



**Plymouth
Church**
UNITED CHURCH *of* CHRIST

Annual Report 2020



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MINUTES OF THE ANNUAL MEETING OF THE CONGREGATION
Sunday, November 10, 2019

Pursuant to the Plymouth Church Constitution, there must be 75 members present for a quorum. Attendance was counted, and it was determined that a quorum was present.

Interim Minister Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay called the meeting to order and began the meeting with a prayer.

David Faulx made a motion to dispense with the reading of the 2018 Annual Meeting Minutes. Janet Neary seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

Kendalle Cobb made a motion to approve the minutes of the 2018 Annual meeting. Joann Hall seconded. The motion passed unanimously.

In lieu of a Senior Minister's report, Rev. Matt Bauhof showed a video of Plymouth's 2019 highlights.

Treasurer's Report

Treasurer Juanita Faulx said that Plymouth's finances are very strong and we are under budget for the year.

Foundation Fund Report

Christine Bretz reported that the Foundation's annual contribution is about 25% of the total budget. However, over the past few years it has provided additional support for various Buildings and Grounds needs, so the Foundation will be working with the Building and Grounds Department to address this. The Fund has approximately \$5.5 million invested.

Finance Committee

Brian Grube stated there are still challenges with the budget, and we are becoming increasingly dependent on the Foundation. The Committee has begun a conversation with the Building and Grounds department and the Foundation directors concerning the demands in maintaining our building. Currently, we are 90-95% toward our giving goal.

President's Report

President Gloria Sturghill noted she started the year thinking being president would be easy as she has been involved in so many areas of the church. This was true until the Rev. Dr. Shawnthea Monroe announced she was leaving to accept a position in East Lansing, MI. She also stated that since communication is the backbone of the church and that lay members of the congregation and staff are working on ways to make sure the transition is as smooth and transparent as possible, setting up a page on the Plymouth website and including announcements and information there and in weekly emails, bulletins, the Perspective (or in the mail) so that everyone is informed as we go through the process of finding a new Senior Minister.

Report of the Nominating Committee and Election of Nominees

Kendalle Cobb presented the slate of nominees for 2020. Those who were present came forward.

Council President (F)
Council Vice-President (F)
Secretary
Treasurer (F)
Assistant Treasurer (F)
Council Member@Lrg
Council Member@Lrg
Council Member@Lrg
Council Member@Lrg
Council Member@Lrg

Brian Grube
Mary Bright
Val Arbie-McClelland (4)
Juanita Faulx (3)
Lisa Hunziker (3)
Ros Gauchat (2)
Cindy Hill (2)
Shelli Smith
Molly Warmbein
Nicole Lepley

Adult Faith & Life Chair
Adult Faith & Life Vice-Chair
B & G Chair (F)
B & G Vice-Chair
Caring Chair
Caring Vice-Chair
C & Y Chair
C & Y Vice-Chair
E & G Chair
E & G Vice-Chair
Giving Chair
Giving Vice-Chair
P & S Chair
P & S Vice-Chair
Worship Chair
Worship Vice-Chair
Personnel Chair (F)
Foundation Chair (F)
UCC Living Water Assoc. Rep
UCC Living Water Assoc. Rep
UCC Living Water Assoc. Rep

Vicki Werneke (2)
Joanna Cullinan (2)
Bill Menges (2)
Ron Werneke (2)
Dave Faulx (2)
Don Grauer
Brian Shields (3)
Jeannie Clarkson (4)
Mendle Adams (2)
Lalana Green
Russell Lamb (2)
Carolyn Jillson
Robin Johnson (3)
Joann Hall (2)
Mary Powell (4)
Amy Holbrook (2)

Pam Beck (3)
Adrienne Brockway (3)
Doug Powell

Key: B & G, Building & Grounds; C & Y, Children & Youth; E & G, Evangelism & Growth; P & S, Partnership & Service; UCC Living Water Assoc Rep, United Church of Christ Living Water Associate Representative.
Andrew Cleminshaw moved to accept the slate. Anne Cook seconded. It passed unanimously.

Kendalle also presented the names of the members of the five Standing Committees of the Church: the Finance Committee, the Nominating Committee, the Pastoral Relations Committee, the Foundation Committee and the Personnel Committee. These appointments have already been voted on by the Church Council.

Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee 20

Brian Grube
Mary Bright
Juanita Faulx
Lisa Hunziker
Personnel Chair

Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee 20
Finance Committee @ Large 20
Finance Committee @ Large 20

Russell Lamb
Bill Menges
Foundation Chair
Hans Hunziker
Chris Karr

Foundation Dir 21
Foundation Dir 22
Foundation Dir 22
Foundation Dir 23
Foundation Dir 23

Jeff Pollock
Dick Pogue
Christine Bretz
Lalana Green
Mary Bright

Nominating Committee 20
Nominating Committee 20
Nominating Committee 20
Nominating Committee 21
Nominating Committee 21
Nominating Committee 21
Nominating Committee 22
Nominating Committee 22
Nominating Committee 22

Kristen Connors
Doug Powell
Jan Wilkens
Wayne Hall
Hans Hunziker
Vicki Werneke
Pam Beck
Sara Martin
Mai Moore

Pastoral Relations 20
Pastoral Relations 20
Pastoral Relations 21
Pastoral Relations 21

Noel Nilson
Vicki Werneke
Jim Holbrook
Tracy Williams

Personnel Committee 20
Personnel Committee 20
Personnel Committee 21
Personnel Committee 22
Personnel Committee 22

Ruth Garwood
Kenyon Mau
Jim Holbrook
Paula Colahan-Sederstom
Karen Reich

Marisue Besse moved to accept this slate. Norma Nelson seconded. It passed unanimously.

Recognition of 50+ year members

Rev. Matt Bauhof read the names of people who have been members of Plymouth Church for 50 years or more. A reception honoring them was held in Fellowship Hall following the meeting.

New Business

Matt Bauhof and Brian Grube thanked Gloria Sturghill for her work as President of Church Council, as well as her dedication to Plymouth. In appreciation, a silver heart necklace was given to Gloria.

Special Meeting

Mary Bright announced the slate of nominees for the Pulpit Committee. This is the committee that will lead the search for a new senior minister. Nine names have already been selected, but up to 12 are allowed per our Constitution. Members 10-12 were nominated during the meeting. The nominees are:

1. Cindy Chapman
2. Andrew Cleminshaw
3. Tom Cullinan
4. Amy Grube
5. Mai Moore
6. Beth Sanborn
7. Gloria Sturghill
8. David Turner
9. Robert Woolfrey
10. Ann Eberhard
11. Dick Pogue
12. Brian Shields

Christine Bretz moved to accept the slate. Gus Schrader seconded. It passed unanimously.

Adjournment

Matt moved to adjourn the meeting. Gloria Sturghill seconded. It passed unanimously.

Submitted by Donna Dickinson

The Agenda/Memo for the Annual Meeting 2020

Plymouth Church Council has decided to hold our Annual Meeting differently this year because of COVID. Instead of gathering a quorum of 75 people in the Sanctuary or on Zoom, we plan to distribute our Annual Report on November 2nd, by e-mail and for those who need or request it, by mail. This will include the slate of candidates proposed by the Nominating Committee on the last pages.

We need EVERYONE to vote on the slate of church leadership candidates. You have two options to vote:

1. We request that you please vote by email. Here's how: Put in subject line: Nominating Vote. The body of the email should say: I approve the 2021 Nominating slate as presented in the Annual Report. Type your name below. Please send your email to office@plymouthchurchucc.org.

2. For those members who have requested to receive a copy of the Annual Report by mail, a ballot will be enclosed. Please complete and return your ballot by mail to: Plymouth Church, 2860 Coventry Rd. Shaker Heights, OH 44120.

All votes must be received by Nov. 16th. We must receive at least 75 votes for the nominees to be elected.

As you know, in the past, we have honored the 50+ year members with a reception following the Annual meeting in November. Unfortunately, due to the pandemic, that will not be possible in 2020. The Caring Department has decided to donate the funds normally spent on the reception to the Cleveland Schools book fund in the name of the 50+ year members of Plymouth Church. We feel that this is a safe way to honor these members' faithfulness and is very much in keeping with the mission of Plymouth Church.

President's Report

Dear Friends,

To say this has been a year of transition at Plymouth Church is by now both cliché and profound understatement. You don't need me to tell you that the COVID-19 pandemic has brought all of us (and some more than others) an unhealthy dose of separation and anxiety, loss and mourning. It has stirred a deep and unrelenting desire to get things back to the way they used to be. Yet without minimizing the havoc COVID continues to wreak, that is not this year's full story—not by a long shot.

Weeping may endure for a night, but joy cometh in the morning. (Psalm 30:5.) Despite our challenges (or perhaps because of them), Plymouth has sought and found new and innovative opportunities to create and grow and to continue serving those whom we are called to serve.

It is no exaggeration to say that, since last spring, Rev. Deborah, Rev. Matt, Jim, and Leslie have reinvented worship, fellowship, and service at Plymouth. Their tireless efforts to bring us together online, first for Sunday services and then for Bible study, Sunday School, bell and choir Zoom hours, youth group, and even council and committee meetings have kept us (virtually) whole and engaged. Add to this our late-summer outdoor services, Sacred Garden Saturdays, and workshops to discuss the racial turmoil with which our country continues to grapple, and you would be forgiven for wondering if there's anything we haven't been doing.

Nor have we let COVID stand in the way of our growth. Plymouth this year welcomed six new confirmands and seven new members. And while the sanctuary may be empty for now, we have refilled our classrooms with more than 40 students and nearly 50 teachers and staff from the Cleveland Clinic's Lerner School for Autism.

Behind the scenes, Plymouth has not lost a step either. The search committee is continuing their work to identify a new senior minister, and in the meantime, Rev. Deborah has graciously agreed to continue her service with Jim's able support. Plymouth's finances are stable, as everyone has continued to contribute generously, and Kathryn has been carefully managing the budget we scaled back earlier this year to account for the uncertain environment. The building also is in healthy shape thanks to Paul, with some long-overdue upgrades to the electrical system and a new telephone system, among other projects.

This year surely is different. Still, Jesus Christ is the same yesterday and today and forever. (Hebrews 13:8.) So too is Plymouth.

Peace,

Brian

Submitted by Brian Grube, President

Finance Committee Report

The Finance Committee has overall responsibility for overseeing Plymouth's financial affairs, including developing the annual budget in collaboration with departments, monitoring overall budgetary compliance, overseeing the Treasurer to assure that appropriate financial controls are in place and are being followed, and periodically reviewing the compensation of all Church employees. Through all of this year's surprises, Finance Administrator Kathryn Kundrat continued to serve Plymouth ably, steadily, and patiently.

We began this year by continuing our work to align Plymouth's expenditures with our revenues from giving and other sources. One of Plymouth's financial challenges is maintaining a building built for a congregation larger than we presently are without sacrificing our other financial objectives or risking the long-term sustainability of and support from the Foundation.

