

2nd Sunday in Lent

March 5, 2023



Plymouth United Church of Christ Rev. David Huber, Pastor

2010 Moholt Drive, Eau Claire WI 54703 ☎ 715-835-5475 🌐 pcucc.com



PlymouthUnitedChurchOfChrist

The Family of God Gathers

Gathering Music

“People Need the Lord”

Please let the prelude be a signal to prepare for worship.

Greeting

Threshold Music

“Show Us How to Love”

Call to Worship †§

L: Christ of the comfortable, you call us from our security and sameness down that unknown path which leads to God’s heart:

P: we want to trust you, to have the courage to place our hands in yours so we may follow.

L: Companion of our sleepless nights, you beckon us out of the shadows of our fears, calling us to bring our doubts and questioning hearts along:

P: with humility, we listen to those answers we do not expect, or even understand, and sometimes that we don't like because they call us too far out of our comfort.

L: Word of life, you fill us with hope where we see only emptiness, you keep your promises while ours litter the ground, unkept:

P: let your grace transform us into faithful disciples who live more fully in your heart by offering help, shining your light, and sharing your love.

Opening Hymn Bulletin page 9

“My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less”

Prayer of Confession and Assurance of Pardon ✠§

L: Let us join together in opening our hearts to God’s love. Before we even utter a word, we can be assured God will offer us grace and a way forward. For this reason, we can be honest with what pains us most about our own thoughts and actions. Let us pray:

- P: Holy and Merciful One, in this season of discernment we come bringing our deepest longings, and our failed attempts at satisfying them. We have often looked for love, acceptance, and security in formulas that will assure success at the expense of staying tuned to your Spirit's nudge. We yearn for lives that matter, we desire relationships that thrive, we want less regret.**
- L: At times we fail to see that you have already given us what really matters: your love and acceptance.**
- P: You provide opportunities all around us to make a difference in the lives of others. You give us a fresh start each day, inviting us to do better. In this silence, we bring to you our pleas for openness to a different way of living.**

Silence

- L: My friends, be assured by the Psalmist who says, "The Lord will keep your life... your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore."**
- All: We open our hearts, our minds, our souls, our vision to the ways of love created by God, embodied in Jesus, and already moving in us by the Spirit. We are forgiven, loved, and freed! Amen!**
- L: The love and peace of Christ be with you!**
- P: And also with you!**

The Sign of Peace

Now please take a moment and share the peace with those in your household and/or offer a moment to send prayers of peace to those you love who are not with you.

Centering Song Bulletin page 10

"Change My Heart, O God"

The Service of the Word

Psalm 121

- L: I lift up my eyes to the hill— from where will my help come?**
- P: My help comes from the Lord, who made heaven and earth.**
- L: He will not let your foot be moved; he who keeps you will not slumber.**
- P: He who keeps Israel will neither slumber nor sleep.**
- L: The Lord is your keeper; the Lord is your shade at your right hand.**
- P: The sun shall not strike you by day, nor the moon by night.**
- L: The Lord will keep you from all evil; he will keep your life.**
- P: The Lord will keep your going out and your coming in from this time on and forevermore.**

Gospel

John 3:1–17

Now there was a Pharisee named Nicodemus, a leader of the Jews. He came to Jesus by night and said to him, “Rabbi, we know that you are a teacher who has come from God; for no one can do these signs that you do apart from the presence of God.” Jesus answered him, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can see the kingdom of God without being born from above.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can anyone be born after having grown old? Can one enter a second time into the mother’s womb and be born?” Jesus answered, “Very truly, I tell you, no one can enter the kingdom of God without being born of water and Spirit. What is born of the flesh is flesh, and what is born of the Spirit is spirit. Do not be astonished that I said to you, ‘You must be born from above.’ The wind blows where it chooses, and you hear the sound of it, but you do not know where it comes from or where it goes. So it is with everyone who is born of the Spirit.” Nicodemus said to him, “How can these things be?” Jesus answered him, “Are you a teacher of Israel, and yet you do not understand these things?

“Very truly, I tell you, we speak of what we know and testify to what we have seen; yet you do not receive our testimony. If I have told you about earthly things and you do not believe, how can you believe if I tell you about heavenly things? No one has ascended into heaven except the one who descended from heaven, the Son of Man. And just as Moses lifted up the serpent in the wilderness, so must the Son of Man be lifted up, that whoever believes in him may have eternal life.

