Opening Ourselves
to Insights

Spiritual Exploration
& Sunday Forum
Fall 2017

Plymouth
CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
On the cover: Photograph by Paula Northwood.
## Spiritual Exploration
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Register: plymouth.org/2017/07/13/spiritual-exploration-fall-2017

### Spiritual Practices

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Bill Davini writes, “Hillbilly Elegy was a deeply moving and disturbing personal experience for me in which I was challenged by the limits of my compassion. My reaction to this book was one of anger and rejection—which makes it a fertile ground for contemplation. In my darkest moments with this book, I asked questions such as: What are we to make of people who are born with privilege and who throw away their gifts in perverse and cavalier ways? What do we owe to people who don’t take responsibility for themselves and yet see themselves as victims? Are men who are not able to get the same jobs that were done by their fathers and grandfathers owed a guarantee by society? What does it mean to respect such people and how do we bring ourselves into dialogue with their opinions, and what do we do when they seem ready to follow demagogues who pander to their fears?”

The above reactions are inconsistent with the way Bill understands Christianity and with the way he would wish to view himself. Join Paula Northwood and Bill as they grapple to understand these and other issues that surfaced in reading this book.

Bill Davini is a retired IT professional and longtime member of Plymouth Church. In both of these capacities, Bill has facilitated groups and discussions. Bill looks forward to hearing and sharing reactions with others, particularly those who have differing opinions of the people in this book!

Paula Northwood, Minister for Spiritual Formation at Plymouth Church, grew up in Ohio not too far from the author’s home.
Four Traditions, One Spirit by Chet Myers
Tuesdays Oct. 3, 10, 17, 24 and 31; 10:30 a.m.–noon, Fireside Room; Chet Myers and Paula Northwood, facilitators. Free; please register.

Chet Myers’s book *Four Traditions, One Spirit* is a spiritual reflection that contemplates the human condition and our longings from four spiritual and mystical traditions: Jewish, Christian, Sufi and Lakota. This five-week study will examine commonalities from these spiritual traditions. Each session will include brief writing exercises and worship rituals. If you have been curious about what values are shared by different religious traditions and what values shape your life, these sessions are for you. Or if you have been feeling despair over the currents affairs of the world, this book will give you hope for the humanity.

**Chet Myers,** M.Div. (Yale), retired professor and member of the St. Stephen’s Catholic Community, has taught and led workshops on issues of philosophy and spirituality.

The book *Four Traditions, One Spirit* can be purchased at the first session ($15) and the proceeds go to Lift Garage, a nonprofit car repair garage in south Minneapolis for people in need.

**Paula Northwood** is Minister for Spiritual Formation at Plymouth Church.

Tears We Cannot Stop: A Sermon to White America by Michael Eric Dyson
Wednesdays Oct. 4, 11, 18 and 25; 5:45–6:45 p.m., Room 207; Seth Patterson, facilitator. Free; please register.

*Tears We Cannot Stop* is a fiery sermon, and an unabashedly emotional, personal appeal. “What I need to say” to white America, Dyson writes, can only be said in “a plea, a cry, a sermon, from my heart to yours.”

This four-week study will convict, inspire and challenge white readers. This book is a provocative and deeply personal call for change. Dyson argues that if we are to make real racial progress
we must face difficult truths, including being honest about how black grievance has been ignored, dismissed or discounted. Dyson writes: “the time is at hand for reckoning with the past, recognizing the truth of the present, and moving together to redeem the nation for our future. If we don’t act now, if you don’t address race immediately, there very well may be no future.”

**Seth Patterson**, Director of Children and Youth Ministries, is intrigued by the ways in which we attempt to listen to “the other” in our lives and how discomfort can sometimes suggest growth. His M.Div. thesis at the University of Chicago was entitled *Dismantling White Supremacy: A Prophetic Approach.*

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**Bible Study: The Book of Esther**

Thursdays Oct. 26 and Nov. 2, 9 and 16; 10:30 a.m.–noon; Fireside Room; Mary Kay Sauter, facilitator. Free; please register.