Toward this goal, we took two steps. First, we adopted a new accounting procedure for large, longer-term capital projects, such as the replacement of electrical panels and installation of new exterior doors undertaken this year. Under this procedure, funds budgeted for specific, generally larger capital projects will be placed in a special Building and Grounds account (No. 80321). Those funds then will be used only for the projects for which they were authorized, and the funds authorized for those projects will remain in the special B&G account until the project is complete or the funds allocated for the project are exhausted. This process will improve transparency and accounting for longer-term capital projects and help the committee in the future to budget appropriately, and set aside the cash needed, for Plymouth's capital needs. In accordance with that policy, we moved into the special B&G fund cash drawn from the foundation in 2019 for particular capital projects authorized in 2019, and those funds have been applied toward approved capital projects over the course of the year.

Second, the committee began to reexamine the 2020 budget, and in particular, its reliance on a planned extraordinary withdrawal from the Foundation (about \$85,000) to cover building expenses. Extraordinary withdrawals reduce the principal of the Foundation, which also lowers the annual income that the Foundation provides to Plymouth—in 2020, that income amounted to more than 25 percent of Plymouth's unrestricted revenues. The question was whether we could meet this year's financial needs without taking the extraordinary withdrawal. Then COVID hit.

The COVID pandemic initially presented additional financial challenges. The March shut down of our building resulted in lost revenues from building use (e.g., no concerts or other in-person events) and other income originally budgeted. Moreover, consistent with the overall market, the Foundation suffered a significant loss in value in April. And the uncertainty of the circumstances, raised questions about what to expect and how long it would last.

To address these financial uncertainties and prepare for potential hardships, the committee recommended and Council approved in May a revised spending plan. Among other things, the new plan reduced capital spending to a shorter list of high priority projects. To identify additional resources, the Committee also reviewed all special funds outside the Foundation (discretionary funds set aside for a special purpose) and discovered some that had remained unused from year to year and/or had a higher balance than necessary for

future needs. The new plan released restrictions on the use of those special funds, generating an additional \$21,190 for general use. Similarly, the new plan approved charging B&G capital projects against unused B&G special funds before charging the operating accounts. As of September 30th, capital expenses of \$73,041.75 have been charged to these special fund accounts, rather than to the general operating budget. The remaining balance in these B&G special fund accounts as of September 30th is \$30,791.87. These changes helped make up for anticipated budget shortfalls.

As the year progressed, the financial situation has improved. The Foundation recovered to pre-COVID levels, though these gains are subject to change as recent market volatility has shown. Not all the anticipated revenue losses have come to be. In fact, with the addition of the Cleveland Clinic Autism Center (starting Sept. 1st) and Les Delices as new tenants, we now expect building use revenue actually to exceed pre-COVID budget expectations. And with reduced capital expenses, we are projecting a modest budget surplus by the end of the year. Nonetheless, this year is not yet over, and so we will continue to monitor the situation vigilantly.

Looking ahead, the Committee will be reviewing the results of our annual auditors' report and working with the departments on the 2021 budget. Part of that work will end where we began this year, determining whether funds need to be set aside for any multi-year capital projects and reviewing accumulated special funds for any that no longer need to be restricted. Many thanks to the committee members for their work this year and their wise and patient advice to me:

Brian Grube, President

Russell Lamb, Giving Chair

Juanita Faulx, Treasurer

Chris Karr, Member at Large

Christine Bretz, Foundation Chair

Bill Menges, Building and Grounds

Lisa Hunziker, Assistant Treasurer

Kenyon Mau, Personnel

Hans Hunziker, Member at Large

Deborah Lindsay, Interim Senior Minister (ex officio)

Kathryn Kundrat, Finance Administrator (ex officio)

Submitted by Mary Bright, Vice President

Treasurer's Report

What can be said of 2020 is "what a long strange trip it has been." Covid-19 hit in March and the impact was hard, not only on our members, but our church, too. However, we managed to work together and kept the church running rather smoothly and the church's finances in order.

Below is a summary of finances. Kathryn Kundrat has managed the accounts and prepared reports. We meet every two weeks to pay the bills. With the changes to the 2020 budget referenced in the Finance Committee report, we expect to close the year with a modest budget surplus.

As of 9/30/2020	Actual
Revenue	\$588,085.12
Expenses	\$506,390.92
Net	\$ 81,694.20

Submitted by Juanita Faulx, Treasurer

Foundation Report

The Plymouth Foundation is the Church's endowment that provides important annual support to Plymouth's operations, special activities and various programs authorized by Church Council. The Foundation has both unrestricted and restricted funds that are only available for specific purposes.

The Foundation's investments are monitored and administered by directors who are recommended for appointment by Church Council. Its funds are a portfolio of diverse investments with moderate risk, composed of both bonds and stocks. Contributions to the Foundation are welcome from one's estate plan or to commemorate a significant event such as a wedding or baptism.

The Foundation's annual contribution to the Church's budget is calculated based on the average of the fair market value of its portfolio at September 30 of the current year and at December 31 of the past 2 years. The portfolio was approximately \$5.7 million at December 31, 2019 and at September 31, 2020.

The typical Foundation annual contribution to the Church ranges from approximately \$220,000 - \$250,000, depending on the value of the investments at the targeted dates.

Submitted by Christine Bretz, Chair

2019-2020 Membership Statistics

November 1, 2019 through October 31, 2020

Summary of Changes in Membership:

Total Membership as of November 1, 2019 633*

*(As reported in the 2019 Annual Report, during the past year, the church staff, along with leadership, have updated our membership categories to better reflect our total membership. This accounts for the change in membership numbers from 2019 to 2020. Our understanding is the 2019 number, and perhaps those a few years back, reflected anyone listed in our database. These current categories/numbers reflect who Plymouth Church is now and puts into perspective our worship attendance and annual giving numbers.)

Current Members 413

Associate Members 4

Student Members 24

Active Friends 41

TOTAL 482

New Members received 13

Deceased Members 9

Members who transferred to other churches 0

Members who resigned their membership 0

Members removed as a result of culling process 114

Total membership as of October 31, 2020 372

Additions to Membership

Members were received as follows:

7 By Re-Affirmation of Faith:

<u>New Member</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Officiating Minister</u>
Kevin Anderson	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Aaron Baker	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Beth Baker	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Jonathan Kraft	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Nicole Lewis	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Zachary Lewis	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Carrie Wise	June 28, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay & Rev. Matthew Bauhof

6 By Confirmation:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Officiating Minister</u>
Jonah Chapman-Sung	September 20, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Samuel R. Grube	September 20, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Dylan Lamb	September 20, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Charlie Lozier	September 20, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Katherine Molyneaux	September 20, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Yumi Ndlovu	September 20, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof

0 by Affirmation of Faith

0 by Letter of Transfer

0 by Reinstatement by Church Council

Losses to Membership:

0 Removed by Letter of Transfer

0 Who resigned Their Membership

114 Removed from Membership by Plymouth Church Council, 10/29/2020, as a result of culling process

3 Due to Death for whom a Funeral or Memorial Service was conducted at Plymouth Church or by Plymouth Church staff:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	<u>Memorial/Funeral</u>	<u>Officiating Minister</u>
*Charles "Chuck" Davis	November 12, 2019	Memorial	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
*Paxton Van Sweringen	July 5, 2020	Graveside Service	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
*Peggy Stephens	August 30, 2020	Memorial at Funeral Home	Rev. Matthew Bauhof

6 Due to Death (No Service)

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Death</u>	
*Phil Ranney	December 25, 2019	
*Marguerite "Peggy" Campbell	April 24, 2020	(No Service due to Covid-19 restrictions)
*Cecil Mellin	May 10, 2020	(No Service due to Covid-19 restrictions)
*Phyllis Gates	June 9, 2020	(No Service due to Covid-19 restrictions)
*Judi Hoerner	July 22, 2020	(No Service due to Covid-19 restrictions)
*Frederick "Rick" Reading	August 18, 2020	

*Plymouth Member

Other Funerals or Memorial Services:

4 Funerals or Memorial Services conducted at Plymouth Church or by Plymouth Church staff for a non-member:

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Service</u>	<u>Officiating Minister</u>
Paul Szalay	September 19, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay
Joe Rice	October 12, 2020	Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay
Harold Lattimer	October 19, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Roger Saloman	October 23, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof

Baptisms:

5 Received the Sacrament of Baptism

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date of Baptism</u>	<u>Officiating Minister</u>
Abigail Susan Garr	December 1, 2019	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Theodore Alan Wible Henry	June 6, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Samuel R. Grube	August 22, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Jonah Chapman-Sung	September 13, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof
Francis Joseph Bauhof	October 12, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof and Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay

Dedications:

0 Received Service of Dedication

Weddings: 1

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Officiating Minister</u>
Carson Strang and Alicia Rock (held in Geneva on the Lake)	September 19, 2020	Rev. Matthew Bauhof

Fifty + Year Members

<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>	<u>Name</u>	<u>Date Joined</u>
Dick Pogue	10/04/1970	Gus Schrader	03/01/1964
Pat Pogue	10/04/1970	Holly Hitchcock	04/11/1963
Merrill Mau	05/03/1970	Martha Forth	10/07/1962
Deborah Palmisano	05/03/1970	Bob Brucken	05/07/1961
Julia Welsh	05/03/1970	Christina Webster	03/30/1961
Shelly Anderson	11/23/1969	Jim Chaney	05/06/1956
Dick Ogle	05/04/1969	Barbara Ginn	03/06/1955
Jeannie Chaney	03/02/1969	Ruth Nowicky	01/02/1955
Barbara Hawkins	03/02/1969	Anne Cook	10/03/1954
Helen Reed	03/02/1969	Barbara Kacir	04/15/1954
Beth Sanborn	05/05/1968	Frank Carpenter	01/03/1954
Joni Gray	03/03/1968	Terry Shockey	04/06/1952
David Rodgers	03/03/1968	William Ginn	12/24/1950
Norma Rodgers	03/03/1968	Dick Brubaker	04/10/1949
Bryan Mau	03/23/1967	Carl Gray	03/21/1948
Stephen Murphy	03/23/1967	Marcia Christian	04/14/1946
Gretchen Smith	11/19/1967	Richard McCrea	04/14/1946
Fred Stueber	07/07/1966	Marion Hill	03/25/1945
Eva Garden	01/09/1966	Rich Gray	04/02/1944
Mary Ann Davis	11/22/1964	Mary Alice Cannon	04/18/1943
Tom Daniel	10/04/1964	Joanne Ross	03/29/1942
Janet Daniel	10/04/1964		

Interim Senior Minister's Report

May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace in believing,
so that you may abound in hope
by the power of the Holy Spirit.

Romans 15:13

Wow, what a year! I arrived at Plymouth Church in November 2019, ready to lead a vital congregation during a time of transition and change. As the interim senior minister, my role is to support the congregation as you adjust to the departure of a respected and loved leader, revisit the mission of the church, imagine a new future, and prepare the way for new leadership. Little did we know back then...

My introduction to the church was a series of Transition Team brunches: remarkable gatherings attended by about 150 members of Plymouth to talk about what you most cherish about the church and your hopes and dreams for the future. The brunches were a wonderful opportunity for me to get to know you better and to see your passion and commitment to the church. I also discovered the culinary skills of Hans and Shelli! I can never say thank you enough to the Transition Team for their support of me and the whole church during this crucial period. The data they compiled from the brunches is invaluable to the Pulpit Committee as it considers candidates for senior minister.

