



Seeking Health and Wholeness

Spiritual Exploration
& Sunday Forum
Winter-Spring 2017



Plymouth
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

On the cover: Image by Ornella Binni, from unsplash.com

Contents

Spiritual Exploration

March 2–30	Deep Roots for the Spirit: Yoga and Christianity	3
April 8	Finding Our Balance in a Turbulent World	4
April 29	Desert Mothers and Fathers	4
Ongoing opportunities		5–6
Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29		
	Racial Justice Journey Workshops	7
	8:45–10:15 a.m., Sundays	

Sunday Forum

9 a.m., Sundays, Jackman, unless noted

Feb. 5	Refugees in Minnesota	8
Feb. 12	A Copernican revolution in U.S. foreign policy	8
Feb. 19	Melanie DeMore, Vocal Activist: Bringing people together	9
Feb. 19 12:15 p.m.	Rediscovering and Reclaiming Dying, Death and Mourning Rituals	10
Feb. 26	VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Composers	10
March 5	Gun Violence Prevention: Next steps	11
March 12	Creating a tipping point for a healthier, more vibrant North Minneapolis	12
March 19	Northside Achievement Zone: Ending multigenerational poverty	12
March 26	Isuroon: Empowering Somali women	13
April 2	Building Bridges Between Faiths: A Continuing Conversation about Islam	14

April 9	Police Work in the Middle East: What law enforcement in that region can teach us	14
April 23	Buddhism: The Path to Awakening	15
April 30	Sharing our Future: Plymouth's children and youth programs	15
May 7	Tutoring at Whittier School: Where we've been and where we're going	16

March 2–30

Deep Roots for the Spirit: Yoga and Christianity for Living and Loving Courageously

Thursday mornings, from 9:30 to 11:30. \$50 for the course.

Jeff Sartain will join with Ben Vincent to lead this five-week series during the season of Lent. Drawing upon the Christian tradition and also upon the spiritual philosophy and practices of yoga, Jeff and Ben will invite participants into an exploration of the life of the soul, especially how we can keep our hearts open and vibrant in times of fear, hatred and suffering. Some simple body movement and meditation will be part of each session, and people of all physical abilities are welcome.

Jeff, as well as being a long-time minister at Plymouth Church, is a student of yoga practices and teachings. He has studied with his teacher, Ben, for several years, completed a month-long self-transformation program at the Himalayan Institute in Honesdale, Penn., in 2013, and in 2015 he earned his yoga teacher training certification. Jeff's life is deeply rooted in the Christian faith, but he has also been strongly influenced through yoga, which has opened his experience of faith and deepened his sense of God's movement in his life.

Ben Vincent has been Jeff's primary teacher. Ben's studies include various traditions of yoga, meditation, mysticism, music, philosophy, conflict resolution and sustainable farming. Self-inquiry through yoga, meditation and music as living arts has deepened his experience of life. He seeks to embody these realities through the simple truths of love, compassion and non-attachment. For Ben, to share the wisdom of yoga as a teacher, is both a blessing and great responsibility, as there is no greater service than the work of love.

April 8

Finding Our Balance in a Turbulent World

9 a.m.–3 p.m. Retreat limited to 25; \$50. Fireside.

We are living in a complicated time in history when we need all the wisdom, stamina and spiritual resources we can muster to meet its challenges. Come together for a day-long retreat led by **Julie Neraas**, longtime Plymouth member, spiritual director, religion teacher, author and inspirational leader of numerous retreats and classes at Plymouth. Wearing many hats, Julie sees a day such as this as an opportunity for “privileged, sacred conversations.”

An ordained Presbyterian minister and Spiritual Director for more than 35 years, Julie has a particular interest in helping busy people find regular spiritual practices. She has been an associate professor in an interdisciplinary graduate program at Hamline University in St. Paul since 1991. Her course material is drawn from theology, mythology and psychology, as well as from artists and writers.