“For God so loved the world that he gave his only Son, so that everyone who believes in him may not perish but may have eternal life.

“Indeed, God did not send the Son into the world to condemn the world, but in order that the world might be saved through him.

Sermon

Sermon Hymn 466 Bulletin page 11 “Unto the Hills We Lift Our Longing Eyes”

Offering

Doxology

**Praise God from whom all blessings flow
Praise God all creatures here below
Praise God above ye heavenly host
Creator, Christ, and Holy Ghost. Amen.**

Prayer of Dedication of Gifts and Self ‡§

You trust us enough to place your blessings in us. May we be as faithful in offering them back to you so others might be kept in their loneliness, might be fed in their emptiness, might receive hope in their despair. Amen.

Communion

Hymn 330 Bulletin page 12

“Let Us Break Bread Together”

Prayer ¶§

L: If love seems to play hide and seek, come searching at this table. For here you will find a host that does not disappoint! The feast is laid for all who come “looking for love,” and who desire to share that love with the unloved or seemingly unlovable. All too often, we have looked for love in all the wrong places. In this silence, we open ourselves to a change in our paths, to seeing with new eyes, to setting aside empty promises.

Silence

L: May Love be with you!

P: **And also with you!**

L: Lift up your hearts!

P: **We lift them up to the Lord!**

L: Let us give thanks to the Lord our God!

P: **It is right to give our thanks and praise!**

L: It is right, and a good and joyful thing always and everywhere to give thanks to you, Love Eternal, creator of heaven and earth. You formed us in your image and breathed into us the breath of life. When we could not fathom your endless love and we turned away, your love remained steadfast. You delivered us from captivity, made covenant to be our sovereign God, and spoke to us through your prophets. And so, with your people on earth and all the company of heaven we praise the name of Love and join their unending hymn:

All: **Holy, holy, holy Lord, God of power and might,
heaven and earth are full of your glory.**

Hosanna in the highest.

Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord.

Hosanna in the highest.

L: What love you have given us in your Son Jesus Christ! Your Spirit poured out through him, as he brought good news, proclaimed freedom, healed, and fed. His life of love shows us the way. His life of love delivers us from false hopes. His life, death, and resurrection offer ultimate and enduring love.

The Story

L: On the night in which he gave himself up for us, he took bread, gave thanks to you, broke the bread, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Take, eat; this is my body which is given for you. Do this in remembrance of me." When the supper was over, he took the cup, gave thanks to you, gave it to his disciples, and said: "Drink from this, all of you; this is my blood of the new covenant, poured out for you and for many for the forgiveness of sins. Do this, as often as you drink it, in remembrance of me." And so, in remembrance of this love in Jesus Christ, we offer our love completely as we proclaim the mystery of faith.

All: Christ has died; Christ is risen; Christ will come again!

L: Pour out your love and spirit on us gathered here, and on these gifts of bread and wine.

P: Make them be for us the love of Christ, so that we may be for the world the love of Christ! By your Spirit make us one with Christ, one with each other, and one in ministry to all the world, until Christ comes in final victory and we feast at his heavenly banquet. Amen.

Lord's Prayer

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name. Thy kingdom come. Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For thine is the kingdom, and the power, and the glory, forever. Amen.

Distribution

This table of friendship and love is open to all who desire an encounter with the living Christ. Please hold your bread in silent prayer until all are served, when we will eat together, symbolizing our unity as the body of Christ. Please drink the cup of salvation (grape juice on the outside rings, wine on the inside rings) as you are served, symbolizing our individual longing for Christ.

Prayer of Thanksgiving

Prayer of St. Francis

Lord, make me an instrument of thy peace. Where there is hatred, let me sow love; where there is injury, pardon; where there is doubt, faith; where there is despair, hope; where there is darkness, light; where there is sadness, joy. O Divine Master, grant that I may not so much seek to be consoled as to console, to be understood as to understand, to be loved as to love; for it is in giving that we receive; it is in pardoning that we are pardoned; it is in dying to self that we are born to eternal life. Amen.

Closing Hymn 172 Bulletin page 13

“Jesus Calls Us, o’er the Tumult”

Benediction ☩

L: Go forth into the world, looking for love in all the right places!

P: We will look for signs of The Helper, knowing that God is ever present, urging our choice for love! Amen!