In January, I attended the annual meeting of UCC senior ministers of larger churches. It was especially exciting to meet some of our young clergy and witness the gifts and creativity they bring to the denomination. It was there that I was introduced to the language of “a little bit of each” that I now repeat almost every Sunday at the beginning of the service. I love how some of you have adopted it as well.

The topic of the UCC conference was “How to Be a Better Anti-Racist.” Sadly, the strategies we learned would take on renewed urgency just a few months later. With the death of George Floyd and others at the hands of police and resulting protest marches in support of Black Lives Matter, we once again confronted America’s original sin of racism. More than 50 members and friends of Plymouth Church attended a series of anti-racism workshops with Deborah Plummer, PhD, in which we took a hard look at white privilege, our own blind spots, and our longing for a just world for all people. The workshops were one step; a group is discerning what is next for this essential work at Plymouth.

An experiment for Monday night Bible study proved to be successful. We are reading books that look at the scriptures from vastly different perspectives. Authors Rachel Held Evans, Amy-Jill Levine, and Kenneth Bailey have enabled us to see the ancient texts with fresh eyes; they have prodded, provoked, and inspired us. It turns out the necessity to meet by Zoom has made Bible study more accessible for some folks who were not able to participate previously.

In March we had just observed Ash Wednesday and entered into the season of Lent; Wednesday night suppers were scheduled and as a staff we were geared up for a hectic, but meaningful Holy Week and a joyous Easter celebration. And then came Covid.

In a few short days everything changed. Ohio entered into a period of shutdown, Sunday worship moved online, and we began reinventing everything we do. The staff of Plymouth Church rose to the occasion with creativity, grace, stamina, and humor. You are well-acquainted with Jim Riggs’ musical gifts, but in that moment so much more was demanded of him. In addition to designing worship for a radically altered

environment, Jim was functioning as Acting Staff Administrator, making tough decisions to protect the safety and wellbeing of the Plymouth community.

Leslie Szalay created all-new children's programming and later stepped up to learn how to edit our Sunday videos. Matt Bauhof returned from paternity leave with the responsibilities of a new daddy and a vastly changed ministry environment, to which he adjusted with his usual good humor. Kathryn Kundrat never missed a beat in managing Plymouth's business and financial affairs and Paul Holter responded to ever-changing needs for hygiene and safety in the building. Later in the summer, Sarah Grube stepped in to assist with video editing and church communications. I am profoundly grateful to the staff for their professionalism and ability to adapt during this time.

I am also grateful for the lay leaders of the church: Council President Brian Grube, Past-President Gloria Sturghill, and Vice-President Mary Bright. Their steady leadership, good thinking, and affirmation has been invaluable during a time of such uncertainty. The same must be said about the Personnel Committee for their expertise as we navigate Covid-19 with our staff.

A sparkling bright spot in the midst of the pandemic was the arrival of the Lerner School, part of the Cleveland Clinic Center for Autism. The school needed more classrooms to accommodate physical distancing for their students and we had the perfect space for them. Now the building has come alive! The Lerner School occupies both education wings, formerly used by Head Start and PDO. We currently have 35-40 students and 40 staff members. We are delighted to partner with the school and to serve these vulnerable children and their parents. The school provided an introductory session for the Plymouth staff, to teach us about autism and the unique needs of the children who share our building. The senior minister's office overlooks the playground and I get such joy out of watching the children from my window; they have brought new life and energy to our church.

Since March, I have been meeting weekly with a group of Living Water Association clergy and a smaller group of senior ministers of neighborhood churches. It's helpful to know how other churches are responding and what their plans are. Additionally, the Cleveland Clinic periodically hosts sessions for clergy about health and safety practices and pastoral care in the time of coronavirus. These collegial relationships are needed now more than ever. A blessing for me is a friendship with Rev. Jessie MacMillan, the interim at Fairmount Presbyterian just down the street from Plymouth.

Over the last six months, I've lost count of how many times someone has said, "This sure isn't what you signed up for, is it Deb?" (Jessie gets that one too.) The fact is, none of us signed up for the experiences we've had in 2020, *yet we are getting through it together*. I've had the unanticipated privilege of seeing Plymouth Church in action during an extraordinary time. I've seen your resilience, your ability to adapt to a whole new reality, your generosity, your passion for justice, and most of all, your faith when it is put to the test. At some point in the coming year, I will leave a letter for the new senior minister of Plymouth Church and I will joyfully tell them there is nothing that can stop this congregation from shining God's light into the world.

Submitted by Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay, Interim Senior Minister

Acting Staff Administrator's Report

No surprise to anyone this has been a challenging and exhausting year with the arrival of Covid19. As a staff we have had to rethink almost everything we do, find new ways of being, and adjust to new schedules. With that said, Plymouth Church has remained a vital presence to both its members and the community during this pandemic.

From mid-March until mid-May most of the staff worked from home. Quickly, zoom became our method of weekly staff meetings and other engagements. Since mid-May most of the staff are now working a few days from home and a few days onsite at the church. Once a month we have in-person staff meeting outdoors. The remaining weeks we continue to meet via zoom. Guests at our staff meetings have included a presentation from the Lerner School, Patti Fine on breathing/resetting during anxious times, and the Rev. Lois Annich, life coach, speaking about what we can do as a team to support one another.

While this pandemic has brought much to a halt, the staff and leadership have not sat idle. Within the pages of this report you will read the various initiatives and ongoing work the staff has done. I will highlight a few items. Rose continues to clean for us, but now on a limited basis. Paul has overseen our building and the installation of new doors and a new phone system. He also did much to prepare for the arrival of the Lerner School and can also be seen painting socially distant circles on the lawn. Kathryn continues to keep us in good financial shape. She takes staff notes at our meetings and gets the various items sent out for the monthly council meeting. Leslie has stepped up to edit our weekly worship videos, prepare the monthly newsletter, and send the weekly email keeping us all informed. Matt has done work getting proposals for livestream/new sound system for the sanctuary. He has done podcasts, built banner holders, and became a daddy. Deb has been an ongoing source of support. Who would have thought her years as a news anchor would be what we would need from her as we moved services online. In addition, she has done much work with the Lerner School and organized a three-week antiracism workshop for the church. I offer my gratitude to each of our staff for their individual work and collective teamwork.

In June we received the resignation of Communication Coordinator, Nicole Whitcomb. That position has gone unfilled, but at this writing the Personnel Committee is working to fill that position by mid-fall. For the summer months, Sarah Grube was hired to do various office projects and to assist with video editing. An expression of gratitude is owed to Jeannie Clarkson for compiling this Annual Report. James Lake, a faithful custodian at Plymouth, went on medical leave from Euclid Maintenance due to health issues.

In January 2020, performance evaluations were conducted for all staff by Deb Lindsay and me. In September follow-up was done with each employee around stress, how job descriptions have changed due to Covid19, and the pros/cons of working from home/church. Working with the Personnel Committee guidelines were developed for employees around Covid19. The building has remained closed to the public, open by appointment only. We have a contract tracing log at the front door that logs every person who enters the building.

I offer my gratitude to the church leadership, the personnel committee, and YOU the congregation for your ongoing support and words of encouragement during this trying time. I am grateful for the many ways we have remained church. As I reflect on this additional role I have agreed to, I think of the words of Sir Winston Churchill who said, "The journey has been well worth making, once."

Submitted by James P. Riggs, Acting Staff Administrator

Associate Minister's Report

It is hard to think about this last year outside of COVID-19. It is hard to remember that within the last twelve months: Rev. Deb arrived as our interim minister; we celebrated Advent and Christmas; we showed off our talents to raise money for the service trip; and we actually worshipped in person and indoors! In the midst of quarantine, it can often feel like this is the only world we know.

My son, our first born, Francis was born on March 12th, 2020. In the three days we stayed in the hospital, the operation of our whole country changed. Buildings, leagues, businesses, and churches shut down. The world quickly became even more virtual than it was before.

I have often joked (or perhaps cried), that I was prepared for—or at least aware of—the huge adjustment that would follow our son's birth. I did not expect however, that I would not only have to learn how to be a father, but also how to do a completely different job.

As I shared during a sermon this summer, COVID really eliminated all the aspects of my job that I love the most. No longer am I able to go to a member's home and have conversations. I was not able to go to Nebraska with our youth group for our service trip, one of my favorite weeks of the year. I could not run around all summer with our youth or go into staff meetings and joke around with co-workers. And I did not have the ability to worship in person alongside all of you. Preaching to a camera, sitting in an office by myself, does not compare to the joy of being in the sanctuary watching all of you laugh, think, agree, disagree, smile, and snooze. Learning a new way to pastor, especially in a way that I do not prefer, has been challenging. It has led to many frustrating days and lots of conversations with my therapist.

My heart still breaks for the funerals we have not been able to have. We have had loved ones die and we have not celebrated their lives in the ways we have learned to depend on. I grieve over the lost time spent with youth and members and moments that we will not get back. I yearn for when we will be safe to gather normally again, for when hugs and handshakes are acceptable. I look forward to when Francis can be in Fellowship Hall with all of you.

One thing that COVID has made clear to me is the strength, intelligence, care and love that surrounds and exudes from the members and staff of Plymouth Church. It goes without saying that quarantine has been incredibly difficult on the hearts, minds and souls of this world and of our community. Through the difficulty, I have seen the way our church has been creative, imaginative, enduring and hopeful as we have come together to support one another and do church in new and different ways. I hosted our first virtual service trip this year and it allowed our students to become servants during a pandemic. We had a socially distant confirmation retreat and had seven high school students remain engaged in confirmation and participate in an outdoor socially distant Confirmation Worship Service. Middle and high school students logged onto Zoom to play games with adult leaders and to talk about how their weeks have been going. I am proud of the outdoor worship experiences that we have had and the ways we have adjusted to meeting virtually and socially distantly in small groups and departments. We have seen members who never even had an email address log onto YouTube and watch Plymouth services. I believe our online services have been unique as we have tried to arrange them for this moment in history and engage as many members as possible to participate from their own homes. I am grateful that our community is searching for and finding ways to become an anti-racist church. I have seen our people proudly proclaim that "Black Lives Matter" and ask one another what we can be doing to put that declaration into action.

This pandemic has reaffirmed how grateful I am to be a part of this church. I love working with this staff. I am eternally grateful for how supportive the members of this church have been to us. We have not had to deal with a bombardment of "you should be open," "why aren't you doing this," or "you shouldn't be holding these

programs,” in the same way that other church communities have. This church has shown us the love of God throughout quarantine. I have been showered by support and love by you all as Mary Pat and I welcomed our new son into this world. You all provided us with essentials, meals, toys and with beautiful knitted gifts galore.

I know this year has been so difficult for an endless amount of reasons. We have all felt that in different ways. Many of you have told me that in different ways. But in the mess, I see how God has been working within us, and I am very hopeful about the way God is going to shape us moving forward. God remains present in us and in our church. When strangers call one another to check in and deliver care packages to front doors, as our members have done, I see how God makes our church stronger. I see how God works towards increasing the depth and understanding of our faith as we sort out what it means to be a Christian when it feels like the world is falling apart. I see how God forms our mission to follow the ministry of Jesus as we seek social justice through tangible, identifiable action. I see how God uses us now and how God will continue to use us in the future. I am hopeful and I hope you are too. I am excited to see what unfolds for us.