April 29

Desert Mothers and Fathers

10 a.m.–3 p.m.; \$20. Jackman

What do the Desert Mothers and Fathers have to say to us in the 21st century? Does their wisdom hold up through the centuries? Please join us for this adventure into the hearts of these contemplatives.

Bring a bag lunch or visit the restaurants on nearby Eat Street.

Co-sponsored by Minnesota Contemplative Outreach. Please register at Minnesota Contemplative Outreach (<http://www.minnesotacontemplativeoutreach.org/>)

Rev. Ward Bauman became the director of the Episcopal House of Prayer, Minneapolis, in 2002. Prior to this he served as a parish priest in the San Francisco Bay area of California. During that time he developed an organization for interfaith dialogue as well as a spiritual life center for prayer and renewal. He is the author of *Sacred Food for Soulful Living*, a cookbook of recipes from the House of Prayer kitchen, and translator with Lynn Bauman and Cynthia Bourgeault of *The Luminous Gospels*.

Ongoing

Meditation, 9:30 a.m., Sundays. Fireside Room. No charge. No registration. Join this ancient Christian spiritual practice, which includes three parts: opening meditation, walking meditation and closing meditation. Leader Diane Boruff is commissioned by Contemplative Outreach International.

Conversations from the Heart Compassionate

Communication Practice Group meets at 10 a.m., Wednesdays, weekly. \$10–\$25 donation suggested. No registration. “Nonviolent/compassionate communication helped me learn to sit with difficult emotions, to approach myself and others with compassion and understanding, and to connect to the human needs underlying all human actions,” says teacher Yvette Erasmus, Psy.D. All levels welcome.

Spiritual Yoga, Ben Lee. 6:45–8:00 p.m. Wednesdays (except holidays). \$10. No registration.

Have you ever wanted to touch your toes? Do you often feel tension in your neck or shoulders? Ever wonder what yoga is all about? This fun and exciting class will leave you feeling stronger, calmer and more flexible. Ben Lee has been studying and practicing yoga since 1994 and teaching since 2001.

Contemplative Life Program, first Tuesdays of the month, 7:00–8:30 p.m., through May 2. Room 205. Fee \$10 a month. If you want to strengthen your spiritual muscles, this is the group

for you! Our purpose is to support one another as we seek to deepen our practice of meditation and our engagement with the spiritual journey. We will meet once a month to explore, share and discuss our experiences with a variety of contemplative practices. We will use booklets from Contemplative Outreach, which we will use at home and are designed to support and enrich a life of daily practice, study and devotion. The topics are listed below, but not necessarily in the order we will use them: Spirituality of Money, Contemplative Service, Silence and Solitude, Simplicity, Discipline of Prayer, Hospitality and Faith: An Advent Companion. The program assumes participants have a meditation practice. If you are interested and do not have a meditation practice, please contact the group leaders.

Diane Boroff is commissioned by Contemplative Outreach International.

Paula Northwood is Minister for Spiritual Formation.

Continuing

These courses are not accepting new registrants. They are, however, examples of the kind of Spiritual Exploration opportunities to watch for in fall 2017.

The Rebirthing of God: Christianity's Struggle for New Beginnings—book study and discovery. Connected by the Celtic elements and the warmth of our hearts, we will search this book and community for our pathways to invite presence.

Character Work: In this world of increased shootings, violence, environmental degradation and polarized politics, how are we meant to live and relate with one another? Expand your capacity to convert anger or fear into courage, heart and inspiration.

Jan. 8, 15, 22 & 29

**Personal Lenses & Collective Environments:
Our Racial Justice Journey**

More Plymouth members may engage in our Racial Justice Journey as the workshop offered last fall, Personal Lenses and Collective Environments, will be repeated for those unable to attend previously.

Taking the place of Sunday Forum, each of the sessions will start at 8:45 a.m. and end at 10:15 a.m. Participants are asked to commit to all four sessions of this no-cost workshop. Register via the link on the front page of our website: www.plymouth.org.

This workshop will allow you to explore your own experiences with racial issues, participate in small group discussions, provide anonymous feedback and contemplate your role in creating a more inclusive and compassionate world.

