

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
LOCAL CHURCH PROFILE



Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
4126 Ingersoll Avenue
Des Moines, Iowa
515.255.3149

Open Position: Senior Minister
Conference: The Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ

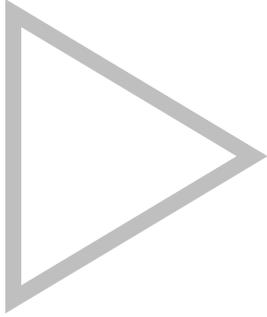
Validation Date: May 4, 2021

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*“God is able to provide you with every blessing, so that
having all sufficiency in all things at all times,
you may abound in every good work.”
(2 Corinthians 9:8)*

1. POSITION POSTING



- a. LISTING INFORMATION
- b. SCOPE OF WORK
- c. COMPENSATION & SUPPORT
- d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

1a. LISTING INFORMATION

Church name: Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ (referred to throughout as Plymouth)

Street address: 4126 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines, Iowa 50312

Supplemental web links: <https://www.plymouthchurch.com>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (*e.g. denominations, communions, fellowships*): The UCC is in full communion with the Presbyterian Church USA, Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), and the Reformed Church in America. Plymouth is a sister-church with Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana, Cuba.

Conference: The Iowa Conference, which shares staff with the Tri-State Conference (Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences) <https://ucctcm.org>

Association: Central Association of the Iowa Conference

UCC Conference or Association Staff Contact Person: Rev. Samantha Houser, Associate Conference Minister, 402-350-1714, samantha@ucctcm.org

Summary Ministry Description:

Plymouth is on its way to living out its 2020-2025 strategic plan—*practicing radical love everywhere and always*. We will practice meaning and purpose, hospitality and belonging, justice and kindness, and operational excellence through effective structures and digital tools to create a frictionless experience for everyone. A copy of our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan is attached.

Our church needs an inspiring preacher and teacher with strong communication skills, who welcomes people with divergent views, handles conflict effectively, and builds effective teams.

Photographs:



What we value about living in our area:

Des Moines, the capital city of Iowa, is regularly ranked as one of the top 10 best cities to live in by U.S. News. Great schools, affordable housing, a budding food culture, several annual festivals, and drivable access to several other large cities help make Des Moines a desirable city to live in. Extensive recreational trails, rivers, and parks all contribute as well to making Des Moines an easy place to enjoy time outdoors. In addition to the amenities of the city, Des Moines is progressive for the region and has a welcoming culture. Surrounding suburbs provide for many different living options within a short commute from Plymouth. People who live in the area describe it as having the best elements of both small towns and larger cities.

Current size of membership: Approximately 2,500. Average weekend church attendance approximately 600 (among our 3 services).

Languages used in ministry (*other than English*): None

Position Title: Senior Minister

Position Duration: Settled Pastor

Compensation Level: Full Time

Does the total support package meet conference compensation guidelines? Yes

1b. SCOPE OF WORK

This position is for a full time Pastoral Position (40-50 hours weekly). The scope of work for this position includes, but is not limited to, the following common pastoral activities:

- Preparation and leadership of worship services, including scripture study, crafting of liturgy and bulletin, sermon preparation, coordinating music with program staff or volunteers, preaching, offering of prayers, etc.
- Faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities, and encouraging and helping lay persons take advantage of them.
- Leadership development by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs.
- Pastoral care in collaboration with ministers and lay people.

- Community engagement and leading the way for the church to be an ambassador of God’s love.
- Leading weddings, baptisms, and funerals for participants in the worshipping community.
- Strategic planning for current and new directions in ministry.
- Attend meetings and give leadership as needed to church programs, in collaboration with lay leadership and other ministerial staff.
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings.
- Oversight of administration responsibilities.
- Faithful financial development and stewardship.
- Overall responsibility for supervision of program and administrative staff.
- Provide mentorship and guidance to TiM Associate Ministers (discussed below).
- Availability to wider community for funerals, weddings, special worship programs, and as a representative of the church to local organizations.
- Counseling, listening, and providing referrals as appropriate.
- Study and prayer to increase faith and to improve skills to lead, teach, preach better.
- Energizing and deepening spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do.

Core Competencies:

Plymouth seeks a senior minister who consistently delivers inspiring sermons. We seek a senior minister with strong personal and interpersonal communication skills to build effective teams and mentor all church staff. We seek a senior minister who will help implement the vision of Plymouth along with the congregation, as described in its Strategic Plan.

1c. COMPENSATION AND SUPPORT

Salary Basis:

Cash Salary		Housing Allowance		Salary Basis
\$75,000-\$95,000	+	\$25,000-\$30,000	=	\$100,000-\$125,000 annually

Benefits:

- Pension: 14% of salary
- Health Insurance: 90% single premium, United Healthcare
- Dental Insurance: 90% single premium, Delta Dental

- Long-Term Disability: 100% of premium
- Life Insurance Premium: 100% of premium (\$500,000 maximum)
- Education/Travel Expenses: Up to \$1,000 annually

What is the expected living situation for your next minister?

Plymouth does not have a parsonage. A housing allowance is incorporated in the salary basis set forth above. While there are residential properties for rent and for purchase near Plymouth and within Des Moines city limits, there are also numerous suburbs surrounding the City of Des Moines, which may provide additional options depending on an individual's personal needs.

For some additional context relating to the salary basis and the housing market:

- According to 2020 sources, the average household income within a 15-mile radius from Plymouth was approximately \$82,000, with the median household income being approximately \$57,000.
- According to 2020 sources, the median price of a single-family home in Des Moines was \$170,000. The median price of a home in the Des Moines area, including the surrounding suburbs, was \$285,000.

Comment on the residential/commuting expectations for your next minister.

The Senior Minister is expected to work primarily in-person at the church, as opposed to remotely. While the Senior Minister is not required to live within a certain distance from church, practical aspects of this position should be considered when determining where to live, including the fact that the Senior Minister will need to be available for all services, meetings, and other church obligations as needed. Additionally, we believe the Senior Minister will generally benefit from awareness of events in the community within which Plymouth is situated.

State any incentives:

Paid Time Off includes:

- Vacation: 4 weeks per year (20 days), pro-rated
- Personal Days: 3 days per year, pro-rated
- Sick Leave: 1 day per month, up to 45-day accrual
- Holidays: 9 paid days each year
- Rest and Renewal: One Saturday/Sunday off each quarter
- Sabbatical: 3-month sabbatical after 5 years of continuous service

Describe peer and professional supports available for ministers in your association/conference:

The UCC provides shared ministerial teams that serve the Iowa, Nebraska and South Dakota conferences, communities of practice that the conference hosts, and twice weekly virtual support gatherings for authorized pastors via the conference.