It is abundantly clear that the history, community, fellowship, and ministry of this church are continuing to grow, expand, shape and give life to who God is calling us to be. What a joy. What a gift.

Submitted by Rev. Matthew Bauhof, Associate Minister

Director of Christian Education Report

Sunday School

For the 2019-2020 school year, we started a new curriculum called *Holy Moly!* For kids in grades Pre-k through 5th grades, it offers different leaflets for the lower level and the upper level elementary kids. This is an easy to use program that requires few materials. Each week there is an animated video that tells the bible story with pictures, colors, and sounds, but no words. The story is not told to the children, but rather open to interpretation. It is amazing how much of the story they understand and remember this way! For the younger children there is a Bible Story book that retells and reinforces the story. And then there is a paper leaflet that gets transformed into something related to the story. This has been a great program that we are continuing to utilize this current year.

The Jr. High students started the *Connect* curriculum, which is also a video and leaflet-based program. I think this program is better suited for the slightly younger students, so we will offer it to our 5th and 6th graders and will offer *Re:form* to our 7th and 8th graders, when we are able to gather again.

Unfortunately, we were unable to finish the school year when the COVID-19 pandemic began in March. We are now rethinking ways to bring Sunday School home, and I am currently offering Holy Moly virtually, with weekly recorded videos and one live Zoom meeting a month. Anyone who registered received all the materials to follow along at home. Next, I plan to offer the same for our 5th & 6th graders with the *Connect* program.

Craft Time

Once things were shut down in March, we wanted to find a way to continue to connect with our families and children, so I began doing a weekly *Craft Time with Leslie*. The crafts corresponded to the seasons of Lent and Easter or special days, like Mother's Day. We had a few special craft days with guest host Jeri Gerard donating

supplies and helping to make deliveries. This continued for 10 weeks, until it was time to shift to our Summer Children's Church.

Children's Church

Our summer program Caring for Creation continued to run virtually with live Sunday morning meetings and a sign-up form for families to come to the church and plant, weed and water the garden. We had another successful growing year but could not hold a farmer's market to sell the produce. At about the same time that the vegetables were becoming ripe, a Scout working on her Eagle Scout award installed a Free Little Pantry near the Children's Garden. So this year we are encouraging people to also take whatever fresh produce they need as an extension of the Little Free Pantry.

I am also happy to report that we received a Living Water Association Grant for the second year in the amount of \$1000 to purchase three additional garden beds. Due to the pandemic, the beds have been out of stock, but we will get them in time for the next growing season.

Special Events and Programs

- *Back to Sunday School Ice Cream Social* - fun way to kick off the return to Sunday School
- *Farmers Market* – the children raised \$230 and donated it the Cleveland Foodbank
- *OWL* – see C & Y report
- *Bible Sunday* - we continued this Plymouth tradition with passing out 5 bible storybooks to kindergartners and 3 bibles to fourth graders.
- *Spooktacular* – with help from Boy Scout troop 15, we filled Fellowship Hall with fun games, prizes, and food, and then transformed the stage into a spooky haunted house. The Trunk or Treat had to be moved indoors to the Chapel again due to rain but was still a great time. We are planning on holding an outdoor only event this year.
- *Advent Wreath Building* - was opened to the whole congregation to create an intergenerational event. It was very well received with 22 families participating. This year we will create kits that people can order and take home due to social distancing.
- *Heifer International* - we raised \$1540 for Heifer with Christmas honor cards
- *Sugar Plum* - continues to be a very popular community event
- *Christmas Pageant* - I directed the pageant this year and Tom Cullinan directed the tech crew
- *Kids Epiphany Art Show* - kids art was displayed in the atrium during the Epiphany season, one of my favorites
- *C & Y Sunday* – students ran the entire Sunday service and we raised \$1000 for the Cleveland Foodbank
- *Valentines Cookie Baking* - we continue this outreach program with cards and cookies for 12 homebound members
- *Plymouth's Got Talent* - talent show and fundraiser for mission trip
- *Parents Night Out* - continued to be a well-attended program with an average of 10-15 kids each time until March when we had to cancel in-person events
- *Coffee & Christ* - high school students met once month for faith-related discussions led by Keith Szalay
- *Plymouth Parents* was regularly meeting each month after church. When we shut down, we continued virtual meetings on and off throughout the summer
- *Lent programs & Jr. Egg Hunt* were canceled this year
- *Movie Night* - we held one socially distant movie night in August

Looking Back and Looking Forward

This pandemic has been difficult on many levels. Many events and programs had to be cancelled but we are also trying to create new ways of doing things. We are working on finding ways to support families' faith development while at home, so many programs have moved to virtual, outside or at home options. We are now recording and creating online worship experiences every week, as well as having some outdoor services. I am saddened about the losses we are all experiencing during this time, but I am also hopeful about a time when we can gather again as a community of faith.

Our jobs have changed considerably, as we are challenged to continuously think outside the box and try new things. When Nicole Whitcomb left suddenly, I volunteered to help during this transitional time to take on some of her responsibilities including producing the weekly worship videos, the weekly TWAP emails and the monthly Perspective. With these new challenges I now find myself learning new skills and stretching my creative side.

Thanks to our Volunteers

Special thank you to the many volunteers involved in C & Y; our Sunday School teachers Justin Caldwell, Cindy Hill, Ali Day, Joanna Horn & Carolyn Jillson, our Sugar Plum coordinators Shelli Smith & Janet Wilkens, and the many volunteers needed to run this event, Jeri Gerard for Craft Time, Owl Facilitators Jeannie Clarkson, Reggie Williams & Brian Shields, the C & Y Department including Jeannie Clarkson, Brian Shields, Joanna Horn, Gloria Sturghill, & Carolyn Jillson, Coffee & Christ leader Keith Szalay, Tom Cullinan and the many Christmas Pageant volunteers and participants. Big thank you also to our nursery workers Karen Sommers and Judy Thomas, we hope to see you back in the nursery in the coming year.

Submitted by Leslie Szalay, Director of Christian Education

Minister of Music and The Arts Report

Never in my wildest dreams could I have imagined when we departed worship on March 8, 2020, that would be our last in-person worship service in the sanctuary for many months. As Covid19 forced the state of Ohio, and much of the nation, to shut down we were forced to quarantine at home. No more singing, no more music making as we once knew.

Zoom became our new method of staying connected. What was especially touching was seeing our more "mature" choir members logging onto this new format. Weeks turned to months. We were devastated to learn singing/aerosols were a high transmission rate of Covid19. Choir and congregational singing are suspended. Wearing masks is essential.

We are finding new ways of being, new ways of making music, but it is not the same as being in-person. Soloists continue to offer music for online worship. The Plymouth Folk Revival continues to make music rehearsing outdoors. The Plymouth Ringers has formed small ensembles to ring in a socially distant format. Instrumentalists, liturgical dance, and other means of artistic expression are being used in online worship. The choirs of Plymouth, First Baptist, and Lakewood Presbyterian are partnering to create virtual choir experiences.

For the first time in my 22 years at Plymouth, we have placed the Organ Scholar program on hiatus for the 2020-21 academic year. Katherine Johnson continues to record organ pieces/hymns for us from Oberlin and from her home in North Carolina.

As outlined in the ArtsPlymouth report, I have been working with a creative bunch of souls in developing an outdoor Sacred Garden. This space has given church members and the community a place to gather. For Pride month a fabric rainbow was created out the front window of the church rolling onto the front steps. A prayer garden has been added around the front sign. A walking meditation provides a moment for folks to walk and to reflect. On Saturdays at 10 am, in the garden, various gatherings were offered including yoga, prayers, music, Tai Chi, and the tolling of bells to mark the profoundly sad moment of 200,000 lives lost in this nation to Covid19. Cleveland's FOX News 8 featured the Sacred Garden on their segment, *Cleveland's Own Helping Cleveland's Own*.

I have been active in designing worship for both online and our in-person worship on the lawn which started in August. In addition to Covid19, I have worked to find hymns and other music around justice, peace, the environment, etc., to offer words to an array of emotions we have experienced during 2020. Conversations continue about when in-person worship in the sanctuary may resume with limited capacity. At this writing, the worship staff is designing various experiences for Advent/Christmas as we arrive at this season with many losses. As part of our Antiracism workshop, we were asked what we are going to do in the next three months regarding antiracism. I continue to reflect and pray about ways we can continue to bring diversity to our music making.

On what was our last in-person worship in the sanctuary in March, the Plymouth Ringers rang a setting of the hymn, "Be Still, My Soul." I think of that text often as a guiding force in a time such as this, "Be still my soul: the Lord is on your side; bear patiently the cross of grief or pain; leave to your God to order and provide; in every change God faithful will remain. Be still, my soul: your best, your heavenly friend through thorny ways leads to a joyful end." We can gain wisdom from the saints who have gone before us—The Plymouth Church bulletin from October 20, 1918, reads, "Some may question the wisdom of closing the churches, but it is a measure recommended by those directly responsible for the public health, and it is only fair that we should co-operate with their efforts to stamp out the Influenza. Inasmuch as there will be no Sunday school, nor assembling for worship, it is urged that all our people observe Sunday as a sacred time."

Our faith, our health, our well-being is be tested right now. We cling to the promise the light will return. We will again make music in person. We will together sing those great hymns of faith. May our faith be stronger than our fear.

It remains a privilege to serve God here in this place, in this community with all of you. Thank you for your ongoing support.

Submitted by James P. Riggs, Minister of Music & the Arts

Finance Administrator's Report

In my second year at Plymouth I have continued to absorb the patterns and seasons of the Church while tending to the finances.

Late last year I negotiated and selected a new natural gas supplier for the church that will save us \$2,000 over the next 12 months. I claimed credit card points of just over \$800 and had the refund deposited into "Misc. Income". Experience gleaned while working on the 2020 Pledge Campaign has proven invaluable as we roll out the 2021 Pledge Campaign. Each year we strive to make improvements!

Several highlights of the past year include arranging the "Keep Up the Beat" CPR class and training on how to use the AED. Our Thanksgiving baskets and Frontline Coat drive were very successful. Less successful was our application for the PPP (Paycheck Protection Program) loan. Despite preparing the application in advance, the timeline proved too short and with the website overwhelmed, the program was abruptly ended as money ran out.

Additionally, I took on some of the office jobs such as taking minutes for staff meetings, compiling and sending the information in advance of council meetings and coming up with procedures to get requisition sign off with the building closed.

Under the direction of Mary Bright, we wrote up revised financial projections to reflect the closed building and loss of income from concerts and rent. We looked at several different scenarios. We decided to be very prudent and limit even planned spending so as to be prepared for the future. Careful management and the sustained flow of pledged donations has allowed us to continue to pay staff and meet or exceed our goals for Partnership & Service.

Another major theme for the Finance Committee this year has been how to best fund and track major Building and Grounds (B&G) projects. We have adjusted the presentation of the financials by removing the capital expenses from the operating budget and showing these funds in the existing special fund ac # 80321 B&G Property Preservation on the Statement of Financial Position. We have also added a monthly report showing in detail the use of these funds for projects.