Colette Campbell is the founder of Working Better 2Gether. She assists organizations with workplace conflict resolution and training and does coaching for business executives. Her husband, **Jonathan Stuart**, specializes in writing and teaching for business and educational purposes and offers workplace mediation and meeting facilitation services. Together they have been navigating culture and difference both personally and professionally for 20 years.

Sunday Forum
9 a.m. (unless noted), Sundays

February 5

Refugees in Minnesota: Welcoming persecuted persons into new lives of freedom, hope and opportunity

Minnesota has a long history of welcoming refugees into our state. Refugees have greatly enriched our communities, our economy and our connections to the world. Churches and volunteers have been instrumental in helping refugees find safety and hope and make Minnesota home. Come learn about who refugees are, why they come to Minnesota, the resettlement work of the Minnesota Council of Churches, and how you can be involved in offering welcome to our newest neighbors.

***Ben Walen** is the Director of Refugee Services at the Minnesota Council of Churches, where he oversees programs in the Twin Cities and Mankato. He has worked in refugee resettlement for the better part of the last 18 years. His interest in working with refugees started after college during his Peace Corps service in Ethiopia. He lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two energetic elementary school-age children.*

February 12

Learning the Wrong Lessons:

A Copernican revolution in U.S. foreign policy

The position of the United States relative to other nations has changed. The rest of the world understands that the United States is no longer the sun around which they rotate, and those nations are developing relationships among themselves that do not rely on us. In this globalized era, the movement of people, money and goods presents fresh challenges that we—and some other developed nations—are finding difficult to grasp. Our privileged geographical position and the stories we tell ourselves about America can become strategic blind spots unless we recognize the changes happening around us.

William Davnie is a retired Foreign Service Officer with 27 years spent abroad and in Washington, D.C. His overseas service focused on Southeast Asia and the (now former) Soviet Union, and he was stationed in Baghdad during the 2007 surge. Since moving to Minnesota, where he had lived as a child, he has spoken frequently to community groups on foreign affairs topics. He and his wife continue to travel frequently, encouraged by one daughter's career as a USAID officer, and have traveled in South Asia, North Africa and Latin America. Bill served as a Presbyterian pastor before joining the Foreign Service, and he currently works for the Presbytery of Twin Cities Area.

February 19

Melanie DeMore, Vocal Activist: Bringing people together with the healing power of music

Teacher, songwriter, troubadour and emissary of tolerance and harmony, Melanie DeMore will be the featured artist at VocalEssence's 2017 Witness concert. Having been in Minneapolis in 2014, Melanie returns to raise up immigrant voices past and present through songs of liberation and freedom, illuminating Minnesota's historic role as a sanctuary for the oppressed. Don't miss this great opportunity to learn more about this internationally revered composer, choral conductor and musical mentor.

Melanie DeMore was a California Artist in Residence with the Oakland Youth Chorus and has received an award from the Music Educators National Conference for her work with young singers and artists. She is on the music faculty at St. Paul's School in Oakland, Calif., where she teaches a cappella singing. She facilitates vocal workshops for professional and community-based choral groups and has taught her "Sound Awareness" program in schools, prisons and youth organizations in the United States, Canada, Cuba and New Zealand.

February 19, 12:15 p.m, please note time
Rediscovering & Reclaiming Dying, Death
and Mourning Rituals

How might we rediscover and reclaim the old fashioned and/or ancient dying, death and mourning practices and rituals of our faith? Are there practices and rituals that we can respectfully learn from other religions? What are the practices that might “get us through” and deepen our spiritual journey in this mortal life? These are the questions that Rev. Sarah Campbell explored during her recent sabbatical. Often we don’t talk about the time between death and the body’s final disposition.

If you would like, get some lunch from Katy’s Café (Lenmark) and join us for a conversation with Sarah about what she has learned from other traditions.

Rev. Sarah Campbell is a graduate of Macalester College and United Theological Seminary of the Twin Cities, Rev. Campbell is the Team Lead Minister for Mayflower Community Congregational UCC in Minneapolis. Sarah has also served churches in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Bemidji, Minnesota, and worked as a campus minister and a community organizer.