Sung Benediction

**All who hunger, sing together;
Jesus Christ is living bread.
Come from loneliness and longing.
Here, in peace, we have been led.
Blest are those who from this table
live their lives in gratitude.
Taste and see the grace eternal.
Taste and see that God is good.**

Postlude

“Aria”

† <http://lectionaryliturgies.blogspot.com>

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§ Modified/written by Rev. David Huber

Worship Leaders

Pastor: Rev. David Huber • Ministers: All the people of Plymouth • Pianist: Lynn McFadyen • Liturgist: Linda Oliver

We of Plymouth extend to you our hand of fellowship and an invitation to become a member. If you are interested, or have any questions, please speak with or send a note to Pastor David or our Moderator, Barb Kleist. Our table always has room for more.

Cross illumination for February is sponsored by Ben Bechle in memory of his father, David Bechle.

This Week at Plymouth

Sunday, March 5

Hunger offering

10:00 A.M. Coffee

10:30 A.M. Communion Worship

11:30 A.M. Leadership Team

Tuesday, March 7

10:00 A.M. Quilters

6:45 P.M. Dartball

Rock Creek at Plymouth

Wednesday, March 8

6:00 P.M. Lenten soup supper

Sunday, March 12

Prayers for the People

10:00 A.M. Coffee

10:30 A.M. Worship

We pray for:

- The General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ Rev. John Dorhauer and Wisconsin Conference Minister Rev. Franz Rigert, along with all UCC staff at the national and Conference level

Wednesday Soup Suppers

Wednesday Lenten soup suppers are back! We will gather for fellowship, discussion, and a simple meal of soup, bread, and bars. Our topic this year is the Kingdom of God (or Kin-dom of God) and how it relates to Plymouth and our community. We will meet at 6 P.M. in the Fellowship Room on March 1, 8, 15, 22, and 29. (That's every Wednesday in March.) If you are coming from work or school and arrive a little late that's ok! If you'd like to provide bread, soup, or bars, please sign up on the sheet in the entryway. If you have questions see George Stecher.

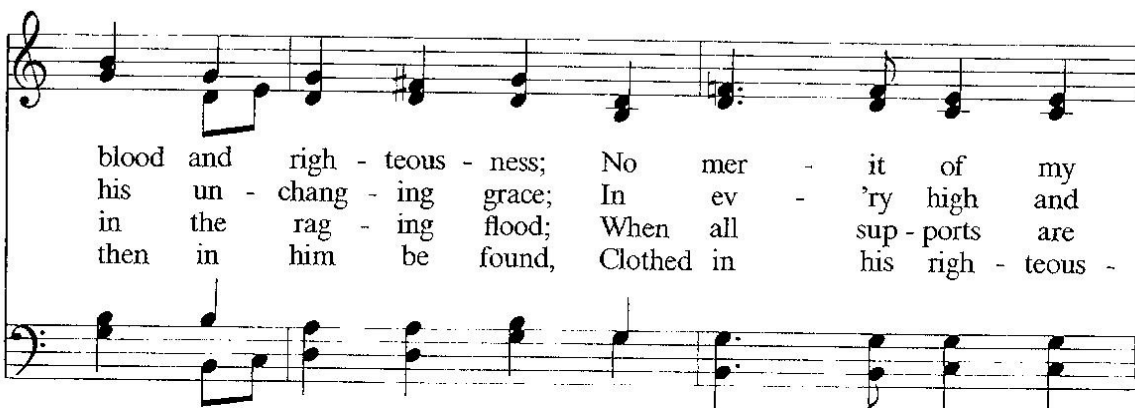
The order for Easter flowers needs to be placed March 10. Order forms are in the alcove. Order yours today!

Don't forget that next weekend we "spring forward."