I will be forever grateful to Deborah Lindsay and James Riggs for their decision to educate themselves and all of us on the pandemic, and then insist on safety first! Moving to work remotely was smoothly accomplished and by April I attended a Sacred Spaces Webinar "Fundraising During a Pandemic" and staff meetings were held over zoom.

Our Agreed Upon Procedures audit took place August 31 – September 1 and we are awaiting the results. All indications are that we have minimal or no findings.

I would like to thank everyone for their support as we move through this challenging time!

Special thanks to Juanita Faulx, Treasurer

Mary Bright, Finance Chair

Christine Bretz, Foundation Chair

Submitted by Kathryn Kundrat, Finance Administrator

Facilities Manager's Report

It has now been 25 months since I began serving the congregation of Plymouth Church. I remain grateful for the opportunity to assist you, The Congregation, as you continue your transition. This will be a time of great change and an opportunity to review, renew and consider the Mission of The Church.

As 2020 progresses, suffering the worldwide pandemic, I look towards the Advent Season. The rhythms of the Church have changed dramatically with the addition of the Cleveland Clinic Foundation's, Lerner School for Autism, within our Church building. I continue to quietly observe the rhythms & patterns of the Church so I can assist you all in the Stewardship of this almost 98-year-old building.

Elsewhere in this Annual Report, the activities of the Building and Grounds Committee who guide me to accomplish goals on behalf of the Congregation, have been presented. But consider just a few things that 2020 will bring:

1. New, updated drawings and information for the Plymouth Church building
2. New, updated electrical service equipment, in the Sanctuary, replacing 60+ year old panels
3. Exterior repainting of the Sanctuary Entrance, facing Coventry Road
4. New, live streaming equipment for the Sanctuary, to share services & concerts online and in person
5. New controls, software, and equipment for the heating systems of the building

The Building & Grounds Department continues to thoughtfully consider the use of the Church in its role with the Congregation, the greater communities of Shaker Heights and Northeast Ohio, and partner organizations including: Les Delices, the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, the Blue Water Chamber Orchestra, the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society, the Boy Scouts of America- Boys & Girls Troop(s) 15, the Art of Tai Chi, Heights 12-Step, the Friday Women's 12-Step,, and now the Lerner School for Autism.

As always, the Congregation should be thankful for the great care that James Lake and Rose Munn have shown to the building. While James battles cancer with his usual determination and good humor, Rose continues to provide stewardship to the Church. It is my job to continuously support their efforts on your behalf.

Please recall the prayer I shared with you when I began in service to Plymouth Congregation:

"This is another day, O Lord.
I know not what it will bring forth, but make me ready, Lord, for whatever it may be.
If I am to stand up, help me to stand up bravely.
If I am to sit still, help me to sit quietly.
If I am to lie low, help me to do it patiently.
And if I am to do nothing, let me do it gallantly.
Make these words more than words and give to me the Spirit of Jesus. Amen."

Submitted by Paul Holter, Facility Manager

Transition Team Report

With the appointment of Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay as Interim Senior Minister, Church Council moved to establish a Transition Team consisting of five Plymouth members (Christine Bretz, Jeannie Clarkson, Lee Makela, Janet Neary and Tracy Williams) to assist her adjustment to our church and community. A second Team expectation was to help the Pastoral Search Committee in the preparation of an updated church profile. Committee members initially met with Rev. Nayiri Karjian (General Minister of the Living Waters Association), Brian Grube (President, Church Council) and Gloria Sturghill (Chair, Pastoral Search Committee) in mid-October to ascertain and discuss these two overall responsibilities.

In late October, under the leadership of Janet Neary, the Team initiated an informal community-building effort, WE ARE PLYMOUTH, through which individual Plymouth members were given the opportunity to fill out a brief questionnaire “introducing” themselves to the congregation. Completed surveys, accompanied by a recent photo, were displayed on bulletin boards throughout the church, enabling all members to become better acquainted.

In early November, a small gathering at FIRE on Shaker Square met and talked with our new Interim Senior Minister just prior to her first Sunday at Plymouth. The luncheon served to introduce the Team, Brian Grube and Gloria Sturghill to Rev. Dr. Lindsay and to pledge her our help in any way needed.

In early November, as we began to contemplate our charge to “celebrate our history and define what our congregation is called to do”, to address “needs and concerns” of the congregation and to seek answers to the question “who are our neighbors”, the Team accepted Vicki Werneke’s offer to schedule a “staying connected” gathering after church for folks to share their thoughts. Transition Team members Christine Bretz, Jeannie Clarkson, Lee Makela, Janet Neary and Tracy Williams were present at the meeting to respond to questions or issues members of the congregation might have as the transition period got underway.

Transition Team plans, thereafter, were periodically posted on the church website, in the monthly PERSPECTIVE newsletter and on the monitor in the church’s back hallway, keeping the larger congregation informed concerning our efforts and intentions. We had lunch again with Rev. Dr. Lindsay on December 21, 2019 just before Christmas to discuss how things were going.

The Team’s efforts, next on our agenda, to produce a self-assessment of the current state of Plymouth Church as a UCC congregation and to explore what our future might be as we look towards the identification and installation of a new Senior Minister, led to a series of after-service brunches. Organized primarily by Jeannie Clarkson via Connection Groups, these gatherings took place during January and early February of 2020. They were designed to provide members of Plymouth the opportunity to discuss what God is calling us to be and to do as a congregation. The gatherings also initiated a self-assessment of the current state of Plymouth Church as a UCC congregation.

In these small group sessions, we discussed a series of open-ended questions: **WHERE ARE WE NOW?** What kind of a church are we at present? What seem to be our priorities? What do we as individuals value about Plymouth? What draws us to this particular congregation? The survey questionnaires themselves were built around two basic questions: **WHAT DREW YOU TO PLYMOUTH CHURCH IN THE FIRST PLACE?** and **WHAT KIND OF CHURCH IS PLYMOUTH TO YOU AT PRESENT?**

Over 187 congregants completed individual surveys and participated in one of the five scheduled brunch discussions (including one evening meal). An analysis of the results is appended to this report. In mid-February, the Pulpit Search Committee met with Lee Makela, who presented the findings of these “Sunday Brunch” conversations. Following Lee’s presentation, the Pastoral Search Committee extrapolated the data provided by the Transition Team to help in creating the official Plymouth profile to be submitted to the Living

Water Association. Lee also presented a summary of the survey findings to the Evangelism and Growth committee via ZOOM in mid-September 2020.

The Team was in the process of drafting a set of questions focused on discerning the larger community's current perception of Plymouth Church. These questions were to be designed to form the basis for one-on-one interviews with mayors, city council members and others in Cleveland area leadership positions. The results of these interviews, we hoped, would contribute to the narrative constructed by the Pastoral Search Committee to describe our congregation's current role in the Greater Cleveland community. These efforts, however, were curtailed by the onset of the Coronavirus pandemic and have yet to be undertaken and completed.

PLYMOUTH CHURCH POSTER SURVEY ANALYSIS 2020

BOLD TYPE = LARGE POSTER COMMENTS

NUMBERS IN PARENTHESIS = PRIORITY AGREEMENT DOTS and ADDITIONAL POSTER MENTIONS

INDENTED TEXT = RELATED TABLE DISCUSSION COMMENTS

quality of preaching / sermons (46) – open communion (4) – ministers relate to congregants (2) – flexibility and comfort (2) – inspiring and engaged staff (1) – worship service diversity (modern / traditional / country / rock and roll) – keeps you thinking – challenged ethically, morally, spiritually (6) – “keeps me sane” – worship provides quiet respite (1) – preaching importance acknowledged;

no need to dress up; balance between lectionary and daily life applications; consistent annual schedule / events (pageant, Blue Christmas, service order, liturgical colors); bidding prayers and the Prayer Circle (a sign of caring); open to guest ministers; creative liturgically; stimulating intellectually and spiritually not dogmatic; “gets my head fed”

full time music director (37) - music and arts integrated in liturgy (19) - arts programming (14) – quality, balanced (12) and diverse (7) music– includes entire range of historic and genre possibilities – congregation involvement encouraged – brings music out of us all (2);

intermittent individual choir participation encouraged; focused on the spiritual and engaging; choir / bell choir

sense of community (not consumption) (32) – we feel the love here (9) – a family (1) – people care for one another– we have fun together - welcoming to new families (6), all (9) – friendly – source of friendships (2)

quick response to needs, proactive; close relationships; inviting and approachable; unique gifts and talents recognized and utilized; helpful, open, friendly and nice; welcomed as a child; soft and warm; joyful; one

comes out feeling good, not exhausted; caretakers of one another; authentic; able to give as well as receive; connectedness; more diverse, yet more alike

“open and affirming” (24) , broadly defined (includes disabilities, religious traditions) (1)– membership diverse and inclusive (16) – diverse theology perspectives (8) – no dogma or covenant requirement (7) – encouraged to think about one’s own spiritual growth (5) – tolerant and accepting of diverse ideas and thoughts (5) – a congregation of independent thinkers (4) – engaged intellectual discussion (3) –

open and willing to discuss, celebrate differences (3) – not just a Sunday-only community (2) – operates on a level playing field (2) – questioning allowed (2) - members loved and celebrated, not shamed or punished – sermons address current events – never hear “we don’t do that here” (1) – humble, not self-congratulatory

involvement in chancel committee, ushers and greeters, Bible Study, Lenten Dinners, EYEJ, BSA, GSA, Connection Groups, Plymouth 101, Rummage Sale; contra dances; social, political, economic, racial diversity; accepting and respecting difference; progressive; creative; Church Council significantly involved in decision making; aware of outside events and opportunities (Habitat, Food Bank, Pride Parade); adult teaching responsibilities honored; lots going on; “diversity” broadly defined, including sexual orientation and race; valued opportunities to talk about diversity; opportunities to increase connections and to collaborate; we know we have things in common

children and youth (7) programming (18) – kids incorporated in worship service (11) – effective engagement of / retention of youth (6) – encourages growth of young people and families – provides outside-school friendships (2)

