

Plymouth Forum Global Warming

Please welcome our two speakers to the Plymouth Forum on October 11, 10:00 a.m. in Hildebrand Hall.

Dr. Brian Naasz Brian is currently a Clinical Assistant Professor of Chemistry at Pacific Lutheran University where he teaches Environmental and Analytical Chemistry. He has a BS in Chemistry from Seattle University and a Ph.D. in Physical Chemistry from the University of California, Berkeley. He joined the Earth Ministry Board in January 2005 and currently serves as its chair. His church home is Agnus Dei Lutheran church in Gig Harbor, Washington.



Dr. Kevin O'Brien is Assistant Professor of Religion at Pacific Lutheran University, where he teaches Christian ethics, comparative ethics, and environmental ethics. His research focuses on the interconnections between human ethics and environmental concerns, scientific data and moral commitments, religious commitments and social justice. His book, *An Ethics of Biodiversity: Christianity, Ecology, and the Variety of Life*, is forthcoming from Georgetown University Press. He has served on the Board of Directors at Earth Ministry since 2008.



Experience the Labyrinth Plymouth's own Betty Behmke is a living treasure of wisdom and knowledge about Labyrinths. Plymouth U is your opportunity to hear about her research and adventures to places like Grace Cathedral in San Francisco and Chartes Cathedral in France. Sally Wagner will facilitate visual and participatory activities to enhance your Labyrinth experience. This will be a rich, fun and soul-filling class. Sign up on Sunday. Classes will start October 14.

Peace Is Possible This Plymouth U class will study proven methods of conflict resolution. The first two sessions will be led by Glen Gersmehl, who has pioneered creative approaches for addressing conflict and justice issues. The following three sessions will be led by Ari Cohen, developer of the new revolutionary Prevention And Restoration (PAR) Model for understanding and resolving conflict. We will learn about and practice this exciting tool. Please join us for this class in resolving conflict and fostering peace. Yes, peace is possible. —Adele Reynolds, Peace Action Group

Men's Retreat The annual Plymouth Men's Retreat is scheduled for the weekend of March 12-14, 2010 at Pilgrim Firs. Please mark your calendars. There will also be an optional 24 hour silent retreat preceding the men's retreat on March 11. We hope you will consider joining us for one or both of these special events. Watch *The Herald* for more information in coming weeks. Please contact Courtney Hashimoto (e-mail: cfhashimoto@comcast.net) if you want to participate on the planning committee.

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
1217 SIXTH AVENUE
SEATTLE, WA 98101-3199

NON-PROFIT ORG.
U.S. POSTAGE
PAID
PERMIT NO. 2325
SEATTLE, WASH.

RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED

Many Thanks to the Faithful Plymouth Pledgers! Unlike other churches during this time of economic downturn who are reducing staff or cutting programs, Plymouth can sustain the adopted 2009 budget thanks to all of you faithfully honoring your pledges. The year to date pledges are meeting our budget goals and expenses are on target. Thanks be to God. — Connie Sandstrom, Treasurer

The Stewardship Team
cordially invites you to a
Celebration Brunch
Sunday, October 18, 2009

in Hildebrand Hall
following the 11:00 a.m. Worship Service

This lively event is being planned for the Plymouth family, young and old, and we hope you will join us.

Childcare provided; sign-ups for childcare (with numbers and ages of kids) need to be made with the office by Sunday, October 11.



we are
witnesses

Plymouth Herald

Volume 48 Number 6
October 7, 2009

PLYMOUTH CHURCH
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

September Council News

The Reverend Kris Ostrem's Resignation: At its September 22 meeting, the Congregational Council received the Reverend Kris Ostrem's letter of resignation. It was not easy news to receive. Kris has been a very significant part of Plymouth for the past 11 years. During those years we have shared in the unfolding of her ministry among us, a gift to all of us. We know and love Kris, for her faithfulness, her caring, and her commitment. She has been our pastor, our teacher, our friend. She has encouraged us to listen and discern.

Now, Kris has listened to her call as she has encouraged us to do. With sadness, the Council has accepted her resignation. We realize we are called to be supportive of her decision, hard as that may be. As the time for Kris' leaving on November 30 approaches, we plan to celebrate the many gifts of her ministry among us, with heartfelt appreciation for who she is and all she has meant to us. We will truly miss you, Kris.