If applicable, describe how your church will adopt part-time adjustments in the pastoral schedule to support a minister's bi-vocational employment:

Not applicable.

1d. WHO IS GOD CALLING TO MINISTER WITH US?

Describe the ministry goals you envision your next minister co-collaborating with the congregation to achieve.

Plymouth envisions that its next Senior Minister will provide inspiring sermons to encourage people to relate their faith to their daily lives, with calls to action to grow in love of God and neighbor. They will also encourage and support intergenerational relationships within the church as well as participation in outreach with our community. Our next Senior Minister will play an important role in implementing Plymouth's 2020-2025 Strategic Plan. The next senior minister, together with the congregation and church leadership, will practice radical love everywhere with meaning and purpose. Our goal is to extend hospitality and welcome all we encounter. Plymouth hopes to lay the foundation for a just and equitable world starting with our own community. They will also lead and assist us in practicing operational excellence. This foundational practice will support all other practices of the Strategic Plan and overall church operations through effective structures and digital tools to create and maintain a frictionless experience for everyone.

Describe how your vision of the minister you are now seeking will assist the congregation in making an impact beyond its walls.

Plymouth seeks a Senior Minister to support community service and outreach initiatives already in progress and led by congregants, and to help expand their reach. Keeping in consideration the new Strategic Plan, our church needs a Senior Minister called to lead, unite, and inspire. The congregation at Plymouth is already passionate and dedicated but without a visionary leader we cannot easily expand our impact.

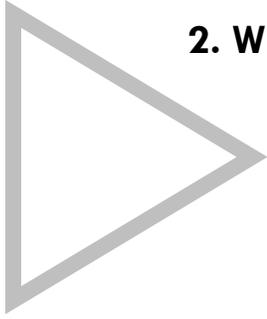
Specify language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in a next ministerial leader, and why those matter to the congregation's sense of calling.

We expect our next Senior Minister to be able to speak English. Aside from this, we do not have any specific language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred in our next Senior Minister.

Based on what you have learned about who your church is, who your church's neighbor is, and who God is calling the church to become, describe four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that your next minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministry in these areas.

Four areas of excellence from *The Marks of Faithful & Effective Authorized Ministry* that our next Senior Minister will display to further equip the congregation's ministries:

1. Building transformational leadership skills
2. Strengthening Interpersonal & Intrapersonal assets
3. Engaging sacred stories & traditions
4. Working together for justice and mercy



2. WHO IS GOD CALLING US TO BECOME?

“You shall love the Lord your God with all your heart, and with all your soul, and with all your mind.” (Matthew 22:37 NRSV)

Who is God calling you to become as a congregation?

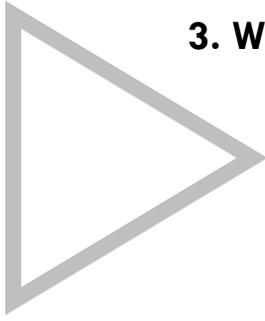
God is calling us to passionately, radically, and actively love God and our neighbor, no matter who they are or where they are on their spiritual journey. All are welcome at Plymouth, a safe space. God is calling us to pursue social action, justice, peace, and love, in our community and the world.

Describe how God is calling you to reach out to address the emerging challenges and opportunities of your community and congregation.

One initiative our Anti-Racism Committee led in January–February of 2020 was a success. A 6-week series focused on the 1619 Project, a New York Times Magazine edition published August 18, 2019, created by native Iowan Nikole Hannah-Jones, devoted to the history of slavery and its effects on our history and current times. This class series attracted 125-150 people, from within the church and outside its walls, who attended these weekly educational programs, read the materials, answered questions before each class, and participated in facilitated conversations during each class. Additional actions to show our support for social justice initiatives occurred during the summer of 2020. This work will certainly continue for the foreseeable future.

Another initiative occurred a few years ago involving a proposal for a Black Lives Matter banner or sign in front of Plymouth Church. This became a divisive issue, leading to some members leaving the church for a variety of reasons. The Black Lives Matter banner was approved, and is currently placed on the front lawn near a busy intersection.

In 2019 and early 2020, a Strategic Plan was created, with input from the congregation. The tenets of this strategic plan are included in other sections of this church profile. We pray that this Strategic Plan, and our next Senior Minister, will take us to the place God is calling us to be as a congregation.



3. WHO ARE WE NOW?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS
- d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING
- e. CHURCH FINANCES
- f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

3a. CONGREGATIONAL REFLECTIONS

Describe your congregation’s life of faith.

Each member of Plymouth states this covenant: “In the presence of God and these witnesses, I give myself unreservedly to God’s service, and take this to be my church. Ever mindful of the welfare of my brother and sister members, I promise to walk with them in faithfulness and Christian love. And, I promise that, so far as able, I will attend the services of this Church, observe its sacraments, share in its work, support its benevolence and endeavor to make it a fruitful body of Christians.”

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

After a tumultuous year of a global pandemic and internal church changes, Plymouth is eager for a new Senior Minister to unite and lead our congregation around shared values and to channel radical love into action. Generally speaking, Plymouth members are dedicated and passionate about the church and its mission; they yearn for excellent preaching and inspiring sermons. With a committed and talented congregation eager to serve the community, the new Senior Minister will have the opportunity to lead, inspire, and challenge the congregation from day one.

Another strength of our Congregation is the fact that we are currently debt-free, and we have a healthy endowment managed through the Plymouth Foundation (see below).

Most importantly, Plymouth members love Plymouth! We love the consistent excellence in music and worship each week. We love the myriad ways we can grow in love of God and neighbor by participating in the initiatives or groups that matter most to us. All are truly welcome at Plymouth Church.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers.

Prior to Covid, Plymouth offered three in-person services weekly, lasting about one hour each: Saturday at 5:30 pm, Sunday at 9:00 am, and Sunday at 11:00 am. As is true for

many churches, Covid's impact on worshipping together and being in community will be felt throughout Plymouth in the days to come. It will be necessary to carry these experiences and lessons going forward as we evolve.

Saturday Night Services are held in the more informal Waveland Hall with attendees sitting at round conference tables, with paper and crayons, perfect for facilitating conversation and connection. Music is provided by the bluegrass-inspired Saturday Night Band featuring a mix of contemporary songs and traditional hymns. This service also includes weekly communion (the Sunday services have historically offered communion eight times per year).

