

Just a Thought

"Certainly it is true that behind every human being who cries out for help there may be a million more equally entitled to attention. But this is the poorest of reasons for not helping the person whose cries you hear...how to determine which one of a million sounds surround you are more deserving than the rest? You will never know; you will never need to know. Reach out and take hold of the one who happens to be nearest. If you are never able to help or save another, at least you will have saved one. To help put meaning into a single life may not produce universal regeneration, but it also happens to represent the basic form of energy in a society. It is also the test of individual responsibility." — *Norman Cousins*

(from Jennifer Castle's Faith Journey, available on CD or on the website: www.plymouthseattle.org)

Watch the Web for the latest Change Grant news. Plymouth is committed to giving 25% of our pledges to support needs outside our doors. This year, we'll use some of that 25% to fund our first Change Grant, a three-year, \$100,000 commitment to a social justice organization. Your input is needed to help us determine who will receive this year's grant. Keep an eye on the Plymouth web site for info on the semifinalists and ways you can be part of this exciting new chapter in Plymouth's engagement in our community. Questions? Check with Jennifer Castle. — *CSSA Board*

Ministry of Presence Create your own Ministry of Presence, women of Plymouth. Come to Mary's Place any Saturday at 10:30 a.m. to sing and worship with Linda Smith and amazingly joyful homeless women. Just be there, that's all. Contact Doris Schaefer at 206/282-4905, Jessie Attri at 206/382-32299 or Jamie Shilling at 206/948-5721.

Are You Caring for Aging Parents? If so, support can help! Come to the next group meeting Sunday, September 13, 12:15-1:15 pm in the Plymouth Library. Questions? Contact Susan Dittig, Parish Nurse, sdittig@plymouthchurchseattle.org, 622-4865.

Caresharing: Rethinking Caregiving and Care Receiving Learn a new way of engaging in care giving that is based on a mutual relationship of shared care at a workshop on September 23, 9:00 a.m.-noon, at Senior Services. Workshop presenter is Marty Richards, MSW, a gerontologist with 40 years of experience. Sponsored by NW Center for Creative Aging. Register at 206/382-3789 or www.seniorservices.org

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Calling All Members! There are senior members in our church who are looking for able drivers to occasionally help them with transportation to enjoy the beautiful parks in our city and state. If you ever wonder who you can help enjoy God's good creation, please let the office know and we can make the connection for you.

Three-Month Report Visit www.plymouthseattle.org to read Tom Stiers' three-month report to the council. You will find it in "Recent Documents of the Congregational Council" in the "Downloads" section of the site. Feel free to share your thoughts with Tom: tstiers@plymouthchurchseattle.org

Stay in Touch with the UCC Visit the national UCC website at www.ucc.org for news from the national denomination. It's a great resource to keep in touch with all the ways the church is working in the world.

Please Plan Now to attend the Stewardship Celebration Brunch on October 18 in Hildebrand Hall immediately following the second worship service.

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PLYMOUTH CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Your Council at Work

During the quiet summer months many Congregational Council activities have been begun which we hope will bear fruit this fall.

- ◆ **Communication:** We are anxious to do everything we can to assure good communication among us. In August we began having a Council member available after the services each Sunday. We have appreciated hearing from you this way. Please do find us on Sunday if you have ideas, suggestions, comments, concerns or questions. Also, a Communication Committee of the Council, convened by Susan Berry, has begun work. Again, they would welcome your suggestions.
- ◆ **Survey Coming:** A working group led by Sue Maul is at work on creating Plymouth's profile, in preparation for Plymouth's search for a senior minister. As a first step, they have prepared a survey for the Congregation which will be available for members to complete the first two weeks in September.
- ◆ **Garage Lease:** Plymouth's forty-year lease of our garage to IBM will end this October, and our mortgage on the garage will be paid in full at the same time. Led by Richard Wilson, the Garage Committee is hard at work on making arrangements for our future operation of the garage. Stay tuned for the results.
- ◆ **Council Retreat:** In early August the Council spent a Sunday afternoon beginning our planning for the fall and beyond. Led by Jan Van Pelt, we explored the five paths for carrying out Plymouth's mission adopted by the congregation during our last long range

planning effort in 2004. We asked what would be priorities in each of these areas for Plymouth today. There will be more on this at the September 20 10:00 a.m. forum. Please come and help us look ahead.