Did you know that Esther is mentioned more times in the Bible than any other woman? Did you know that the book bearing her name in the Old Testament does not mention God even once? The book of Esther tells a compelling story, dramatic and exciting. It reads like a movie plot, with a beautiful queen risking her life to prevent genocide. It also reveals deep and abiding spiritual truths about God’s power to deliver us from danger and oppression, even when despotic rulers plan to do evil to God’s people. What lessons can we learn today from studying the book about this very remarkable woman?

**Mary Kay Sauter** is a retired UCC pastor currently living in Maple Grove.

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**Healing the Heart of Democracy** by Parker Palmer

Mondays Oct. 30 and Nov. 6, 13 and 20; mornings 10:30 a.m.–noon, or evenings 7:00–8:30 p.m., Fireside Room

Paula Northwood, facilitator. Free; please register.

“For those of us who want to see democracy survive and thrive—and we are legion—the heart is where everything begins: that
grounded place in each of us where we can overcome fear, rediscover that we are members of one another, and embrace the conflicts that threaten democracy as openings to new life for our nation.” (from the preface)

Join this four-week study of Palmer’s seminal work on the “habits of the heart” we need to revitalize our politics, hold the tensions of our differences and restore a government “of the people, by the people, for the people.” Using the guidelines of conversation circles, we will create safe space where everyone’s voice will be heard and deep dialogue encouraged.

**Paula Northwood** is Minister for Spiritual Formation at Plymouth Church.

**Convictions: How I Learned What Matters Most** by Marcus J. Borg

**Tuesdays Nov. 14, 21, 28 and Dec. 4; 10:30 a.m.–noon, Fireside Room; Paula Northwood, facilitator. Free; please register.**

The late Marcus J. Borg, preeminent theologian and Bible scholar, reflected on his life and how he developed his most bedrock convictions and why they matter. The result is a manifesto for all progressive Christians who seek a path for following Jesus today. With each chapter embodying a distinct conviction, Borg writes provocatively and compellingly on the beliefs that can deeply ground us and guide us:

- God Is Real and a Mystery
- Salvation Is More About This Life Than an Afterlife
- The Bible Can Be True Without Being Literally True
- Jesus’ Death on the Cross Matters—But Not Because He Paid for Our Sins
- God Is Passionate About Justice and the Poor
- To Love God Is to Love Like God

Participants will have an opportunity to reflect on their convictions and why they matter. Join us for thought-provoking discussions and reflection. This could be similar to an adult confirmation class!
Paula Northwood is Minister for Spiritual Formation at Plymouth Church.

**WORKSHOPS**

Register: plymouth.org/2017/07/13/spiritual-exploration-fall-2017

Enneagram Relationship Intensive: Creating more Conscious Relationships
Mondays Oct. 2, 9, 16 and 23; 7:00–9:00 p.m., Room 205
Fee: $60 for four sessions; please register. Anne Mureé.

For individuals or couples who want to deepen your capacity for love, enjoyment and balance in your relationship with yourself and your loved ones. You will learn how self-awareness and precise strategies and practices can enhance and revitalize your relationships.

Classes will include new information, skill-building practice, support and much laughter.

At each class you will:

- Learn and practice one new conscious communication skill
- Gain awareness of your Enneagram type relationship strengths and blind spots
- Practice making daily choices from your authentic knowing, instead of your Enneagram type habit
- Learn how to open yourself to give and receive more love in all your relationships
- Learn how to allow more pleasure, creativity and support in your life

These classes are open to everyone. If you are not sure of your Enneagram type or are new to the Enneagram, please email Anne Mureé (amuree@q.com) to set up a complimentary half-hour telephone conversation before the first class.

Anne Mureé is a transformational and spiritual coach and master Enneagram educator. She has been facilitating adult groups for 30 years. Anne has studied and used the Enneagram in her work for 20 years. She is certified to teach the Enneagram.
by Palmer/Daniels and Riso/Hudson. Anne has also studied with Claudio Naranjo. She founded the Minnesota IEA Chapter and served on the board of the International Enneagram Association. She teaches a six-day Enneagram Certification each year for people who want to use the Enneagram professionally.