Both Sunday morning services feature the same scripture passage, announcements, and sermon with a traditional feel. Held in the gorgeous sanctuary, attendees worship alongside talented instrumentalists and choirs. The Matins Choir, featuring high school youth from across the metro, serves as 9:00 am worship leaders during the academic calendar year. Children's choirs, for children in pre-K through 6th grade, frequently sing during Sunday morning services as well. The 11:00 am worship service features the adult Chancel Choir, leading the congregation in singing traditional hymns and performing choral anthems that complement the scripture passage and sermon theme. Our talented organist accompanies the hymns and plays preludes and postludes. Worship is occasionally accompanied by a bell choir or various instrumentalists. The blending of music, scripture, sermons, and spirituality is integral to Plymouth's identity and a key way for congregants to connect to and worship God.

Aside from our many choirs and musical talents, Plymouth has a strong tradition of stirring, thought-provoking preaching. The minister's sermon is a beloved component of weekend worship and guiding light for inspiring all to focus on love of God and neighbor. When asked "Why attend worship at Plymouth?," the most common response relates to inspiring preaching. Plymouth ministers take turns preaching sermons on a rotating basis, so the congregation hears from four or five different ministers each month. It is true that Plymouth congregants do not "check our brains at the door" and we have come to expect and cherish theological discourse and "take action" inspiration during weekend worship.

Between services on Sundays there is a weekly Fellowship Forum for any who wish to attend. At this conversational gathering, members have an opportunity to express what they are currently processing as well as to be challenged and educated by one another on current events.

Since the beginning of the pandemic, Plymouth has offered weekly online worship services and weekly virtual fellowship opportunities. We have also held a number of in-person, outdoor services and other worship opportunities. As we begin to resume some in-person worship as 2021 continues, we anticipate continuing to offer a variety of worship opportunities and locations, including regular online services.

Describe the educational program/faith formation vision of your church.

Plymouth offers a variety of educational programming and faith formation for children, families, and adults. While much of our programming has been modified or suspended due to COVID, we developed several ways to engage with children and families during the pandemic, and intend to resume more of our traditional offerings in the near future.

While our programming for children and families has a strong foundation and healthy attendance, we are eager to expand and best meet the needs of our congregation. Currently, educational programming for children and youth is largely related to choral opportunities. Building on this structure and expanding it to broaden our inclusion should be considered a priority for the new Senior Minister.

See below for current educational program/faith formation offerings:

Children and Families:

- **Family Church School.** Since September 2020, Family Church School has been offered via Zoom on Sunday mornings and Wednesday evenings for children (ages 3 to 6th grade). Content aligns with the worship series and resources including crafts are distributed to families. Church School includes prayers, opportunity to view the week's Children's Sermon, teacher-led small groups, and craft time. Prior to Covid, Church School classes were held Sunday mornings during the 9:00 am worship service (children could attend worship until they were dismissed to Church School).
- **Vacation Bible School.** Plymouth has a long history of offering a 4-day Vacation Bible School in the summer. In 2020, a virtual 4-day VBS was offered with songs, skits, crafts and snacks. VBS 2021 will again be virtual in response to parent input. In addition, small in-person family gatherings in the summer will allow children and parents to participate in community service activities.
- **Children's Choirs.** Plymouth has several aged-based choirs for children ages 3 years old through 8th grade (with Matins Choir starting in 9th grade). Most of the choirs rehearse weekly and sing during worship once every 4-6 weeks during the program year.
- **Confirmation.** Confirmation at Plymouth is a two-year program for 7th & 8th graders. Confirmands are placed into small groups for service projects and community building activities led by volunteer adult guides. Pastors and lay leaders teach "theme nights" twice each month, focusing on the foundational questions and practices of Christian faith that help us grow in love of God and neighbor. This program averages 25 students per grade level.
- **Classes for Families.** At key moments in the lives of families (when a child is born, starts school, receives their own Bible, enters adolescence, is confirmed, graduates high school), it is important for families to know they are not alone. Plymouth gathers families at these times for classes, community building, and blessing to remind families and children that they are not alone on the journey of faith.

Youth Programming:

- **Matins Choir.** A 65-year-old tradition of leading worship at the 9:00 a.m. Sunday worship service, weekly, September through June. They rehearse weekly and tour across the US annually in June. These 14–18-year-olds represent 12 different metro high schools.
- **Conversations & Connections.** A weekly gathering sharing highs and lows, discussing current events & topics as well as study of thematic material woven in worship and the life of Plymouth.
- **High School Small Groups.** Meeting twice a month either on Wednesdays (during Covid) or Sundays after worship. Small groups led by adult volunteers and HS leaders focus on thematic material in an intimate, relationship building group.
- **Care & Outreach.** A monthly opportunity for HS youth to serve their community either within Plymouth Church or outside our walls.
 - HS Youth Note Writers, began early in the pandemic pairing high schoolers with older adults in the congregation through note writing. This ministry continues and is developing.
 - Senior Care Packages – Current high schoolers pack and send care packages to former Matins in college, and our older adults in the congregation.
 - HS Mental Health Advocates – This developing group seeks to provide space for any high schooler to gather in conversation about mental health and wellness.
- **Service & Social Justice.** Varied opportunities for high schoolers to engage in relevant and current issues that affect our communities.
 - Black Lives Matter – protests and marches
 - Voter Registration Rallies
 - Refugee & Immigration Awareness Trainings
 - Central Iowa Services Shelter – Feeding the homeless
- **High School Summer Book Study.** Summer small group book study led by HS leaders. Book based on current events.
- **Youth Nabbing/Welcome to HS Youth Ministry.** Annual welcome to our incoming high schoolers at the beginning of the year. This year, youth leaders visited and dropped off swag bags and Youth Ministry yard signs to all incoming freshmen.
- **Mobile Youth Ministry Visits.** During the pandemic, the youth director makes personal driveway visits to high school youth to remain in connection & relationship.
- **Youth Leadership Team.** Leadership team of ten 12th graders meets monthly, working collaboratively with the adult Youth Executive Committee.
- **Youth Executive Committee.** Adult committee serves and supports the HS Youth Ministry program. Members serve a three-year term, meeting monthly.
- **Matins Tour.** Annual outreach tour of the Matins Choir for one week during June. Based on a rotation schedule of local (up to 6 hours out), regional (up to 12 hours out) or long (up to 2 days out).
- **Wednesday Night Dinners.** Weekly dinners provided by Matins parents feeds approximately 50–60 students.
- **High School Youth Lock-In.** Annual overnight event in January, celebrating the end of the fall semester, allowing an opportunity for fellowship with Matins parents' supervision.