OWL, Youth Groups, service trips; Sunday School is not daycare

an active and involved congregation – intergenerational membership (2)– young families (7) - significant long-term membership – members embody the gospel message and take it into the community

good food; diligent and on-going; Saints of Plymouth; we have lives beyond the church

coffee hour interactions (2) – connection groups (shared responsibilities) (1) – willingness of individual leadership by congregants (1)

resources – active and effective staff – foundation endowment offers financial stability (6)

creative budget-making process; fiscally conservative

outstanding physical facilities, building and grounds (5) – available to outside groups – good acoustics – beautiful sanctuary (1), conducive to an awareness of tranquility and God’s presence

well-cared-for; wide range of facility types; balcony room for nursing mothers, small children

commitment to social justice (5) – service projects (5)– Parents Day Out (4) – effective community outreach (3) –a community resource – time, talent and financial investment to make a difference, inside and out (1) – Sugarplum Workshop – connected to outside world – “We look West” in mission to the City – opportunities to live faith through action (“roll up your sleeves”)

both internal and external interests, awareness of the larger world; invited to contribute

sets an independent direction (apart from outside dictation) (4)

willing to engage the wider UCC, lack of required beliefs or judgments; we know we are responsible for building the community that we want

all involved in setting new directions, individual as well as committee, congregants as well as ministers (14) - a learning community open to new learning opportunities (“seekers”) (19) – considers visioning the future (2) – not afraid of change (2)

currently “the engine idled, but not turned off”

history woven in and around the fabric of the church and still being written (role in abolitionism) (4)

legacy of the Candy Circle; community church

STAFF PERCEPTIONS OF THE CONGREGATION

A spiritual melting pot with lots of differing backgrounds (3); an Open and Affirming congregation, exhibiting diversity and depth; an authentic community; higher than average racial diversity; sustainable; challenging; motivated and engaged; (often undisclosed) “drama” of the past has dissipated; no longer hard to connect; not angry or cynical; low drama; imperfect at growing edge but talk and live into mutual respect, understanding; moving along diverse pathways; beyond the white liberal “norm”

well-meaning (3); warm and welcoming; genuine; provides fellowship and support; happy, warm, proactive; share God’s love; a long-standing community presence; an exemplary example of a positive local church community force; inclusive and welcoming; energetic; conflict” handled meaningfully; willing to risk

emphasis placed on social justice (2)

straightforward and direct communicators; humane; staff and congregants are patient with staff and one another; healthy and vital; progressive

engaged (1); a spiritual home; increasingly a place for families and younger members encourages devotional and spiritual discussion; aligned with mission of service; inward looking currently to discern existing qualities and future inspiration; seeking to discern future style and how to reach larger community; equipped with needed resources (building, colleagues, talents, structure)

willing to experiment (1)

accommodating and understanding; take care of one another

inspirational and creative; aware of what is good in people

funding (Dively, Plymouth Foundation, Arts Plymouth) allows creativity

an outward facing community

TRANSITION TEAM INDIVIDUAL SURVEY ANALYSIS HIGHLIGHTS

INDIVIDUAL SURVEY RESPONSES indicated current congregants initially might have been drawn to Plymouth Church because of its United Church of Christ affiliation (43 survey responses), recommendations by neighbors or friends (14), family ties (27) or mere proximity (26). Others, having grown up in Shaker Heights, recall chiming church bells or the sounds of the practicing choir or the attractive architecture of the building itself (6). Individual events and experiences, from Christmas Eve services to annual service trips (31 different specific events mentioned) also brought folks through the doors, seeking meaningful faith experiences and opportunities for spiritual growth and development.

Once inside, families looking for a spiritual home (13) found a vibrant children and youth programs (23). Others were impressed by the warm (10), friendly (6) welcoming (14) atmosphere and the loving (12), diverse (19), “Open and Affirming” (13) nature of the worshipping community (27). They found the music inspiring (42); the leadership of various individual ministers (25), effective. They came to appreciate the style and content of the sermons (32) and the spirit-filled nature (3) of the entire worship experience, sensing, on the whole, “a people very close to God”.

Once they made the decision to affiliate with Plymouth Church, members and friends alike reported the congregation quick to take into account, involve and embrace their talents and interests (10). They discovered just how enthusiastically children and youth were made to feel part of a large nurturing community (19); they, themselves, made to feel individually valued and universally accepted (26). They were drawn into a wide range of events and activities (29 specific opportunities mentioned) and easily made themselves a part of an inclusive (11), caring (15), respectful (12) “church family”, a source of friendship, one encouraging a feeling of personal connection and fostering the impetus to volunteer (13), to give back to the larger community.

The creative liturgies, the skilled integration of music and message, the mixture of contemporary and traditional forms, all contributed to feelings of enlightenment and uplift, engendering a lingering impact, one related to everyday life and geared towards social justice (12). “Quality” especially affected members’ and friends’ assessments: in evaluating Plymouth Church’s current strengths, survey results mentioned “inspiring music” 60 times and “preaching style and content”, 28 times, both key elements keeping them involved and invested in church life.

LARGE GROUP DISCUSSIONS, too, centered on the quality of the sermons (46 colored dots, indicative of priorities felt to be of particular importance) and the role played by a full-time Minister of Music (37 dots) as critical to Plymouth’s current sense of itself. Others felt strongly that their love of Plymouth emerged from being part of such a diverse, caring, open and friendly community (32). Identifying as an “Open and Affirming” (24) congregation was critically important to many.

Perhaps most importantly, survey responses and large group discussions alike pointed to a shared sense of involvement in setting new directions during this period of ministerial transition. We are invested in fostering a learning community open to new opportunities; we identify as a living and evolving, imperfect congregation willing to change, seeking to heed God’s call to serve and dedicated to sharing God’s love. The congregation of Plymouth Church knows full well that “God is still speaking” -- and we are listening!

Submitted by Lee Makela, Chair

Pulpit Committee Report

Following our commissioning at Church on January 12, 2020, the members of the Pulpit Committee first met with Nayiri Karjian, General Minister of the Living Water Association, to get an orientation into the search process. Since then, we have met bi-monthly (weekly if necessary). In mid-February we met with Lee Makela, a member of the Transition Team who presented us with the findings of the “Sunday Brunch” conversations which took place in January and early February. We are grateful for the congregation’s dialogue and discussion expressed at these meetings. Following Lee’s presentation, we extrapolated the data provided by the Transition Team to help us in creating the official Plymouth profile to be submitted to the Living Water Association. In an effort to keep the process moving forward, and due to Coronavirus (Covid-19) social distancing, we have been meeting remotely since March. The Church’s profile was completed and submitted to Living Water on April 30. This was a large task which we were all relieved to have successfully completed. Here is the link to the profile if you would like to read it.

http://oppsearch.ucc.org/web/fastdetails.aspx?id=4046&KeepThis=false&TB_iframe=true&height=&width

There has been a lot of interest in Plymouth Church! After the initial job posting, we received over 40 Profiles for our review and discussion. During the summer we had preliminary interviews with 6 of these prospective Candidates over zoom. These initial meetings were an opportunity for us to get to know the Candidates, as well as to field any questions they might have about Plymouth Church.

In the coming weeks we will be having a more in-depth interview with one of the Candidates we interviewed in July. We also continue to receive new profiles from prospective Candidates. We will be conducting a few preliminary interviews with these Candidates as well. In addition to all of the interviews (and on the advice of the Living Water Association of the UCC) we are looking further afield by putting an advertisement in the Christian Century Magazine in the coming weeks. We expect this to further expand our pool of interested Candidates.

The Pulpit Committee is unanimous and unified in taking the necessary time to find the right person for the position of Senior Pastor at Plymouth Church. We appreciate your patience and prayers for discernment as we continue to move forward in this important process.

Members of the Pulpit Committee

Devan Bhatia – Is a freshman at Shaker Heights High School (Go Raiders!), enjoys golfing and listening to music in his free time.

Cindy Chapman – Joined Plymouth in 2002. Cindy is married to Wai Sung and they have three children. Cindy is a professor of religion at Oberlin College and was recently awarded “Best Book Relating to Hebrew Bible” in 2017 by the Biblical Archaeology Society.

Andrew Cleminshaw - Joined Plymouth in 2008, has been an usher, a member of the nominating and pastoral relations committees, and a Christmas pageant angel wrangler. He is married to Kendalle Cobb and they have one daughter, Catherine who is almost 12.

Tom Cullinan - Joined Plymouth Church in the spring of 2017 and was married to Joanna May Cullinan the following year. A life-long Clevelander, Tom teaches Improv in his spare time and was a member of the Hospitality and Ushers team at his former church.

Ann Eberhard – Joined Plymouth in 2002 and this is the eighth church she has been a part of. She is the archivist at Plymouth, sings in the choir, is a member of the ArtsPlymouth committee and has belonged to four Christ Care groups.

Amy Grube - Is a pediatrician and married to Brian Grube. They have 3 children: Sarah, Samuel, and Luke and joined the church in 2013. She has previously served as the Partnership and Service co-chair and a member of the bell choir.

Kate Molyneaux – Is a sophomore at Solon and loves to swim. She spends her days “at” school, swimming, working part-time and hanging out with her little sister.

Mai Moore - Joined Plymouth Church in 2010, has served on Council as E & G Lead and various other roles including Usher, Sunday School Teacher, Youth Group Junior High Lead, and Nominating. She also developed EYEJ, a non-profit that started at Plymouth focused on amplifying youth voices and has a 16-year-old daughter – Yumi Ndhlovu.

Dick Pogue – Joined Plymouth in 1970 with his wife Pat. They have three children, and love Plymouth and the city of Cleveland. Dick has spent his career as a lawyer at Jones Day and is involved with civic organizations all over the city.

Beth Sanborn - Beth Sanborn and her husband Mitch have 4 children and 2 grandchildren. Beth grew up in the church (a member for 50+ years) and in the past assisted with Church School and Fellowship Programs, and now cares for those with special needs.

Gloria Sturghill - Joined Plymouth in 1997, is a member of the Chancel Choir, C&Y Department and Youth Groups. Lives in Shaker and is learning, along with her sister, what you have to do to take care of a house built in 1937.

David Turner - Joined Plymouth in 2016 but has been a member of the bell choir since 2014 and also serves on the ArtsPlymouth Committee. He just got married to his husband this past August. David works in fundraising for Playhouse Square downtown and served on the search team at his former UCC church in Cincinnati.

Robert Woolfrey - Joined Plymouth Church in 2012. He is married to Tanya Woolfrey and they have two young children. Robert and Tanya are both musicians in The Cleveland Orchestra.

Submitted by Gloria Sturghill, Chair

Adult Faith & Life Department Report

We had great plans for AF&L at the start of 2020. But with the global pandemic, most of those plans had to be cancelled, postponed, or reimagined. Before the shutdown though, we did host a couple of powerful programs.

In November 2019, we had a program to recognize our transgender brothers and sisters. The Cleveland Transgender Choir sang during the morning worship. After service, the choir joined us to discuss how we can be better allies and to find common ground. The discussion was robust, informative, and holy. Hopefully, we will be able to have the choir back to perform again during worship and continue the discussion and learning.

On March 8, 2020, we celebrated International Women's Day and the centennial anniversary of the passage of the 19th Amendment that gave white women the right to vote. We had a presentation by the League of Women Voters about the history of suffrage. They also provided voter registration information. It was interesting and informative. Sadly, that Sunday was out last time to have in-person worship at Plymouth.

Before the pandemic, we were able to have Theology on Tap at Larchmere Tavern. We didn't know then that would be our last time in person for 2020. We did continue to have Theology on Tap via Zoom for a few months. Those discussions were thought provoking and important. Hopefully, we will be able to resume them in person soon back at Larchmere Tavern.

We were able to help the Evangelism and Growth Department with the Plymouth 101 Class for prospective new members. That was done successfully via Zoom. It was great to have new members join the church even during this pandemic.

Rev. Deb has been great about continuing to have the Monday Night Bible Study via Zoom.

Considering our need to become a true anti-racist church, the AF&L department will take on the task of organizing a sub-committee to study how the Church can accomplish that goal. This committee will determine how we can intentionally be diverse, inclusive, and equitable.

It was been my honor and pleasure to be the Chair of AF&L the last two years. I am confident the next Chair, Rev. Mendle Adams, will do an excellent and better job than me. Joanna Cullinan will be staying on as Vice-Chair.