From Staying Safe to Being Brave: Practices for Self-Empowerment
Saturday, Oct. 14, 9:00 a.m.—4:00 p.m., Fireside Room
Fee: $85 for individuals, $160 for couples; limited to 35; register. Yvette Erasmus, PsyD., LP

“The secret to change is to focus all your energy not on fighting the old, but on building the new.” —Socrates

Join us to learn new communication and relationship tools for personal change that lead into transformative social change. Build on your own personal skills to become even more courageous and open-hearted.

Yvette Erasmus has experience teaching Compassionate Communication at the Aslan Institute and leading children, parents, teachers, and prison inmates to a more spiritual-centered communication model.

Spiritual Practices

Meditation, 9:15 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), One Groveland. $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, 7:00–8:15 p.m., Room 205; Diane Boruff and Paula Northwood. Free. Strengthen your spiritual muscles by practicing Centering Prayer with the support of a caring group. Beginners and those with an established meditation practice are welcome! We will be using *The Book of Awakening* by Mark Nepo as our resource for reflection. This can be purchased at your local bookstore.

**Diane Boruff** is commissioned by Contemplative Outreach International.

**Paula Northwood** is Minister for Spiritual Formation.

**Coming in spring!**

**Spirit Circles**

Stay posted for a six-week Lenten opportunity to join a small group discussion
Sept. 17
The Center for Victims of Torture:
Providing a home for healing in tumultuous times

The Center for Victims of Torture has been serving victims of some of the world’s most heinous crimes for over 30 years. What began in a clinic in 1985 and moved into a more welcoming, nurturing setting in 1987 is now an international effort to meet the physical, psychological and spiritual needs of those who have endured unspeakable pain. Join us to learn what that work looks like in our current political climate. What has changed with a new administration, and how has that affected the work that CVT does?

Curt Goering, the Executive Director of the Center for Victims of Torture, has been an advocate for human rights and the reduction of state-sponsored torture throughout his career. Prior to joining CVT in 2012, he worked for Amnesty International for 30 years where he served as chief operating officer. He has worked with many administrations and troubled countries and is uniquely qualified to speak about the impact of the current political climate on this work.

Suggested audience: Adults

Sept. 24
One Day at a Time: Celebration of recovery and hope

National Recovery Month is held every September to increase awareness and to celebrate successes of those in recovery. It’s an ongoing effort to educate Americans that substance use treatment and mental health services can enable those with mental and/or substance use disorders to live healthy and rewarding lives. Today’s Forum is one of Plymouth’s efforts to participate in this yearly National Recovery Month Celebration, now in its 27th year.

Robert “Bob” Subby, born and raised in Minneapolis, has had a career as a chemical dependency practitioner, licensed
psychologist, author, lecturer, corporate consultant and adult life coach. Educated at the University of Minnesota with a master’s degree in psychology, Bob became the first adapter of a Family Systems Theory approach to the treatment of chemical dependency, alcoholism and codependency. He has published two books during his tenure, Lost in the Shuffle: The Codependent Reality and Healing the Family Within. He is a founding member of the National Association for Children of Alcoholics (NACOA).

Suggested audience: **Adults**

**Oct. 1**

**Better Futures Minnesota:**

**Transforming lives and rebuilding communities**

By providing effective, efficient and compassionate practices and services, Better Futures Minnesota is helping men with troubled pasts build futures in which they are productive citizens, fathers, employees and neighbors. Better Futures addresses the trauma and mental health issues, racial and economic disparities, and poverty and homelessness that disproportionately plague men exiting incarceration. In partnership with Beacon Interfaith Housing Collaborative and Westminster Presbyterian Church, Plymouth is working to create Great River Landing, which will provide safe, affordable housing for these men. Come to hear an update on that project and to learn more about how Better Futures is building a strong, vibrant community.

**Isreal Moses** is the Director of Integrated Care for Better Futures Minnesota. He is responsible for the management and performance of the four core components of the Better Futures services model: housing, health, life coaching and employment. He also serves on the board of directors for Harold Mezile North Community YMCA.

Suggested audience: **High school students and adults**
Oct. 8  
**Sustainable Energy:**  
The state of renewables in the Trump era

Global and national energy policies will have a profound impact on the growth of renewable energy sources in the coming years. In the United States, energy trends are at crosscurrents with national energy policy as the federal government seeks to cut back on renewables. Unless the government profoundly undercuts renewable production, however, clean energy still has a bright future. In our own state, solar energy is poised for a quantum leap in production. But how much more could we be doing on the state and local level? Our speaker will discuss these trends and the future of solar energy in Minnesota.