- **Matins Parents Choir.** Annual parent choir rehearses and sings in worship the Sunday after the Youth Lock-In. Parents experience what it is like to be a Matin once a year.

Adults:

- **Weekly Bible Study.** Traditionally held at church or a coffee shop on Wednesday mornings, the weekly Bible Study has transitioned well into a digital gathering
- **Various Book Clubs.** Current virtual offerings include the Plymouth Young Adults Book Study and the Eastertide Book Study. A Lenten Book Study, via Zoom, included people from Alabama, Florida, and Arizona, in addition to Plymouth members in the Des Moines area.
- **Virtual Faith Formation.** Connecting during a pandemic has shifted to almost entirely online but Plymouth is still prioritizing spiritual growth. Currently we offer several opportunities for connection and exploration including a weekly spiritual kick off, daily evening prayers, and digital guides for faith at home.

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Plymouth has a somewhat complex organizational structure made up of committees and boards, with a Church Council serving as the ultimate governing body.

At least 20 committees meet monthly for 60 or 90 minutes. Generally speaking, each committee reports to one of Plymouth's nine boards: Board of Benevolences, Board of Christian Education, Board of Christian Stewardship, Board of Christian Social Action, Board of Deacons, Board of Membership, Board of Music and Fine Arts, Board of Spiritual Growth, and Board of Trustees. Boards also typically meet monthly for 60-90 minutes. The Chair and Vice Chair of each board are voting members of the Church Council. The Church Council is Plymouth's governing body and meets monthly for 1-2 hours. Church Council has 21 voting members. Church Council meetings are led by the Church Moderator and Moderator-Elect, both of whom are voted on by the membership and serve 1-year terms in each position.

Committees and boards are comprised of church members, with a minister assigned as a liaison. The decision-making process for some matters flow from a committee to its overseeing board and on to the Church Council for final approval or authorization, while other decisions are made at the committee or board levels.

The church bylaws govern the decision-making process.

Decisions are communicated to our members and attendees in a variety of ways, including weekly e-mails, pulpit announcements, a monthly newsletter, mailings, and an annual church meeting. Additionally, Church Council meetings are typically open to all to attend.

- When it comes to decision-making, how many hours are spent in meetings per month?

At least 20 committees meet regularly, for 60-90 minutes per month. The nine church boards (plus the Plymouth Foundation Board) meet monthly for 60-90 minutes. The Church Council meets monthly for 1-2 hours. An approximate total of 45 hours is spent in meetings per month, by Plymouth members. Plymouth ministers are assigned as liaisons to these committees and boards, but are not expected to regularly attend all of these meetings. The Plymouth staff meet weekly for several hours. The Senior Minister presides over these weekly staff meetings and actively participates in the monthly Church Council meetings.

- Think of a time when action had to be taken quickly, for example when a crisis or disaster occurred. How was that accomplished?

In mid-March of 2020, when the church building shut down due to the COVID-19 orders, the church staff and lay leaders acted quickly to find a new way to conduct worship services and provide the ministries of the church in virtual formats. The church staff and lay leaders continued to improve these services and ministries over the past year.

- Can you provide the next minister with a copy of an organization structure, bylaws and/or annual report to further explain the patterns of the church’s activity and governance?

Yes, bylaws and an annual report can be provided to the next Senior Minister. Please note, the bylaws are currently being reviewed and have the potential to be amended later this year. An accurate organizational chart is not currently available.

3b. 11-YEAR REPORT

The 11-Year Report is attached.

3c. CONGREGATIONAL DEMOGRAPHICS

Describe those who participate in your church.

		<i>Is this number an estimate?</i>
Number of active members:	2518	Yes

Number of active non-members:	762 (prospects)	Yes
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	3280	Yes

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church: Note: of the 3,280 participants identified above, we only have this data for 1,894.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	1238 or 65%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	372 or 20%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	284 or 15%	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-44	45-54	55-64	65-74	75+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
208	166	169	197	230	277	321	381	353	Yes

Percentage of adults in various household types: This information is not currently available.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Single adults under 35:		
Households with minors:		
Single adults age 35-65:		
Joint households with no minors:		
Single adults over 65:		

Education level of adult participants by percentage: This information is not currently available.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:		
College:		
Graduate School:		

Specialty Training:		
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types: This information is not currently available.

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Adults who are employed:		
Adults who are retired:		
Adults who are not fully employed:		

Describe the range of occupations of working adults in the congregation:

The majority of Plymouth’s membership has a bachelor’s degree or higher and is part of, or retired from, the professional community.

Describe the mix of ethnic heritages in your congregation, and the overall racial make-up. Most UCC congregations tend to describe themselves as “diverse.” Yet, the vast majority of UCC congregations are mono-cultural. What does diversity mean in your context?

Plymouth is a predominately white, upper-middle class congregation. We desire to become more reflective of the entire greater Des Moines Metro community by increasing our racial and socio-economic diversity, among many other things.

Diversity amongst Plymouth congregants relates more to political ideology, city of residence, and previous religious background. There is not currently significant racial or socioeconomic diversity but we are home to many members of the LGBTQ+ community and families of all different structures.

Has your congregation recently had a conversation about welcoming diversity, or do you plan to hold one on the near future (perhaps using, for example, the Welcoming Diversity Inventory)? Please note the date. Comment after the exercise:

Plymouth has not engaged in the Welcoming Diversity Inventory exercise. However, during our most recent strategic planning process, many conversations were had about the value of diversity and Plymouth’s desire to create a more diverse congregation that reflects the community within which we live and serve. Please see our 2020-2025 Strategic Plan for additional information.

In addition, Plymouth’s Anti-Racism Committee (ARC) was started in February 2018. Anti-racism work at Plymouth is a spiritual practice that is intentional and ongoing. The work includes educating ourselves about the presence of structural racism, to repent of our roles in those structures, and to identify ways to create a more just, equitable, and peaceful community. This is not a project in the traditional sense. It will continue to be a part of Plymouth’s future growth by also placing a high value on diversity. The strategic planning process reflects the importance of diversity and creating a congregation that more accurately reflects the community we serve.

3d. PARTICIPATION AND STAFFING

Complete the following chart. Please leave blank any fields that are not applicable to your congregation.