February 26

VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! Bringing music across the border and into the classroom

Join us to learn how music by our southern neighbor, Mexico, is enriching the lives of students of all ages across the metropolitan area. **Composers Rodrigo Cadet and Samuel Pascoe** will talk about how they participate as artists-in-residence with elementary schools, high schools, colleges and community organizations. The composers work directly with student choirs, becoming familiar with the ensembles, writing new music specifically for each which culminates in an Ordway concert in May—and having great fun in the process!

Celebrating rich Mexican musical traditions, VocalEssence ¡Cantaré! is a cross-cultural exchange program connecting composers from Mexico with students of all ages across the metropolitan area. In 2008, VocalEssence began offering the ¡Cantaré! program to Minnesota schools, churches and community choruses. More than 60 new works have been commissioned and premiered through ¡Cantaré!—and from these works, several newly-published scores have become available to the public.

March 5

Gun Violence Prevention:

Next steps in the new political environment

Enacting common-sense solutions to the escalating epidemic of gun violence is a challenge considering current political divisions. What actions can we take now that will result in stronger laws and policies to protect our children and loved ones? Join us for an overview of gun laws in Minnesota and recent developments in the Minnesota State Legislature, and learn what strategies lie ahead.

Megan Walsh *advocates for gun violence prevention as the Be SMART lead for the Minnesota chapter of Moms Demand Action for Gun Sense. She attended law school at Duke University and previously was a partner at Minneapolis litigation boutique Greene Espel PLLP. **Stephanie Karri** is the communications lead for Moms Demand Action. She attended law school at the University of Iowa and previously worked as an appellate public defender.*

March 12

**North@Work: Creating a tipping point
for a healthier, more vibrant North Minneapolis**

North@Work is a program of the Northside Funders Group, a unique collaboration of private, public and corporate funders aligning investments and strategies to catalyze comprehensive, sustainable change in North Minneapolis. These funders share a strong sense of hope for and dedication to the community. North@Work's goal is to sustainably employ 2000 African American men by the end of 2020 to jump start this change.

***Tony Tolliver**, program officer for Northside Funders Group and director of the North@Work Program, has nearly 20 years of experience and leadership in diversity, public affairs and community engagement in the corporate sector. He has served in a variety of volunteer capacities including on the boards of Pillsbury United Communities, KMOJ and Hands on Twin Cities. Tony was recognized as “Volunteer of the Year,” by the Minneapolis Park and Recreation Board in 2012. He has a bachelor’s degree in Business Administration from Doane University located in Crete, Neb., and lives with his family in North Minneapolis.*

March 19

**Northside Achievement Zone: Ending multigenerational
poverty through education**

The Northside Achievement Zone is a collaboration of more than 40 nonprofits, parents and schools in North Minneapolis with a single goal—to prepare low-income North Minneapolis children to graduate from high school ready for college. Through its efforts, it has become a nationally recognized model for comprehensive community development and systems change.

*Relating the NAZ story will be its dynamic president and CEO, **Sondra Samuels**. Prior to leading NAZ, Ms. Samuels was the President of the PEACE Foundation (NAZ's predecessor organization), a sought-after diversity consultant, a Peace Corps volunteer in Africa and a National Service Leader for AmeriCorps. She also serves on the Leadership Council for Generation Next. She and her family have been North Minneapolis residents for 20 years.*

March 26

Isuroon: Empowering Somali women in Minnesota and beyond

Taking its name from a Somali word that means “woman who cares for herself,” Isuroon, a local grassroots organization, believes that empowering women is the key to building a thriving community. Led by the women it serves, Isuroon has earned a trusted place in the community because of its cultural and collaborative approach. Isuroon is committed to improving the health and upward mobility of Somali women in Minnesota, the United States and Somalia and promotes health and empowerment for Somali women through health education, communication and advocacy to create policy change.