Work on Refreshing Plymouth's Vision Continues: Lively conversations are happening on what is important to each of us in our life as a faith community — today and as we look to the future. Thank you to all who participated in the discussions at the September 20 Forum and at the board chairs conversation. The Council has begun exploring the questions of Vital Worship and the roles of our clergy. We are making plans for future Congregational conversations and involvement on both of these important topics.

Pastoral Search: The Council has formally asked the Nominating Committee to prepare a slate of nominees for the Pastoral Search Committee. A Congregational meeting to elect the committee is set for November 8, 2009, after the 11:00 a.m. service.

Referendum 71 Supported: In 1993, the members of Plymouth voted in a Congregational Meeting to become an Open and Affirming Church. Part of the resolution which was passed called on us to:

"condemn acts of discrimination and violence (physical, emotional, economic, or legal) against persons because of their sexual orientation,...we encourage our members and friends to support advocacy efforts designed to assure that homosexual persons enjoy the same rights and privileges as heterosexual persons."*

In accord with this commitment of the Congregation, the Council voted unanimously at its meeting on September 22 to support Referendum 71** in the name of the Congregational Council and Pastors of Plymouth Church.

We invite you to join us in advocating for approval of Referendum 71. Information on Referendum 71 is available at the kiosk.

Progress made on the Future of Plymouth's Garage: A lease has been signed with Ace Parking Management for operation of the Plymouth Garage. An exciting part of the new arrangement is that Plymouth will now be able to make parking available in our garage in the evenings and on weekends, beginning November 1. Many thanks to the Garage Committee, Richard Wilson, Chair, Bill Bumpas, Stephanie Jones, and Marcia Almquist for outstanding work on Plymouth's behalf.

Congregational Conversation on Alcohol Policy Planned: A Congregational gathering to explore together the question of what should be Plymouth's policy on alcohol at intergenerational Plymouth camps will be held on Sunday, November 15, after the 11:00 a.m. service. —Nancy Smith

* The full text of the Open and Affirming resolution is available on the Plymouth Website.
** Support of Referendum 71 will preserve the Domestic Partnership law.

1217 Sixth Avenue
Seattle, WA 98101

TEL 206.622.4865
plymouthchurchseattle.org

Musings on Stewardship



I was excited. It was time to fire up the new financial software I'd purchased for my computer. I punched in all of our family financial information. And I was not disappointed with the result! Just as I'd hoped, there it was, in all its pie-charted, bar-graphed, multi-colored glory: our complete financial picture, all on one screen!

And then I clicked on the button marked "calculate net worth." The computer spit out its approval in response. Positive net worth. I felt good. Like "positive report from the dentist" good. Prudence, planning, excellent financial advice and hard work had all paid off.

The next day's mail brought me the latest edition of *The Christian Century* and the cover article presented an altogether different thesis: "God does not love your 401 K." The author, Jonathan Wilson-Hartgrove, posed a challenging question: "Do we really trust the abundance of God's economy or the goodness of God's family?"

And I must say, as I contemplate a new meaning for the data on my computer screen, the honest answer is that, in many aspects of my own life, the answer is a resounding no. By the world's rules I'm doing great. But in terms of building God's Kingdom on earth, I'm not so sure.

In our Covenant Group we are studying Archbishop of Canterbury Rowan Williams's book *Tokens of Trust: An Introduction to Christian Belief*. Williams calls on us to live lives of integrity. What would my life look like if it were more integrated with the Kingdom of God than the rules of the world? What might be different if I added up my net worth using the calculus of faith in abundance rather than a math based on the fear of scarcity?

Williams goes on to say that one of the key things we do as Christians is to "Take responsibility for making God credible in the world." And I fear that keeping parts of my life "faith free" where education, connections, my own cleverness and, ultimately, privilege are the currency I trust in, simply won't make me the witness I'd like to be for the God of Grace that has transformed my life.

It is a challenging time for the part of God's family we call Plymouth Church. We have no idea what the future holds. Some of us fear what might be lost. Others fear what's to come.

In the midst of such uncertainty, will my own family decide to increase its pledge during this stewardship season? Just how much is enough? I don't know yet. But in praying for a greater trust in God's economy, I hope to come much closer to the mark than I might otherwise.