Ways of Gathering	Estimated number of people involved in attendance	Who plans each of the listed gatherings? <i>(list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)</i>
Adult Groups or Classes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth Women • Adventure Groups (PWAG-38) • Lunch and Learns • Memorial Reception Team • Faithful Readers • Mom’s Book Club • Women in Spiritual Exploration (WISE) • Plymouth Men • All Men Exploring New Spirituality (AMENS) • Men’s Book Club • Men’s Luncheon Group • Food and Fellowship – Nine to Dine (on hold due to COVID; 145 prior) • Nine Online (During COVID, 100 participants) • Book Study Groups, sponsored by committees or Board of Spiritual Growth • Webinars and programs, sponsored by committees • Plymouth Young Adults 	Various Staff and Self-Managed Groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Plymouth Moms 	
Baptisms	27 (2019)	Pastors
Children's Groups or Classes	<p><u>Sunday School 2019-2020 (Pre- COVID)</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 3-year-olds: 29 • 4-year-olds: 22 • Kindergarten: 22 • First grade: 34 • Second Grade: 29 • Third Grade: 17 • Fourth Grade: 27 • 5th Grade: 14 • 6th Grade: 14 <p><u>During COVID – Offered On-Line by Family</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 08/20 – Vacation Bible School: 104 Children from 60 Families • 09/20-11/20 Fruit of the Spirit 58 Children from 31 Families • 12/20-02/21 Advent 134 Children from 77 Families • 02/21-02/21 Epiphany 72 Children from 46 Families • 02/21-04/21 Lent 64 Children from 42 Families • 04/21-05/21 Eastertide 46 Children from 29 Families 	<p>Director of Child & Family Ministries</p> <p>Overall curriculum is chosen/planned by the Dir. CFM in conjunction with other ministers</p> <p>Individual classes are taught by other teachers</p>
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	<p>Easter 2019</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sat = 58 Attended • Sun = 731 Attended • Total = 789 <p>Christmas Eve</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Will be tracked in future system, but church is always full for the 9:00 pm and 11:00 pm services 	Pastors, Choral Department, Custodial Department, Child & Family Ministry
Church-wide Meals	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Maundy Thursday: 100-120 people • Shrove Thursday Pancake Dinner: 400-450 people 	<p>Connection Coordinator - Break Even Event</p> <p>Deacons - Fundraiser for Pastoral Discretion/Good Samaritan Fund</p>

Choirs and Music Groups	<p><u>Children’s Choirs</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Music Makers (Pre-K): 11 • Kinder Choir (Kindergarten): 18 • Cherub Choir (1st grade): 18 • Hallelujah! Choir (2nd grade): 19 • Treble Choir (3rd & 4th grades): 27 • Chorister Choir (5th & 6th grades): 19 • Hand Chimes (4th, 5th, 6th grades): 17 • Soul Singers (7th – 8th grades): 23 • Matins (9th – 12th grade): 67 <p><u>Adult ensembles & other groups</u></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Chancel Choir (adults) - 85 • Chancel Chorale – 20 • Plymouth Brass – loose group of 10 • Recorder Ensemble – 5 • Instrumental Ensemble - 15 • Plymouth Bells – 17 • Drama Group (very ad hoc) - 4 • Chancel Arts Committee - 11 • Gallery Committee – 13 • Saturday Night Band – 4-7 <p>Planned: Liturgical Dance, Scripture presentation</p>	Director of Music & Fine Arts Admin Assistant, Music & Fine Arts Director of Youth Ministries Parents Church Member Directors
Church-based Bible Study	Group 1 = 20 people Group 2 = 20 people	TiMs & Sr. Ministers
Communion	2019: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 401 individuals on Sunday, eight times per year. • 73 individuals on Saturday, every service 	Pastors
Community Meals	2X per month, 250 people served at each meal (8-12 members serve the meals)	Various Boards & Director of TiM Programs, Chancel Choir
Confirmation	21-25 individuals (2019)	Pastors
Drama or Dance Program	None at this time	

Funerals	Average of 40 per year	Pastors
Intergenerational Groups	Port Pillow Project	Pastors
Outdoor Worship	<p>Easter 2020 was our first outdoor service. The following information are those who signed up to attend, not actual attendee counts:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 9:00 am: 111 people, 40 groups • 9:45 am: 119 people, 37 groups • 10:30 am: 185 people, 62 groups 	<p>Pastors, Music Directors, Custodial Department</p> <p>Pastors, Music Directors, Custodial Department, Child & Family Ministry</p>
Prayer or Meditation Groups	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) Pre-COVID – Monday Evening Prayer Group 10-12 people (This was at the church) 2) Prayer Groups – 45 3) Stephen Ministry Online Evening Prayer – 40 (live and later) 	1) Self operational group
Public Advocacy Work	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Board of Christian Social Action <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anti-Racism Committee • Welcoming Migrants Committee • Peace Committee • Plymouth Grounds Coffee Shop • AMOS (A Metropolitan Organizing Strategy) • Interfaith Alliance • RENEW Adult Literacy program • Transition from Prison Ministry • Human Trafficking Task Force • Cuba Partnership Team • Creation Care and Justice Coalition • P-JPAN (Plymouth Justice and Peace Action Network) 2. Board of Benevolences <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Food Buddies • DMARC - Food Pantry • Homeless Assistance Team • CISS - Shelter Meals • Family Promise 	Boards & Committees

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Career Closet – 70 Volunteers during 2019-2020 	
Retreats	<p>2019 Retreats:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Stephen Ministry: Every other year average of 25 individuals • Annual Confirmation Groups: average of 45 individuals • Three (3) Choir retreats per year: average of 50 individuals • Two (2) Matins and high school youth leadership per year: average of 50 individuals 	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	Four Year Faith Building Group: 10-12 individuals	Director of TiM Programs
Weddings	8 (2019)	Pastors
Worship (Sat. 5:30 pm)	<p>Random Average over 2019 & Early 2020 = 73</p> <p>Note: They are only counted if they physically signed the pew books.</p>	Custodial Department, Child & Family Ministry
Worship (Sun. 9:00 & 11:00 am)	<p>Random Average over 2019 & Early 2020 = 401</p> <p>Note: They are only counted if they sign the pew books. Also, we do not currently have the ability to split out attendance between the two (2) Sunday services.</p>	Custodial Department, Child & Family Ministry
Young Adult Groups or Classes	Groups (Average 10-15 per Group) Fellowship & Education Group Plymouth Young Adults	TiM Associate Ministers & Director of TiM Programs
Youth Groups or Classes	Youth Group – 67	Director of Youth Ministry
Other	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Casserole Patrol • Flower Delivery Team 12 • Willits Committee – LGBTQ • Plymouth Grounds (coffee shop) 	Various Staff and Self-Managed Groups

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Office Volunteers • Bulletin Collators • Hobbies & Interests (Yoga, Tai Chi, Knitting Bridge, Quilting, Open Gym Basketball...) • Visiting Ministries - 8 	
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List all members or regular participants in your congregation who are ordained, licensed, or commissioned ministers. Indicate those with current United Church of Christ Three-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a congregation) or Four-Way Covenants (i.e. serving in a ministry beyond a congregation).