***Fartun Weli** is the founder and executive director of Isuroon. A public health graduate student with two decades of experience in the medical field—including 10 years as a health and technology specialist for Park Nicollet Clinics—Fartun has gained international prominence for challenging taboos against speaking openly about reproductive and mental health issues. She currently serves as a member of the Community Advisory Board for the Hennepin County Sheriff's Department, as well as assisting local nonprofit organizations. She spoke at Plymouth's October 2016 Moral Revival.*

April 2

Building Bridges Between Faiths:

A continuing conversation about Islam

We will continue to explore the similarities and differences between Islam and Christianity which was begun last fall. This will include basic beliefs and practices in the context of both faiths, such as views of God, Mary and Jesus, as well as verses from the Qur'an that are equivalent to the Ten Commandments. The focus is on the similarities of both faiths and opportunities to pursue joint Muslim-Christian projects.

*Our speaker, **Rashed Ferdous**, is a member of the Islamic Resource Group, a volunteer organization working to improve the quality of interactions between Muslims and people of other faiths through cultural competence training in schools, faith-based organizations, law enforcement agencies, corporations and health and social service agencies. He spoke at Sunday Forum last September.*

April 9

Police Work in the Middle East:

What law enforcement in that region can teach us

What does an ex-Minneapolis police chief have to contribute to policing in Israel, Palestine and Jordan? What, if anything, are police doing in those regions that could benefit us? Hear what United States chiefs of police with the Police Executive Research Forum (PERF) have learned from their consultations with Israel, Jordan, Palestine and China on police law enforcement practices. Tim Dolan will share his own experiences with PERF working in the Middle East.

***Tim Dolan** is a 34-year law enforcement veteran who served as chief of the Minneapolis Police Department for nearly seven years. He currently serves on several boards and is a member*

of the Research Advisory Board for the Police Executive Research Forum. He also consults for the Department of Justice Community Oriented Policing (COPS) and several other agencies. He has written essays on the future of policing and leadership during times of crisis and has consulted with federal and state attorneys on police-related shootings.

April 23

Buddhism: The Path to Awakening

The Buddhist lineage dates back to the time of the Buddha more than 2,500 years ago. The teachings offer a path that helps its followers understand how mistaken perceptions create suffering and how to discover the inner wealth of love, compassion and wisdom that help to overcome it. Join us in a discussion about Buddhist practices, many of which have practical applications for all of us.

*Our presenter will be **Myoshin Kelley**, who has practiced and taught meditation for over 40 years. She is a senior instructor for the Terger Meditation Community, a worldwide community whose base in the West is in Minneapolis.*

April 30

Sharing our Future:

Plymouth's children and youth programs

Seth Patterson, Plymouth's Director of Children and Youth Ministry, will be on hand to share information about the exciting and transformative work of ministry with our families. If you haven't met Seth, here is your opportunity to hear about his vision for ministry at Plymouth. In addition to a conversation about current programming and curriculum, together we can discuss the ways that our whole church can teach each other, learn from each other and give each other hope.

Seth has an MFA in Theater Performance from Florida Atlantic University and an MDiv from the University of Chicago. He is married to Nora Montañez Patterson, a theater artist, and they have an almost-3-year-old daughter, Nery.

May 7

Tutoring at Whittier School:

Where we've been and where we're going

This past school year more than 35 Plymouth members have connected directly with students at Whittier Elementary School, most of them on a one-on-one basis. Join with us to hear our volunteers' heart-warming stories plus reflections on accomplishments and challenges. In addition, we'll get the perspective of a current Whittier teacher and hear about plans for the 2017-2018 academic year.

*The conversation will be led by volunteer coordinator and Plymouth member **Bill Davini.***

Plymouth Congregational Church

1900 Nicollet Ave.

Minneapolis, MN

55403-3789

612/871-7400

www.plymouth.org

churchinfo@plymouth.org

facebook.com/PlymouthCongregationalChurch

[twitter.com @PCCmpls](https://twitter.com/PCCmpls)

Instagram #plymouthchurchminneapolis

www.pinterest.com/plymouthcongreg/