*Mark Andrew* is the founder and President of GreenMark, a sustainably focused public affairs and green marketing and branding agency, and GreenMark Solar LLC, a solar development concern focusing on moderately sized solar gardens in the Xcel Energy service territory.

Suggested audience: **High school students and adults**

Oct. 15  
**Changes and Constants: Cuba’s relationship with Plymouth**

Plymouth members made their first trip to Cuba in 2005, and since then a Plymouth group has traveled to this unique island nation almost every year. We have made many friends, among them our guides Aurelio Paz, a journalist, and Eduardo Gonzalez, the minister at our sister church in Ciego de Avila. Come and hear about changes we’ve seen and experienced over the past 12 years, updates on Cuba’s economy and governance and tentative plans for the next trip.

*Plymouth members and frequent Cuba travelers will be our presenters. They are Nancy Albrecht, Tom Anderson, Kathryn Hagen, Colleen Cooper, Bryce Hamilton and Jill Hennesen.*

Suggested audience: **High school students and adults**
Oct. 22
**Centro Tyrone Guzman:**
**Serving our Latine* neighbors for over 40 years**

Established in 1974, Centro Tyrone Guzman is the oldest and largest multi-service Latine organization in Minneapolis, serving more than 7,000 individuals annually through a holistic array of programs. Focusing on education, health and wellness, and community engagement, it has established itself as a trusted leader both within and outside the Latine community. Join us to learn how this organization, located in the nearby Phillips neighborhood, is working to create a vibrant, diverse and inclusive Latine community that belongs and contributes to the social and economic vitality of Minnesota.

[*Centro Tyrone Guzman has chosen to use “e” in place of the Spanish use of masculine “o” to include people of all genders.]

**Iris Ramos** is the owner and founding attorney of The Law Office of Iris Ramos LLC. Shortly after graduating from the University of Minnesota Law School, Iris started her law firm with a vision of helping individuals, including those in the Latine community, achieve their legal needs by providing caring, informed and supportive services in the areas of family and immigration law.

**Roxana Linares** is the Executive Director of Centro Tyrone Guzman and has held that position since 2009.

Suggested audience: **High school students and adults**

Oct. 29
**Sacred Music in the 21st Century:**
**Three composers’ perspectives**

Music is foundational at Plymouth Church, and we are often treated to world premieres and multiple genres. While sacred music enriches a church member’s spiritual life, how does it impact the composer? What inspires a composer and what are the challenges? Join us to hear three composers, two of whom are Plymouth members, describe their experience in creating music that is both timeless and timely for today’s congregations—and that speaks to their own souls.
Carol Barnett is the composer of The World Beloved: A Bluegrass Mass and the soon-to-be premiered Bluegrass Te Deum. She creates audacious and engaging music, both for traditional instrumentation and for cross-pollinations such as a duet for steel pan and organ. She says, “While writing accessibly, I try to find something unusual to say, something unique, magic, that bypasses intellect and goes straight to the heart.”

Randall Davidson is a cellist and composer whose works have enjoyed hundreds of performances throughout the United States and Europe and have attracted the attention of critics, performers and audiences alike for their dramatic and accessible musical language.

Emmy Award-winning composer Steve Heitzeg is known for evocative music that celebrates nature and addresses social and ecological issues with vision and purpose. His wide-ranging body of works includes compositions for orchestra, chorus, chamber ensemble, ballet and PBS films.

Suggested audience: Adults

Nov. 5
Jewish Holidays: There’s more than just a menorah

Many of us are somewhat familiar with Passover and Hanukkah, but what about other holidays on the Jewish calendar? What happens during Sukkot, and why is Purim so much fun? Come to learn how our Jewish neighbors celebrate their faith and history and leave with a new appreciation for the richness of their traditions and how they might enliven our own.

Rabbi Marcia Zimmerman, Senior Rabbi at Temple Israel, is a long-time friend of Plymouth Church and a highly respected voice for social justice in the Minneapolis faith community. In 2012 and 2013, she was named one of America’s top 50 rabbis by Newsweek.