Name	Three- or Four-Way Covenant? <i>(3 or 4 or No)</i>	Ministry Setting	Type of Ministry Role	Retired? <i>(Y or N)</i>
A number of retired ministers, approximately six, from various denominations attend Plymouth, but this specific data is not available.				

If one or more previous pastors or retired ministers currently hold membership in the church, describe their role(s) in the life of the congregation:

Like all Plymouth members, previous pastors and retired ministers can be called on in a variety of ways to use their time and talent to assist the congregation.

List all current staff, including ministers. Exclude the position you are seeking to fill. Indicate which staff person serves as head of staff.

Staff Position	Head of Staff?	Compensation (full time, part time, volunteer)	Supervised by	Length of Tenure for current person in this position
Interim Senior Minister	Yes	Full time	Church Council	Less than 1 year
Minister of Care and Connection	No	Full time	Senior Minister	8 years
Minister of Vitality and Outreach	No	Full time	Senior Minister	5 years
Associate Minister (TiM Minister)	No	Full time	Director of Transition into Ministry Programs	2 years

Associate Minister (TiM Minister)	No	Full time	Director of Transition into Ministry Programs	1 year
Director of Operations and Finance	No	Full time	Senior Minister	2 years
Director of Transition into Ministry Programs	No	Part time	Senior Minister	3 years
Director of Music & Fine Arts	No	Full time	Senior Minister	4 years
Director of Communications	No	Full time	Director of Operations and Finance	11 years
Director of Youth Ministry	No	Full time	Senior Minister	15 years
Organist	No	Full time	Director of Music & Fine Arts	29 years
Accountant	No	Full time	Director of Operations and Finance	7 years
Communications Assistant	No	Part time	Director of Communications	2 years
Music & Fine Arts Administrative Assistant	No	Part time	Director of Music & Fine Arts	5 years
Facilities Manager	No	Full time	Director of Operations and Finance	15 years
Assistant Facilities Manager	No	Full time	Facilities Manager	3 years

REFLECTION

Reflection: After reviewing the congregational demographics and activities above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's overall ministry?

Plymouth is firmly and consistently invested in musical excellence in worship. Plymouth is firmly invested in the TiM program, supporting the next generation of ministers. Plymouth employs ministerial staff, program staff, and operational staff with talents to serve in their areas of experience and expertise. Plymouth provides a myriad of activities and programs for any and all to join in and participate with their time, talent and treasure as they wish.

3e. CHURCH FINANCES

Current annual income (dollars used during most recent fiscal year)

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$1,898,400
Endowment Proceeds (<i>as permitted within spending policy, such as a cap of typically 4.5%-5% on total return</i>)	\$86,667
Endowment Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, "drawing down the principal"</i>)	\$0
Fundraising Events	\$N/A
Gifts Designated for a Specific Purpose	\$358,450
Grants	\$N/A
Rentals of Church Building	\$4,823
Rentals of Church Parsonage	\$N/A
Support from Related Organizations (<i>e.g. Women's Group</i>)	\$1,500
Transfers from Special Accounts	\$ N/A
TOTAL	\$2,349,840

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for 2021):

\$2,108,643. Our approved 2021 budget (and historical budget information) is attached.

Considering total budgeted expenses for the year, compare total ministerial support. What is the percentage?

$$\$505,486 / \$2,159,748 = 23.4\%$$

Has the church ever failed to pay its financial obligations to a minister of the church?

No.

Is your church 5-for-5, i.e. does it include each of the following contributions during the church year? (*indicate those included during the most recent fiscal year*)

- Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM – Basic Support)
- One Great Hour of Sharing
- Strengthen the Church
- Neighbors in Need
- Christmas Fund

In what way is OCWM (Basic Support) gathered? If calculated as a percentage of operating budget, what is that percentage?

Our current practice is under review, but in recent history it has been a 2% increase over the prior year.

What is the church’s current indebtedness?

\$0. As of December 31, 2020, we had \$207,000 in the form of a forgivable loan through the Paycheck Protection Program (PPP), but this was forgiven in full in March 2021.

If a building program is projected or underway, describe it, including the projected start/end date of the building project and the total project budget.

No building program is currently projected. Maintenance and repairs of the historic building are needed from time to time.

If the church has had capital campaigns in the last ten years, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Result	Impact
2018-2021	TiM Fruitful Change Campaign	\$1,393,200	Ability to sustain the TiM Programs until at least 2030
2018	Rollins Tower	\$414,210	Complete necessary repairs on Plymouth’s historic bell tower, the Rollins Tower
2013-2015	Sanctuary Remodel “New Day”	\$3,078,425	Our worship sanctuary was upgraded and remodeled.

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

No capital campaign is underway or anticipated.

Describe the prominent mission component(s) involved in the most recent (or current) capital campaign.

The prominent mission involved in the TiM Fruitful Change Campaign was to sustain our Transition into Ministry Residency Program (“TiM Program”) beyond the period of time it was funded by the Lilly Endowment (2006 through mid-2022). The TiM Program is a vital part of Plymouth. It is a 27-month salaried residency program. The program offers recent seminary graduates with a teachable spirit the opportunity to serve as Associate Ministers of our pastoral staff and perform all functions along with our settled ministers, all while being actively supervised and mentored. The program is designed to be an intensive learning environment within a congregation that is both supportive and demanding. It provides an invaluable opportunity for professional and personal growth that will leave each Associate Minister better equipped for a long and fulfilling career in ministry. The TiM Fruitful Change Campaign will allow the TiM Program to continue through at least 2030.

Does your church have an endowment? Yes. Plymouth’s endowment is held by the Plymouth Foundation.

What is the market value of the assets? Approximately \$10,400,000 (\$8,178,434 in unrestricted assets; \$2,232,712 in assets for the TiM Program)

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Funds are drawn as requested through a grant process. For 2021, the available grant pool is \$708,000, which is based on a percentage of unrestricted funds, minus funds reserved for sustainability.

What is the percentage rate of draw (last year, compared to 5 years ago)? The formula is the same every year. See above.

Describe draw on endowment, if any, to meet operating budget expenses for the most recent year and the past five years: N/A

At the current rate of draw, how long might the endowment last? Indefinite.