Peace and love,

Vicki

Submitted by Vicki Werneke, Chair

Building and Grounds Department Report

As the year ends in transition for our world, our country and our congregation at Plymouth Church, we thank the Department members for their thoughtful participation and input in the maintenance, operations and capital improvements of the Plymouth Church: Chairman, William (Bill) Menges; Vice-Chairman, Ron Werneke; Department Members, Robin Menges; Pat Pogue; Dr. Ken Rogers; Janet Neary; Charlene Nevans; and Doug Powell. We are grateful for the participation of Rev. Dr. Deborah Lindsay, Interim Senior Minister, and Mary Bright, Finance Committee Chair & Council VP.

We are thankful for the continuing support of the Plymouth Church Staff, including Matt Bauhof, James Riggs, Kathryn Kundrat and Leslie Szalay. It is a caring and resolute team of staff members, who, with the support of the Department, Council, and the entire Plymouth Church Congregation, maintaining the edifice on the property as the Van Sweringen's first conceived almost 100 years ago.

We are grateful for the continuing service & care of Rose Munn as the daytime, Church custodian. We thankfully pray for James Lake for his longstanding care, stewardship, and service to the Plymouth Church Congregation as he firmly and with his usual good humor, battles cancer.

As the Year closes, the Committee has completed the following projects:

- Installation of new Main Electric Panels in the electric vault
 - Additional safety lighting installed in the vault
- Installation of new, digital phone system for the Church
- Complete renovation of eight (8) door entries to the Church, including:
 - The Chapel and Christian Education Breezeway entries
 - The Chapel and Christian Education parking lot entries
 - The Chapel Entrance
 - The basement Kitchen Entrance
 - The Lerner School Classroom Entrance, basement level
 - The Lerner School Playground Entrance, basement level
- Installation of new electronic access & security cameras at the Main Entrance
- Led by the Sacred Gardeners, The Joyce Cherry Memorial Garden Phase 2 is complete
- New wrought iron railing to complement the new brick wall, at the Main Entrance

Looking forward to 2021, the Committee anticipates the following capital appropriations:

- Updated building information, including:
 - Updated drawings of the Church Building
 - Survey of all mechanical, electrical, plumbing, heating & cooling systems
 - Survey of all safety & security systems
- New electric panels for the Sanctuary and Fellowship Hall
- Exterior repainting of the Main Sanctuary Entrance, including wooden facades below the steeple
- Solutions for live streaming services and concerts to the Congregation and Arts Partners
- New controls, thermostats, circulating pumps to improve heating efficiency within the building

As we conclude 2020, completing our 98th year in the Sanctuary, we ask for your prayers, support, and contributions to the operations of the Church. Nothing happens here that does not originate from the Holy Spirit and your hearts & souls. On behalf of the Building and Grounds Department, we thank you for allowing

us to serve you, our fellow Plymouth Church Members, our partner organizations, our community at large and those in need. May God Bless you all, always and in all places. We urge you to heed the words of John Wesley:

“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”

— **John Wesley**

Approved By

William (Bill) Menges, Chairman – Building & Grounds Department

Ron Werneke, Vice Chairman – Building & Grounds Department

Submitted by Paul Holter, Facility Manager

Archive Report

The Plymouth Archives continued to process materials in the Archives until the pandemic prevented work in the Archives Room. That effort will continue when the Room is accessible again.

Submitted by Ann Eberhard, Plymouth Archivist

Caring Department Report

The Caring Department coordinates and supports the various caring-focused committees of Plymouth Church. While each committee within the department provides a unique service, the department as a whole, is committed to provide care, friendship and support to others. With the ministers' leadership and assistance, the committee provides food, flowers, rides, prayer shawls and other gestures of friendship and comfort. The activities of the caring committee have been seriously impacted by pandemic since February of this year as have all church functions.

Feed Our Neighbors

Because of limited access to the Church building, I don't know of any activity in this ministry.

Fifty-year Member reception

We are currently involved in planning an alternative way to honor the 50 year plus members

Flower Ministry

Because we have not had worship in the sanctuary, there have been no altar flowers. Individual members have provided flowers for outdoor worship.

Food Ministry

There have been no requests for this ministry to date.

Memorial Receptions

Due to the pandemic, there have been no memorial receptions although we have lost members.

Pastoral Care Team

The Pastoral Care team has not met since January and due to Covid -19, I don't believe any visitations have taken due to pandemic restrictions.

Plymouth Lunch Club

There have been no luncheons due to the Pandemic

Wednesday night food and fellowship

All Lenten activities this year were cancelled.

Transportation

With no services in the sanctuary, there has been no need for transportation.

Submitted by Dave Faulx, Chair

Children and Youth Department Report

It's been a challenging year for the church and for our department, due to a worldwide pandemic that caused a shutdown of all in-person gatherings in mid-March through the present. We have adapted to the best of our ability, and we have continued to provide religious education and faith formation of Plymouth's children and youth. Our chairperson, Rev. Brian Shields, resigned on March 4. I moved from vice-chair to chair, as approved by Church Council in April. Joanna Horn became our new vice-chair, as approved by Church Council in June. Carolyn Jillson joined Gloria Sturghill as an additional regular member of the department. Angela Zawada and Wayne Hall have contributed significantly. Leslie Szalay and Rev. Matt Bauhof are our staff leaders.

Sunday School: Leslie quickly modified Sunday School in the spring and fall, as well as summer Children's Church to online activities (see her report).

Youth Groups: Rev. Matt has creatively adapted Senior and Junior High youth groups to online and outdoor, socially distanced activities (see his report).

Our Whole Lives (O.W.L.): Reggie Williams and I taught 9 students in the 6th-8th grades (a total of 24 hours of classes) before the pandemic hit Ohio. Leslie and Brian Shields taught 2 out of 8 OWL classes for K-1 students, although these classes were suspended after the pandemic shutdown.

Confirmation: Rev. Matt Bauhof, Wayne Hall, and Gloria Sturghill held Confirmation classes for 7 students in person, online, and a socially distanced outdoor final retreat. Confirmation Sunday was Sept. 20th in outdoor worship.

Service Projects: Sugar Plum had 49 volunteers helped 94 children make 949 gifts. We raised \$1530.00 for the Heifer Project in December 2019. Feb. 2nd was Children & Youth Sunday, where \$1,000.00 was collected and donated to the Cleveland Foodbank. We sponsored a Talent Show in February and raised \$5200.00 for the Mission Trips, which were cancelled due to the pandemic. The money will be used for future trips. Matt generated a virtual service trip in August (see his report).

Family & Community Support: Plymouth Parents and Parents Night Out (PNO) are important as we strive to aid families (see Leslie's report). We celebrated our high school graduates and Sunday School teachers in virtual worship services in May. Matt designed an online Family Trivia Night in May. The department made phone calls to every Plymouth family with children and youth during the summer to offer support. Matt & Leslie held a family Zoom session in August to assess the needs of families as children went back to school online. The department sponsored a church-wide fundraiser in September to contribute money to families in the community around this same issue. We are currently planning a safe way to hold Spooktacular on Oct. 24th. Matt & Leslie are starting a quarterly newsletter on family faith formation.

We are grateful that our Plymouth families are still actively involved in the church. We look forward to the time when we can be in person again.

Submitted by Jeannie Clarkson, Chair

Evangelism & Growth Department Report

At the end of 2019 and continuing in 2020 the Evangelism and Growth Department took a close look at its Constitutional obligations:

Shall develop and implement a comprehensive church growth strategy that seeks to attract, identify, inform, and encourage potential members to join the church and live out their gifts as active members of the church.

Mendle Adams sought to strengthen the Department by formalizing its structure. This became an effort to gather, update, develop documents of the committees to serve as Standard Operating Procedures—not set in stone but to serve as guides as needed. This task is ongoing. A comprehensive growth strategy is likely to be put in place in 2021 as church membership is reviewed through new data and insights into Plymouth's strengths.

Responsibilities, programs, and projects:

New Member Orientation and Induction—Pat Schinabeck organized this Spring 2020 procedure twice – as originally planned for April 2020 and later in a new reality accommodating the Coronavirus pandemic. In-person events were cancelled and new membership procedures and obligations were met through mailed materials, emails, phone conversations and online screens, with Pat and the ministers shepherding new members who joined through pre-recorded video during the on-line worship service of June 28, 2020. The Rev. Matt Bauhof prepared these videos.

Advertising & Publicity -- Rev. Matt Bauhof oversees online advertising and website as well as signage and new banners. He serves as a guide to all things that are evangelism.

Fellowship Committee -- Contra dance, game nights, church tours, and planned outings are on hiatus still at this time. Paul Qua is eager to bring back events that bring us together. Paul inspired a new project of Unpredictable Friendship whereby he searched out a Plymouth member to create a respectful and sincere friendship. Brian Shields accepted the challenge and the two of them write of their experiences in The Perspective.

Church Picnic -- Cancelled due to pandemic social distancing.

Evangelism (general) -- Vicki Werneke guides the church in developing Advent / Lenten Devotional publications. The Ambassadors make themselves and materials available to provide welcome and information to newcomers. New members Zack Lewis and Kevin Anderson are embarking on a project of data study and analytics such that we at Plymouth may come to know our strengths and ways that we may consider a comprehensive growth strategy.

Coffee Hour/Connection Groups – Connection Groups 11, 12, and 13 served the after-worship Coffee hour in Fellowship Hall from January to mid-March when in-person services were cancelled. Margaret Reuthinger had coordinated these from September 2019 until Spring 2020. In the summer Plymouth offered online coffee hour gatherings on Sunday mornings. Jeannie Clarkson agreed to return to coordinate a calling tree project through Connection Groups. Connection Group participants were asked to make a phone call to another in their group to provide social contact during pandemic isolation. Jeannie also contacted all those who do not participate in Connection Groups. This endeavor serves as an extension of Connection Groups purposes beyond the tasks of Coffee Hour.

Culling (Reclamation) of the Membership Rolls – A critical matter in any church is the painful task of culling the membership rolls and this responsibility falls on E&G Department. Over several months Mendle Adams, Paul Qua and Matt Bauhof analyzed the membership lists that needed updating and the requirements for doing so. Mendle suggested that the tone of letters to be sent to those meeting the criteria (absence, no contact, etc.) be sensitive, and that Plymouth use the term “reclamation”. These contacts were seen by E&G as an opportunity for the church to continue to reach out. In review of the lists, longtime E&G members Lalana Green and Jeannie Clarkson also provided information to assist in final decisions. When the pandemic moved Plymouth’s Sunday worship, Bible study, meetings, workshops to a rich online presence new opportunities opened: the gentle reclaiming approach inviting many to rediscover the church through the website has resulted in- at this writing- 40% of “lost” members asking to be retained.

Submitted by Margaret Reuthinger, Recording Secretary

Giving Department Report

Co-Chairs: Russell Lamb, Carolyn Jillson

The Giving Committee is responsible for conducting and facilitating financial support to the church from its members and friends. This year, the Committee members worked diligently to develop an annual campaign that would engage a broad number of contributors as well as provide a nominal increase in financial contributions for the 2021 operating budget as we deal with the Covid pandemic. While this has certainly put an imprint on this year, the committee continued its work to achieve a successful campaign and allow senior pastor transition and other activities to occur in 2021.

