, world religions, Christianity, Congregationalism and Plymouth Congregational Church.

—**For older students**, class discussions focus on world events, trends, exploration of spirituality and religion, teen issues and identity, and fellowship.

- Young people grades 7 to 12 participate in Plymouth's Youth Choir.

Approximately 50 youth are involved in service activities, retreats, mission trips, lock-ins, A Night on the Street and fundraising events.

Community Life and Spiritual Formation for Adults

Plymouth pulses with life throughout the week with thoughtful dialogue as we share knowledge, faith and insights with one another. We encourage meaningful questions rather than providing definitive truths—our search for the divine is expansive. We are spiritual, loving, relevant and transforming.

From informal gatherings over coffee, to fellowship and spirituality groups, to workshops and yoga—we care for each other, challenge each other and grow together, in all God's ways.

A sample of the programs offered:

- Small groups, including One More Chair gatherings focused on books, hiking and other interests
- Sunday Forums, where faith and life intersect
- Spiritual Exploration classes, book studies, workshops and retreats
- Meditation on Sunday mornings
- Yoga practice, weekly
- Compassionate Communication practice, weekly
- New member classes
- Coffee hour
- Meals Sunday noons and Wednesday evenings

Caring for Members of Our Faith Community

As a faith community, we turn to one another for support and nurture in life's difficult times and we also celebrate with one another when blessings abound. Through our compassionate and dedicated staff and a broad network of lay members, we extend care to one another. Plymouth's ministers call on members in their homes, in hospitals and care centers to bring the presence of the community to those who benefit from being reminded of their place among us. The clergy plan memorial services with individual care, and they support couples as they prepare for marriage. Two volunteer faith community nurses reach out to members who are ill or who need help finding appropriate resources.

Our BeFrienders listen without judgment and our Plymouth Visitors bring cheer and warmth to many who find it difficult to come to worship. Dozens of additional caring connections are initiated each year.

Other ways we care for one another are:

- Prayer Chain
- Rides Program
- Faith Partners in Recovery
- Grief Education and Support
- Support Groups and Prayer Shawls
- Fifty-Year Member Recognition
- Sanctuary Flower Delivery

Outreach and Community Fund

Plymouth Church's Outreach ministries and Community Fund uphold a long tradition of putting our faith into action. The emphases are on building relationships with our neighbors, educating ourselves on the causes of injustice and using our resources to make a difference in the world.

Approximately 400 members are active in community ministries and outreach at Plymouth through working groups such as:

- Racial Justice Journey
- Gun Violence Prevention Initiative
- Groveland Emergency Food Shelf
- Third Sunday free community meals
- Strobel Drop-In Center for people with mental illness
- Meals on Wheels
- Caring for Creation
- Neighborhood and community organizations
- and more

In addition to volunteer service, Plymouth through its Community Fund contributes at least 10 percent of its budget annually to organizations that promote economic and social justice, alleviate poverty and advance progressive faith.

Some of our Community Fund recipients are Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative, Downtown Congregations to End Homelessness, United Theological Seminary, Greater Minneapolis Council of Churches, Groveland Emergency Food Shelf, Simpson Housing Services and International Village Clinic (India).



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A Brief History of Plymouth Church

In April 1857, 18 people organized Plymouth Congregational Church. They built their first building a year later at Nicollet and Fourth Street. That building was destroyed by fire 16 months later, rebuilt and used until 1875 when a larger building was built at Nicollet and Eighth.

In those early years, Plymouth started Sunday Schools at various locations in the city. Most of these eventually became churches or community centers.

The present building at Nicollet and 19th was dedicated in 1909. Many changes have been made since the Chapel was added in 1948, with a new education wing and other improvements completed in 2007, when Plymouth celebrated its sesquicentennial.



We welcome into full membership and participation in all aspects of our church life persons of every race, language, national origin, age, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity or expression, physical or mental ability, economic or marital status and faith background.



Plymouth

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