Please comment on the above calculations or estimates: See above.

Other Assets:

Cash: \$221,574 (as of 12/31/2020)

Reserves (savings): \$ 290,000 (as of 12/31/20)

Investments (other than endowment):

- Cornerstone: \$250,000
- Community Foundation of Greater Des Moines: \$450,000

Does your church have a parsonage? No.

Describe all buildings owned by the church: The building owned by Plymouth is our property at 4126 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312. (526 40th St; 531 41st St; 535 41st St; 527 41st St; 532 40th St; 534 40th St; 4126 Ingersoll; 4048 Ingersoll; 4050 Ingersoll)

Describe non-owned buildings or space used or rented by the church: None.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? The balcony in the church sanctuary is not accessible to wheelchairs. All other areas of Plymouth accommodate wheelchair accessibility.

Reflection: After reviewing the church's finances and assets described above, what does this information reflect about your congregation's mission and ministry?

Plymouth's financial picture remains strong, with a fiscally responsible annual budget and the resources held by the Plymouth Foundation. The church building is an asset to Plymouth members, participants, and the surrounding community. These assets allow Plymouth to continue its ministries and outreach to the community. These assets allow Plymouth to propose and implement new ministries and programs as needed or desired.

3f. HISTORICAL INFORMATION

Name one to three significant happenings in the history of your church that have shaped the identity of your congregation. Add the most important event in the life of your church in the past 10 years.

1. Plymouth became an Open and Affirming congregation in the early 1990s. This commitment to honoring the full humanity of any individual, regardless of sexual or gender identity, has remained a priority for over 25 years. Since becoming an ONA church, Plymouth has walked in many Capital City Pride Parades, hosted

performances by the Des Moines Gay Men’s Chorus, and had multiple LGBTQ+ members of clergy serve on our worship team. We are honored to be viewed as a safe spirituality center and church home to anyone of any identity.

2. We began the TiM (Transition in Ministry) Program in 2006. The Associate Ministers Plymouth welcomes through this program bring their talent, fresh perspectives and insights, and some unforgettable sermons to enrich our weekly worship services and our church as a whole.
3. The church building and the ministries we could offer substantially changed in 2003, when a new addition to the building was completed. The space for Sunday school classes, music rehearsals, a casual contemporary worship service, confirmation classes, meetings, and safe nearby parking made Plymouth a very busy place all day every day of the week.

Describe a specific change your church has managed in the recent past.

Specifically, this past year, the church managed the changes made necessary due to the COVID-19 pandemic and resulting closure of the church building. Overall, the congregation is of the opinion that these changes were handled extremely quickly and well. The ministers and lay leaders came up with new and unique ways to worship, connect, and support our members and attendees during the challenging times.

Every church has conflict, some minor, some larger. “Where two or three are gathered, there will be disagreement...” Describe your congregation’s values and practices when it comes to conflict.

Plymouth had to manage conflict during the debate over the proposed Black Lives Matter banner. This happening caused many members of our congregation to question how well we live out the part of our motto that states “we agree to differ.” In the years since the Black Lives Matter banner was presented, discussed, and voted on at Plymouth, we have had the opportunity to reflect on why this conflict did not go well and how we can improve in the future.

Ministerial History (*include all previous ministerial staff for the past 30 years*)

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing	Ordained in UCC
Sarai Rice	2020-Present	Y	N
Lindsey Braun	2016-Present	Y	Y
Kathryn Palen	2015-2016	Y	N
LeAnn Stubbs	2013-Present	Y	N

Valerie Miller-Coleman	2011-2019	Y	Y
Matt Mardis-LeCroy	2005-2020	Y	Y
Angie Witmer	2000-2013	Y	Y
Pat Oberbillig	1999-2008	Y	N
Jim Newby	1997-2003	Y	N
Martha Hendricks	1995-1998	Y	Y
David Ruhe	1994-2014	Y	Y
Paul Johnson*	1991-2004	Y	N
Janice Davis	1989-1992	Y	Unknown
Faith Ferree	1984-2013	Y	N
Wayne Shoemaker*	1982-1991	Y	N
Alden Hebbard	1981-1995	Y	Y
Obid Hoffland	1979-1984	Y	Y
James Gilliom	1978-1994	Y	Y

*Minister of Administration

Note: this does not include TiM Ministers. Additional information on the past and current participants of our TiM Programs can be provided upon request.

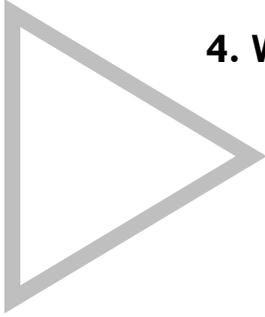
Comment on what your church has learned about itself and its relationship with persons who provided ministerial leadership:

Each minister brings unique gifts and talents to Plymouth. Each minister who stayed any length of time impacted Plymouth in one way or another. Plymouth is better and stronger because of all the gifts these ministers brought to their work here.

Has any past leader left under pressure or by involuntary termination? Ask Us.

Has your church been involved in a Situational Support Consultation? No.

Has a past pastor been the subject of a Fitness Review while at your church? No.



4. WHO IS OUR NEIGHBOR?

“You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” (Matthew 22:39 NRSV)

- a. COMMUNITY VISION
- b. MISSION InSite

4a. COMMUNITY VISION

How do the relationships and activities of your congregation extend outward in service and advocacy?

Plymouth initiates and participates in numerous activities and relationships that extend outward in service and advocacy. Some of these activities happen in cooperation with other faith communities and organizations. Others are managed solely by Plymouth and its volunteers.

The relationships and activities, which are made possible by the support of hundreds of volunteers, include:

- Plymouth Grounds Coffee Shop: an on-site coffee shop that provides training to intellectually disabled students from ages 18-21 from Des Moines area schools.
- Plymouth Career Closet for Women: located at the Wellmark YMCA, the Plymouth Career Closet for Women provides free professional attire to women in need.
- Food Pantry Committee: with a drop off station located at the church, their focus is food insecurity for residents of Des Moines.
- Central Iowa Shelter & Services Meals: on the 26th and 27th of every month, Plymouth volunteers prepare and serve meals to 150-200 homeless persons.
- Family Promise: as part of a metro-wide interfaith network, Family Promise provides meals, hospitality, and shelter to families with children experiencing homelessness.
- Food Buddies: provides non-perishable, healthy and easy to prepare meals to food-insecure children. Meals are provided during the school year for weekends when students are not at school and do not have access to school meals.
- Homeless Assistance Team: once a month, donated furniture is picked up and delivered to non-profit organizations that help homeless people transitioning to permanent housing.
- A few Plymouth committees have a relationship with Trinitas Las Americas, a United Methodist Church in Des Moines with primarily Latinx members.
- The Cuba Partnership Team fosters Plymouth Church’s partnership with Ebenezer Baptist Church in Havana, Cuba.
- The Welcoming Migrants Committee sponsored a trip to the border to witness conditions and provide assistance, followed by educational programs at Plymouth based on the information gathered from the trip.