- ◆ **Stewardship and Budget:** The Stewardship leaders, Mike Pierson, Marcia Regnier and Stan Orr are preparing for our stewardship program in mid October. And, the Budget Committee has begun its work, led by Jim Bechtold.

We look forward to the fall and exploring together what the future holds for Plymouth.
— *Nancy Smith, Plymouth Church Moderator*

Coming Soon!

This Sunday, September 6, is the last Sunday of the summer schedule. Next Sunday, September 13, we return to our regular program schedule:

Services will be at 8:30 a.m. the Chapel and 11:00 a.m. in the Sanctuary.

Sunday School will begin at 10:00 a.m.

The Plymouth Forum will resume at 10:00 a.m. with a presentation from Joel Connelly, columnist for SeattlePI.com

Make sure you're here to help get our program year off to a great start!

Pastoral Musings



Growth is a natural outcome of health and hospitality. Peter Steinke in his book, *Healthy Congregations: A System Approach*, approaches the practice of fostering health in churches through a holistic and system perspective that includes the cycle of illness, anxiety, healing and health. His thesis is that how we steward our resources, and our members, will determine how we go through that cycle. We as Plymouth Church are going through the cycle and walking toward healing and health. In the meantime, we are deeply invested in our members' lives and intentionally engaging our visitors in our community. Having said this, I would like to take a moment to tell you about the new inquirer and membership formation classes that we are offering this fall.

Upon returning from my sabbatical, with the support of Tom and the entire staff, along with the New Member Board and Fellowship and Recreation Board, the charge to revamp our current new member classes jumped to the top of my to-do list. With the help of the great people listed above, here is what we will be embarking on to extend our hospitality, reach out to our visitors, and intentionally incorporate visitors into our community. This last point being the catalyst here: we want to plant seeds for active membership in our visitors. All of the staff and members of the New Member Board and Fellowship and Recreation Board are working together with all of you to be the agents of hospitality to make this a faithful and successful process.

Here is our schedule:

Phase 1-Inquirer

10/13 Class 1: Introduction with the four Quaker questions

10/17 Class 2, 3: Extended Saturday morning for faith journey and gift discernment

10/18 Class 4: UCC history and theology

10/25 Class 5: Plymouth Vision, here and the future

Phase 2-Membership

11/1-Class 1: Membership

11/7-Class 2: Extended Saturday morning with social justice programs of our church

11/8-Class 3: Education at Plymouth, visit Sunday School classes

11/15-Class 4: Worship at Plymouth, visit the choir

11/22-Class 5: Fellowship and community at Plymouth, forming covenant group

12/6: Celebration and New Member Sunday

There will be three phases to the membership classes. The inquirer phase will have three Sunday sessions and one Saturday session. The membership phrase will also have three Sunday sessions and one Saturday session. The active membership phrase will be in a covenant group of one year, beginning with the New Member Sunday service, brunch and festivity. Again, the focus here is to invite, invigorate, and invest in our visitors, bringing them into active membership with us, and bringing us into their faith journey.

This is an exciting time for our congregation. I invite you to join us and encourage friends and families to join us in this faith-forming time! To get involved, please contact me (206/622-4865; dshinn@plymouthchurchseattle.org).

The Reverend David W. Shinn

Sunday, September 6, 2009

Last Sunday on the Summer Schedule

**Services at 8:30 a.m. in the Chapel and
10:30 a.m. in the Sanctuary**

The Reverend Kristine Anderson Ostrem, preaching

9:30 a.m. Faith Journey, Frances McEvers,
Lounge

11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour, Lounge/Patio

Final Faith Journey of the Summer

Please join us in the Lounge this Sunday, September 6, to hear the fascinating journey of Frances McEvers, member of Plymouth since 1974, who has participated in many programs and groups here. Frances has led a long and interesting life — be sure to come hear about it.