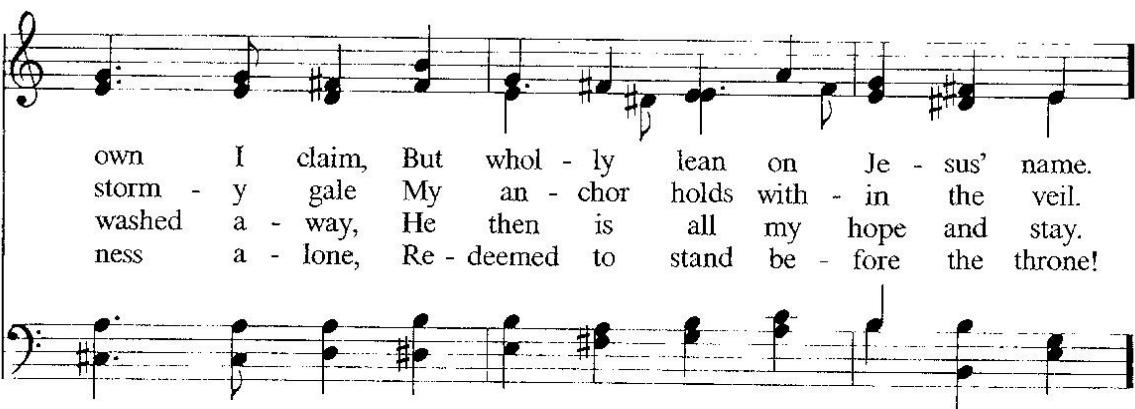
My Hope Is Built on Nothing Less



1 My hope is built on noth - ing less Than Je - sus'
 2 When dark - ness veils his love - ly face, I rest on
 3 His oath, his cov - e - nant, his blood Sus - tain me
 4 When he shall come with trum - pet sound, Oh, may I



blood and righ - teous - ness; No mer - it of my
 his un - chang - ing grace; In ev - 'ry high and
 in the rag - ing flood; When all sup - ports are
 then in him be found, Clothed in his righ - teous -



own I claim, But whol - ly lean on Je - sus' name.
 storm - y gale My an - chor holds with - in the veil.
 washed a - way, He then is all my hope and stay.
 ness a - lone, Re - deemed to stand be - fore the throne!

Refrain



On Christ, the sol - id rock, I stand; All oth - er ground is sink - ing sand.

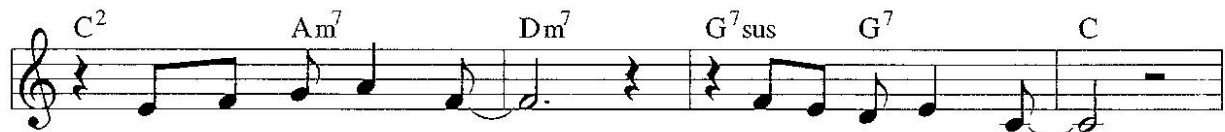
Text: Edward Mote, 1787-1874, alt.
 Tune: John B. Dykes, 1823-1876

MELITA
 88 88 88

Change my heart, O God



Change my heart, O God. Make it ev - er true.



Change my heart, O God. May I be like you.



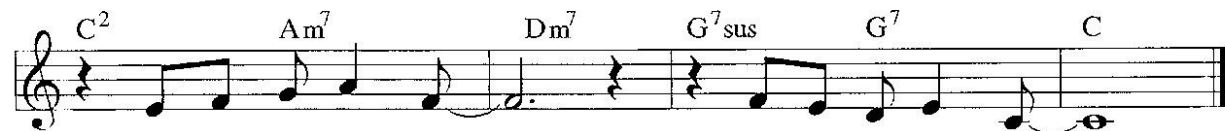
You are the pot - ter, I am the clay;



mold me and make me, this is what I pray.



Change my heart, O God. Make it ev - er true.



Change my heart, O God. May I be like you.

Text and music: Eddie Espinosa ©1982 Mercy/Vineyard Publishing
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Unto the Hills We Lift Our Longing Eyes

466

John Campbell, Duke of Argyll, 1877; alt.

Ps. 121

1 Un - to the hills we lift our long - ing eyes with yearn - ing sighs.
 2 God will not let our ser - vant feet be moved; safe we will be.
 3 God is our keep - er, change-less through the years, a shel - ter strong.
 4 From ev - ery e - vil, God will keep our lives, from ev - ery sin.

Who will pro - vide the help we sore - ly need? Who hears our cries?
 God will sup - ply, for all our nights and days, se - cu - ri - ty.
 God is our shade, pro - tect - ing ev - ery hand, through a - ges long.
 God will pre - serve and guard our go - ing out, our com - ing in.

From our Cre - a - tor comes our cer - tain aid.
 God does not sleep when we are tak - ing rest.
 Sun will not strike or harm through-out the day,
 Ev - er a - round, with - in, we will a - dore.

Our help is from our God, who all things made.
 God's cov - e - nant en - dures through ev - ery test.
 Nor moon by night, those liv - ing by God's way.
 our God who holds and guides for - ev - er - more.