The Annual Campaign launched in September with an appeal of support from members of Church Council as well as lead givers from the past year. The main appeal was launched on October 11th and runs through November 8th.

The currently ongoing campaign’s goals are \$585,000 in pledges from members and friends. This is a slight increase from our raise of over \$575,000 in 2019 for the 2020 operating year. A successful campaign is important to demonstrate the vibrancy of Plymouth Church to candidates for the senior minister position. The Committee is managing the campaign process with the wonderful support of Kathryn Kundrat in the church office.

We look forward to another successful campaign and are always in awe of the generosity of the members and friends of our church.

Submitted by Russell Lamb, Chair

Partnership & Service Department Report

Plymouth Church is a very generous church, both with both our money and our time. We set aside 10% of our annual pledges for distribution to organizations in the Cleveland metro area and our national and association churches. We also organize and encourage service opportunities within the church, the community, and our partner organizations.

Distribution of Funds

There are many needs in our community. To discern the most effective way to distribute the funds, we have established criteria: 1) the 501c3 organization must be located within or service the Cleveland Metro/Cuyahoga County area, 2) a member of the church is a liaison to the organization, and 3) the grant request is for a specific program, and not for normal operating expenses. There are five areas that the organization and the request must affect as well: 1) education, 2) environment, 3) homeless or disenfranchised, 4) hunger, and 5) LGTBQ+ community. We added 6) COVID-19 Relief in 2020. Most of our partner organizations impact more than one area.

We also support the Living Water Association and the UCC National Office with substantial gifts. And we support the scholarship funds to the universities our ministers attended and a chapel organ retreat to honor our minister of music.

This year we had \$58,432.40 to distribute, which included \$1,997.40 from the Peg Gray Book Fund.

As of October 2, 2020, this is the breakdown of what we supported.

- Nine grant applications were received, and seven were funded.
- Two universities that our Plymouth ministers attended.
- National and local offices of the United Church of Christ.

UCC National Office	\$8,000
Living Water Association	\$14,000
McCormick Theological Seminary	\$500
The Portageville Chapel	\$250
Community Service Alliance	3,500
EYEJ	\$5,000
Family Promise	\$5,000
Fostering Hope	\$2,500
Habitat for Humanity	\$5,000
Nature Center of Shaker Lakes	\$1,000
Rainbow Terrace Learning Center	\$3,200

The church throughout the year also participates in several special offerings.

Once again, the SERRV committee hosted a sale of SERRV items to Plymouth members on the first 3 Sundays in Advent. SERRV is a nonprofit fair-trade organization dedicated to empowering small-scale artisans and farmers to earn a fair living for their work to help break the cycle of poverty and build stronger communities worldwide. We anticipate being able to disburse some of our sale proceeds in the coming year to support community needs.

Service Opportunities

Plymouth members volunteered for many organizations in the Cleveland area, and we modified our work as the pandemic unfolded. Examples include the Greater Cleveland Food Bank, The Shaker Hunger network, and Habitat for Humanity. We also held specific fundraisers for organizations through a parking lot food drive (during Covid) and the coat drive. Plymouth also has a new "Little Food Pantry" that is an Eagle Scout project, which we facilitate. COVID-19 has adjusted how we help our community, but we feel it's even more important to give and to serve those in need.

Submitted by Robin D. Johnson, Chair

Worship Department Report

The 2020 Worship Department members are Rev. Deb Lindsay, Rev Matt Bauhof, Jim Riggs, Christine Bretz, Alissa Wible, Amy Holbrook, James Callihan, Lalana Green, Brenda Grauer, Rosalind Gauchat, Nicole Lepley and Chair, Mary Powell.

Our January meeting began with a review of Advent and Christmas, but most of the meeting addressed plans for Lent and the Easter season. We decided our overall Lenten theme would be "Just Be," a great theme for a community that was in the midst of leadership transition. We didn't realize how appropriate it would be for the entire year at Plymouth, our country and the world, well into 2021.

In April, we had a ZOOM meeting. Jim Riggs opened it with three questions: What works well in online service? What's a preferred timeline? What are you longing for? We had entered a new world.

We shared an appreciation of our journey at Plymouth. We expressed gratitude for our services and the fact that "Deb, Matt, Jim, and Leslie are in our faces, speaking to us, and that we're not watching a videotaped worship service. It makes us aware that this is a different up close and personal experience; there is a connection with us. We enjoy the mix of individuals and the scenes of Plymouth and the community. It is simultaneously intimate and corporate. Our spiritual needs are met; the interaction is thought provoking and personal." We noted that the "integration of the sermon and prayers shows we're part of a global community. It looks like the staff is in this together and intentionally designing it for this point in time, not just reacting to a difficult reality." We suggested "involving more members of the community in the service, recognizing our worship was engaging the general public, not just members of Plymouth." We acknowledged that "our worship is God's worship with an open door, and as the service starts, we should announce it is for everyone, welcoming people who may not be part of Plymouth and invite them to share it with those who are visitors."

By July, we realized this was not a short-lived experience. We began to talk of outdoor worship and creating a sacred space outdoors. From that a Sacred Garden grew, a space for worship, meditation, music, yoga, and tai chi to nourish us.

We do not know when we will return to the Sanctuary and Chapel for worship, but we know that the Spirit is with us! We are beyond grateful for Rev Deb, Rev Matt, Jim, Leslie, the musicians, and everyone who has been with us on this precious journey.

Submitted by Mary R. Powell, Chair

ArtsPlymouth-where the arts, faith and the community converge

Mission Statement: *ArtsPlymouth is dedicated to presenting arts events for the spiritual enrichment of the congregation of Plymouth Church and the community it serves.*

ArtsPlymouth hosted concerts by the Cleveland Chamber Music Society, the Cleveland Classical Guitar Society, BlueWater Chamber Orchestra and Les Delices (Artist in Residence) culminating with an amazing sold-out concert by Chanticleer. That was the last in-person concert held a week before the shut down due to Covid19. Concert Hosting activities were coordinated by David Turner. Volunteers served as hosts welcoming visitors to Plymouth Church for these events.

The ArtsPlymouth Scholarship program is still in need of some revision and updating, so no money was awarded this year. The fund continues to increase as planned.

Following the lockdown in March 2020, many things changed. ArtPlymouth strove to respond and to support the congregation and community in a new paradigm.

- Since Plymouth Church could no longer host concerts in person the committee approved a donation of \$750 to each performing group to support their ongoing work.
- ArtsPlymouth declined to take its May 2020 draw from the Foundation following the guidance of the Finance Committee.
- ArtsPlymouth supported the work of the Sacred Garden Team, who created an outdoor space for meditation and reflection. There were Saturday morning offerings in the garden including various music, Tai Chi, yoga, and prayer.
- Following all safe practices including masks and seating in social distanced circles, ArtsPlymouth hosted a July 2020 outdoor concert with Les Delices. Many in the neighbors expressed how wonderful to experience live music again.
- ArtsPlymouth hopes to offer 1-2 virtual concerts this coming year.

No concerts are being held during the fall of 2020. Les Delices is filming a virtual concert season and they are now renting office space at Plymouth.

The ArtsPlymouth team is a working team – each team member shares in various tasks to make ArtsPlymouth a vital presence at Plymouth Church and in the community. Team members include: Ann Eberhard, Pam Ford, Noel Nilson, Karen Reich, James Riggs, staff, Kathy Smyth, David Turner, Jane Underwood, and Jan Wilkens.

Submitted by Karen Reich Kolendo, Secretary

Plymouth Church Leadership Roster for 2021

This roster represents the elected and appointed leadership of the church. It assumes that the recommendations of the Nominating Committee (the nominees for the fall 2020 Annual Meeting and those nominated for appointment by Council) will be accepted. It is included in the Annual Report to add to that report's comprehensive portrait of the congregation and not to preempt the election or appointment process.

Note: Numbers in parentheses denote that this will be the person's 2nd, 3rd Etc. term.

Key: B&G: Building & Grounds; C&Y: Children & Youth; E & G: Evangelism & Growth; P&S: Partnerships and Service;

(F): member of Finance Committee

Council President (F)	Brian Grube (2)
Council Vice-President (F)	Mary Bright (2)
Secretary	Vicki Werneke
Treasurer (F)	Juanita Faulx (4)
Asst. Treasurer (F)	Pamela Ford
Council Member@Large	Ros Gauchat (3)
Council Member@Large	Shelli Smith (2)
Council Member@Large	Nicole Lepley (2)
Council Member@Large	Becky Neal
Council Member@Large	Jan Wilkens
Adult Faith & Life Chair	Mendle Adams
Adult Faith & Life Vice-Chair	Joanna Cullinan
B&G Chair (F)	Ron Werneke
B&G Vice-Chair	Hans Hunziker
Caring Chair	Dave Faulx (3)
Caring Vice-Chair	Don Grauer
C& Y Chair	Jeannie Clarkson
C& Y Vice-Chair	Joanna Horn
E & G Co-Chair	Margaret Reuthinger
E & G Vice-Chair	Kevin Anderson
Giving Chair	David Turner
Giving Vice-Chair	Carolyn Jillson
P & S Chair	Robin Johnson (4)
P & S Vice-Chair	Joann Hall (3)
Worship Chair	Amy Holbrook (2)
Worship Vice-Chair	Val McClelland
Personnel Chair (F)	
Foundation Chair (F)	
UCC Living Water Rep.	Pam Beck (4)
UCC Living Water Rep.	Adrienne Brockway (4)
UCC Living Water Rep.	Jeff Pollock
Finance Committee 21	Brian Grube
Finance Committee 21	Mary Bright
Finance Committee 21	Juanita Faulx
Finance Committee 21	Pamela Ford
Finance Committee 21	Personnel Chair

Finance Committee 21	David Turner
Finance Committee 21	Ron Werneke
Finance Committee @ Large21	Marcus Henry
Finance Committee @ Large21	Chris Karr
Foundation Dir 21	Jeff Pollock
Foundation Dir 22	Dick Pogue
Foundation Dir 23	Lalana Green
Foundation Dir 23	Mary Bright
Nominating Committee 21	Wayne Hall
Nominating Committee 21	Hans Hunziker
Nominating Committee 21	Vicki Werneke
Nominating Committee 22	Pam Beck
Nominating Committee 22	Sara Martin
Nominating Committee 22	Mai Moore
Nominating Committee 23	Faye Gary
Nominating Committee 23	Jane Underwood
Nominating Committee 23	Dan Farmer
Pastoral Relations 21	On hold for new Senior Minister
Pastoral Relations 21	On hold for new Senior Minister
Pastoral Relations 21	On hold for new Senior Minister
Pastoral Relations 22	On hold for new Senior Minister
Pastoral Relations 22	On hold for new Senior Minister
Pastoral Relations 22	On hold for new Senior Minister
Personnel Committee 21	Ruth Garwood
Personnel Committee 21	Kenyon Mau
Personnel Committee 22	Jim Holbrook
Personnel Committee 22	Paula Colahan-Sederstrom
Personnel Committee 22	Karen Reich Kolendo