Change to Wednesdays at Plymouth

Although the Wednesday Jazz Service ended on August 26, Susan Pascal will continue her musical leadership with us this fall. Come enjoy the contribution of her special music to our worship on September 27 and October 11.

Beginning on September 16, the Plymouth clergy will lead a study of I Corinthians every Wednesday from 12:10 to 12:50 p.m. We hope to see you there. Please call the church office to sign up (206/622-4865).

This I Trust

Women's Retreat October 9-11 at Pilgrim Firs

It is that time of year to start thinking about the annual fall **Women's Retreat**. We will be going out to Pilgrim Firs from October 9-11, 2009, for the one time in the year that we gather as women to feed our souls and be in a space reserved for us. Our theme this year is **'This I Trust.'** We will be exploring the role of trust in our lives and in our community. As always, there will be time for connection, quiet and reflection. We do hope you can join us this year. Contact any of us if you have questions. Sign-ups begin September 13.

—Vicki Schoettle, Joanne Marshall, Phyllis Daniels, Kris Ostrem.



Loan Money at Work

The Community Investment Committee's charge is to loan up to 5% of the endowment in areas such as low-income housing, environmental stewardship, and social justice, where the loans may further the Church's mission in the community. We try to work in concert with the Community Service and Social Action Board to supplement CSSA grant areas with loan support. In addition to renewing our existing funding commitments to NICA Fund, (a micro-credit organization serving parts of Nicaragua), Plymouth House of Healing, and Community Capital (a Central-Area small business development lender) the Committee has made two new loans over the summer.

One new loan of \$200,000 has been made to Recovery Cafe, a downtown service agency and restaurant dedicated to working with drug and alcohol addicted clients. In July, an additional loan of \$116,500 was made to Casa Latina, a Latino day worker center. We are proud to say that all of our available capital of \$891,500 is now hard at work.

—Tony Case Chair, Community Investment Committee

A Note from the Interim Action Group

I'm lucky to have a list of loving, spiritual, fun, challenging, and often indescribable yet wonderful experiences due to my participation at Plymouth church. I'm very appreciative of the role the Plymouth community has played in the life of my family and me. To me, Plymouth is a rare spot where people intentionally gather and the focus is centered around the best parts of who we are, the best parts of who I am — that is, kindness, courage, trust, forgiveness, and dignity (to name a few).

I believe these unique aspects have made it much easier for me to learn so much about myself and the world, and to have experienced so much joy (even while working through many difficult times). I've found Plymouth to be a community of people who have been extremely strong at providing an environment for me to find a healthy balance between fitting in comfortably within a very accepting group and providing a supportive place where I've been able to find and form my unique and genuine voice.

By providing a setting where, more than just about anywhere else, all parts of me are welcome, no matter what — from my talents and gifts to my questions, uncertainties, and vulnerabilities — I've been able to become more fully who I am. The same way this is true for an individual, I think it's true for a group.

This leads me to the all-church survey that will soon be available for you to fill out. The more people (each with their unique voice and stories) who participate in the survey, the more accurate the information will be. The more accurate the information is the more it increases our ability to become more fully who we are as a faith community, which in this context means clarifying our priorities for the future and helping create a church profile that will help us call a new senior minister. This means everyone, no matter what.

We all have our imperfections (attendance at times being one for me). However, each voice — yours, mine, and many of those not reading this — is still very important and wanted in our survey. Honesty and being present, letting your voice be heard (online or in person), is the point of this survey.

Yes, there have been many changes at Plymouth recently. Here's to many more loving, spiritual, fun, challenging, and often indescribable yet wonderful experiences at Plymouth for everyone.

—Keddy Williamson, a member of the Interim Action Group.