—David Guthrie

We Welcome Norm Rice to Plymouth

Former Seattle Mayor Norman Rice will be with us this Sunday, participating in a sermon dialogue with the Reverend Tom Stiers. In July, Mr. Rice was named president/CEO of The Seattle Foundation (www.seattlefoundation.org). He served two terms as the Mayor of the City of Seattle, from 1990–1997, after serving 11 years on the Seattle City Council. He is currently a distinguished visiting practitioner at the Daniel J. Evans School of Public Affairs at the University of Washington. Please help to welcome him to the Plymouth pulpit this Sunday, October 11.



photo courtesy of Seattle Foundation

Sunday, October 11, 2009

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

The Reverend Thomas L. Stiers and
former Seattle Mayor Norm Rice, in dialogue

10:00 a.m. Sunday School

10:00 a.m. Plymouth Forum, *Global Warming*,
Hildebrand Hall

12:15 p.m. Fellowship Hour, Hildebrand Hall

Music This Sunday

We Welcome the Plymouth Trio This Sunday

Prelude: Plymouth Trio
Introit: Men's Choir Anthem
Offertory Anthem: *All My Trials* Norman Luboff
Postlude: Plymouth Trio
Hymns: 306, 448, 568

Where is God calling Plymouth's Youth Forum Ministry this year?

After navigating a couple of challenging years in Plymouth's high school ministry, the three adult volunteers and I are pleased to share exciting news about God's renewing presence at work among us all.

Here are highlights from our recent Fall Retreat with 19 teenagers at Camp Huston:

- ✧ Youth and adults alike soaked their souls in silence by first preparing to walk the labyrinth prayerfully, then wandering into the center of it and back out — all during a downpour! Of course we were rambunctious again afterwards, and yet for that hour we were able to be more fully present to God, creation and one another.
- ✧ Saturday morning's unwrapping of the two creation stories gave way to many wondering questions, among them, "Why don't we have a ritual honoring God blowing into Adam's nostrils, setting his breath in motion?" Good question!
- ✧ In the course of our Bible study we learned experientially why context is important for every story. Fighting the habit of jumping ahead to future Bible passages, the group disciplined themselves to engage only with what they were hearing about *right then*.
- ✧ After dinner Saturday night the group sang some of their favorite songs from our hymnal, including this line sung at top volume, "Go tell it on a mountain that Jesus Christ is born!"

There are other changes too:

When we are not in worship twice a month, our Sunday mornings will be centered on verbally learning core Bible stories, conversations sparked by Rob Bell's *NOOMA* videos, and learning new prayer practices by, well, practicing them!

One challenge in such a dynamic ministry like YFM is the shocking workload of tasks unrelated our core purpose of faith formation. Blessings go to both the team of parents who are working to help all YFM parents share in these tasks, as well as last year's parent team who proposed the idea. This year parents will help host our fundraising events, do the lion's share of grocery shopping for various events, and even put together those beautiful Shareholder Reports.

Finally, on last year's Sabbath weekend experience we learned the value of not going on a week-long mission trip every year. Having two week-long and two weekend

experiences within the four years of the Youth Forum Ministry provides opportunities for youth to both reach out as God's hands and feet, as well as reach in to tend to their personal faith journey. This is a mission trip year: in March 2010 we head back to Heifer International's Learning Center in Arkansas. We hope to discover again how our choices around food are linked to our faith.

What has generated this new growth?

There are many reasons. Chief among them is having a Sunday School ministry "upstream"—for babies through Confirmation—which focuses on connecting what we read in the Bible with how we walk the rest of our lives. Whatever the causes, those of us in the Youth Forum Ministry are giving thanks to God!

Cory Maclay, lay High School Youth Minister

Sign The Book of Life

Each year Plymouth members write down names of people who have passed from this world in *The Book of Life*. All the names recorded in *The Book of Life* will be listed in the Order of Worship on November 1. The names of those who passed away during the last year will be lifted up to God in spoken prayers that Sunday. You can find *The Book of Life* at the kiosk in the Lounge.

Our Neighborhood Caring Networks

Wondering what neighborhood you are part of and who your coordinator is? Go to the "Community" tab on the Plymouth website and click on "Faith Community Resources." Thanks again to all who stepped forward and agreed to coordinate their caring neighborhood network.

Come to Plymouth U

If you haven't yet registered for a Plymouth U class, there's still time. Call the office to reserve your space today. Classes run October 14 through November 11. \$40 for the entire five-week session includes dinner each evening. Class lists are available at the church, or online at www.plymouthseattle.org.

New Member Classes in October

Those interested in membership in Plymouth Church are invited to attend the first round of New Member classes, starting this Saturday.

10/13 Class 1: Introduction with 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