John Campbell's paraphrase of Psalm 121 was a favorite with Canadian soldiers during World War II. Campbell, a member of Parliament, was married to Queen Victoria's daughter, Princess Louise. For six years he was governor-general of Canada.

Tune: SANDON 10.4.10.4.10.10.
 Charles Henry Purday, 1860
 For another harmonization, see 366

Let Us Break Bread Together

Acts 2:42

African-American spiritual

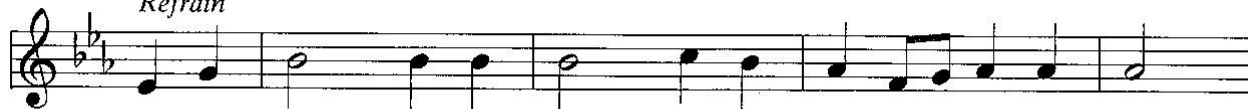


- 1 Let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees;
 * 2 Let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees;
 3 Let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees;



let us break bread to - geth-er on our knees.
 let us drink wine to - geth-er on our knees.
 let us praise God to - geth-er on our knees.

Refrain



When I fall on my knees, with my face to the ris - ing sun,



My God, have mer-cy on me.

* "Share the cup" may be substituted for "drink wine."

The earliest version of this spiritual probably began with the current stanza three, and was a song some of the enslaved in Virginia used when gathering for secret meetings. The communion stanzas were added some time after the Civil War.

Tune: LET US BREAK BREAD
 10.10. with refrain
 Harm. David Hurd, 1983


Music harmonization Copyright © 1986 by G.I.A. Publications, Inc.

Jesus Calls Us, o'er the Tumult



172

Cecil F. Alexander, 1852; alt.


Matt. 4:18-22; Mark 1:16-20; John 21:15



1 Je-sus calls us, o'er the tu - mult of our life's wild, rest-less sea;
2 As of old, Saint An-drew heard it by the Gal - i - le - an lake,
3 Je-sus calls us from the wor-ship of the trea - sures we a - dore,
4 In our joys and in our sor-rows, days of toil and hours of ease,
5 Je-sus calls us! By your mer-cies, Sav-ior, may we hear your call,



Day by day that voice still calls us, say - ing, "Chris-tian, fol - low me."
Turned from home and toil and kin-dred, leav - ing all for Je - sus' sake.
From each i - dol that would keep us, say - ing, "Chris-tian, love me more."
Je - sus calls, in cares and plea-sures, "Chris-tian, love me more than these."
Give our hearts to your o - be-dience, serve and love you best of all.



Cecil Alexander, who in Ireland wrote sacred verse to teach children the meaning of the catechism and liturgy, designated this poem for St. Andrew's Day. Many years later Galilee was composed for this text by an English organist, William Jude.

Tune: GALILEE 8.7.8.7.
William H. Jude, 1887
Alternate setting: ST. ANDREW

Who we are...

Plymouth UCC is an Open and Affirming congregation, embracing diversity and affirming the dignity and worth of every person, since we are all created in God's image. We welcome into full membership and participation in the Body of Christ persons of every race, ethnic background, age, gender identity and expression, sexual orientation, physical or mental ability, socio-economic background, marital status and background. We welcome all to share in the life, leadership, ministry, fellowship, worship, sacraments, responsibilities, humor, and blessings of participation in our congregation.

Spiritual Care Package

Questions for Reflection

Consider a time when you felt uncertain. Can you see how God was at work in your life at that time? What from Abraham and Sarai's story, or from Nicodemus's story, is a help to you as you look for evidence of God's presence in your own life?

Household Prayer: Morning

Loving God, you have given me the gift of this new day, and you send me out to live it fully and well. Help me to be attentive to your direction and leading. If you should call me to go in some direction, give me courage to try this new thing. If you present me with a mysterious truth or grace, help me to understand, or to seek understanding, with a sense of wonder and faith. Whatever this day may hold, I trust that you will keep me in all my comings and goings. In your Son's name, I pray. Amen.

Household Prayer: Evening

Gracious God, as the evening comes and the light fades, I look for you even in the shadows. Your love and protection stay with me through the night hours, and I rest in your promises. For the day as it has been, I give you thanks. For the gift of rest, I offer a hymn of praise. You love me and the whole world so greatly that you offer us salvation. After a night of rest, bring me into the light of a new day. In gratitude, I pray in Jesus' name. Amen.

God is still speaking,