Suggested audience: High school students and adults
Nov. 12
Caring for the Caregiver: How to ask for help when caring for a loved one with dementia

In this independent culture, asking for help can be difficult, but it can be particularly so when the caregiver is caring for someone with cognitive impairment. This forum will discuss what happens both physically and emotionally to everyone involved, how to share the load by reaching out to others and when to seek help from community resources. Our speaker will suggest ways to keep track of specifically what’s going on, and she will share the knowledge and wisdom of Mayo Clinic’s dementia staff. She may even share how a yoga practice can bring comfort and support to caregivers.

**Angela Lunde** is the Cognitive Health and Wellness Director at Charter House, a Senior Living Community. She joined the Mayo Clinic’s Alzheimer’s Disease Research Center in 2001 and was part of the Mayo team that gave the HABIT study course at Plymouth in 2015. She is recognized as an institutional, state and national expert and leader in recognizing the needs of persons with dementia and supporting caregivers of people with Alzheimer’s and related dementias.

Suggested audience: **Adults**

Nov. 19
Prophets and Mystics: Past and present voices for truth

If we are to be equal to our times, we must draw on both the disquieting, even thunderous, truth telling of prophets who rage against unspeakable inequities and all that should not be so in our world, and the hopeful reminder by mystics of the hidden wholeness and unfathomable love, that lies at the core of our lives. We will reflect on the ancient biblical prophets and on contemporary prophets, along with Christian mystics old and new.

**Julie Neraas**, an ordained Presbyterian minister and spiritual director for more than 35 years, 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, and she has facilitated numerous retreats at Plymouth. She is the author of Apprenticed to Hope: A Sourcebook for Difficult Times.

Suggested audience: **Adults**

**Dec. 3**  
**Community Singing: Experiencing aliveness, joy and connection through song**

Back by popular demand, Barbara McAfee will help us start off the Advent season on a joyful note by leading us in song in the oral tradition (no notes to read, no instruments, no experience needed) “to embody our interdependence and enjoy the heck out of being alive!”

**Barbara McAfee** is a voice coach, singer/songwriter, keynote speaker and author who merges lessons from 12 years in organization development with the transformational power of sound. Her latest TEDx talk is “All Together Now: What Group Sound Making Can Teach Us About Working Well Together.”

Suggested audience: **All ages!**

**Dec. 10**  
**Holy Emoji!—Navigating social media in the 21st century**

Tweets—do they come from people or birds? Meme—something fun to share with your friends or a person who talks about themselves too much? And how about Snapchat—is it a fun way to communicate or how people talk and dance in *West Side Story*? Whether you are 9 and have grown up with technology or 90 and the world of the internet is a new, exciting and potentially frightening place, come to this intergenerational presentation from our own Nina Jonson to talk about the role of social media in the 21st century: how it can help, how it can hurt and what you can do to feel more connected, get your voice heard and make a real impact in the world.

**Nina Jonson** has been a youth culture expert working in the
field of adolescent health and wellness for over a decade. She has taught individuals of all ages about the challenges and joys of technology and has been interviewed on various media outlets, sharing her knowledge on the subject. She currently works as the Director of Enrollment and Outreach for Minnesota Life College, and finds herself on some form of social media, either for work or fun, multiple times every day.

Suggested audience: **High school students and adults**

**Dec. 17**

**Laughter and Stress: Which one wins?**

We have all heard the saying, “We’ll laugh about this someday,” but it is hard to keep that in mind when you are feeling the stress of constant change and seemingly insurmountable obstacles. This workshop will have you laughing and learning about laughter. Joe Harstad will share fascinating new research about how laughter affects the brain and helps you think faster, more smoothly and more creatively. This is not a speech or PowerPoint presentation. You will engage in fun, hands-on exercises to learn how to use the power of laughter to command the most stressful situations.

**Joe Harstad** is the assistant artistic director of The Stevie Ray’s Comedy Troupe and is a master instructor in the Stevie Ray’s School of Improv. He co-directs the performances at Stevie Ray’s Comedy Cabaret and keeps their professional performers sharp by conducting training in improvisational comedy, sketches and music. He loves teaching all levels of students, from beginning through advanced, and focuses on individual improvement and personal growth.

Suggested audience: **High school students and adults**