- Plymouth marches in the annual Capital City Pride Parade, in large numbers, to the loud and strong support of people watching the parade.

Plymouth also engages in numerous outreach efforts during the holidays, including our Special Offering program, which takes our largest offerings of the year (Easter, Thanksgiving and Christmas) and distributes the money to organizations within the community.

Describe your congregation’s participation in meetings, relationships and activities connecting the wider United Church of Christ (association / conference / national setting).

The Executive Conference Minister of the Iowa, Nebraska, and South Dakota Conferences, Reverend Brigit Stevens, is a Plymouth member. Plymouth member David Nelson serves on the UCC Board of Directors. Plymouth member Brian Leckrone and Plymouth associate member Jared Walter serve on the Iowa Conference Board of Directors.

Many local churches love to tell the story of what they are doing in the community to transform lives. Some have identified certain aspects of their witness into the wider community using language shared with other UCC congregations. (Find more information as desired at ucc.org.) Check any statements below that apply to your UCC faith community.

- | | |
|--|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Accessible to All (A2A) | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Just Peace |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Creation Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Global Mission Church |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Economic Justice | <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Open and Affirming (ONA) |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Faithful and Welcoming | <input type="checkbox"/> WISE Congregation for Mental Health |
| <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> God Is Still Speaking (GISS) | <input type="checkbox"/> Other UCC designations: |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Border and Immigrant Justice | <input type="checkbox"/> Designations from other denominations |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Inter-cultural/Multi-racial (I’M) | <input type="checkbox"/> None |

While we have marked “X” next to the items that we have formally adopted, Plymouth indirectly supports numerous of these initiatives.

Reflect on what the above statement(s) mean(s) to your community. Is your congregation interested in working toward any of the above statements of witness in the near future?

The Creation Care and Justice Committee is working towards Plymouth becoming a Creation Justice church.

Describe your congregation’s participation in ecumenical and interfaith activities (with other denominations and religious groups, local and regional).

Plymouth supports and participates in the following ecumenical and interfaith activities:

- AMOS (A Metropolitan Organizing Strategy)
- The Interfaith Alliance
- DMARC (Des Moines Area Religious Council)
- Inter-faith Bible studies
- St. Paul AME Church
- Corinthian Baptist Church
- Ebenezer Baptist Church, Havana, Cuba
- Trinity Las Americas United Methodist Church

If your congregation has a mission statement, how does that mission statement compare to the actual time spent engaging in different activities? Think of the range of activities from time spent gathering, to governance, to time spent going out.

Plymouth's purpose is to grow in love of God and neighbor. The worship services, programs, and activities inside the church and outside its walls, and governance actions, support this purpose.

Reflect on the scope of work assigned to your pastor(s). How is their community ministry and their ministry in and on behalf of the wider church accounted for in the congregation's expectations on their time?

Most of the community ministry is planned and implemented by Plymouth members. The Senior Minister and other ministers generally authorize and support these community ministries.

4b. MISSION InSite

Comment on your congregation's Mission InSite report with data for your neighborhood(s) or area. What trends and opportunities are shown?

- With a focus on social justice, and an increasing proportion of the immediate area population shifting to people of color, the church should focus on bringing members of non-white communities into the church, as well as focus on working within those communities to garner a greater level of trust and openness.
- As the population of the surrounding area continues to age on a median basis, continuing to have focus on the needs of older generations should attract and retain these groups.
- As family populations grow throughout the greater Des Moines area, showing a greater focus on children and families ministries.

How do your congregation's internal demographics compare or contrast to a) the neighborhoods adjacent to your church, and b) other neighborhoods with which your church connects?

Plymouth has a predominantly white, upper middle-class congregation. In contrast, the neighborhood and greater Des Moines community is continuing to become more diverse. To continue to grow as a church and serve our community, we need to practice radical love and welcoming as outlined in the strategic plan.

How are the demographics of the community currently shaping ministry, or not?

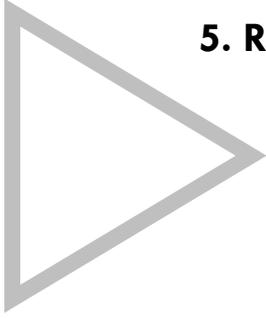
- The church has the opportunity to support, more directly, the community, and we do not provide enough of that support currently.
- Our direct neighborhood has a slightly older demographic, combined with the propensity for older generations to be more supportive, and active within a church setting, has created a majority of the congregation to be above the median age group.

What do you hear when you talk to community leaders and ask them what your church is known for?

Many Plymouth members are political and organizational leaders themselves or have personal relationships with local, area, state, and national leaders. Community leaders note Plymouth's active stances in particular matters, including being one of the first churches in Iowa to welcome and affirm LGBTQ families and participate in the annual Capital City Pride festivities. Leaders will note that our past senior ministers regularly submitted opinion pieces to the *Des Moines Register* to articulate theological standings on specific social issues; those articles were frequently shared on social media and create conversation in the community. Leaders also know Plymouth congregants to show up on particular social justice matters, including climate change rallies, racial justice marches, and regularly speaking to legislators and other elected and appointed officials at the Iowa Capitol and Des Moines City Hall.

What do new people in the church say when asked what got them involved?

The reasons new people get involved in Plymouth are vast and varied. Many people join Plymouth because they already identify as Christian but are seeking a more progressive theology than the one they experienced in their past. Others participate because they see congregants who are also local and state leaders actively engaged in conversations about issues relevant to their lives. Some get involved in Plymouth because their children are participants in our music program. Some join to participate in our traditionally excellent music programs. Some participate in Plymouth's community outreach programs, and then become actively involved in worship services and other church activities. While we are working to expand our children's and youth programming further, the large number of children and families in our church compared to other churches is an appealing factor for families to join.



5. REFERENCES

REFERENCE 1

Connie Ryan

Executive Director, Interfaith Alliance of Iowa

515-279-8715 (Office)

515-577-3636 (Cell)

connie@interfaithallianceiowa.org

Frequent collaborator with Plymouth social justice and action committees.

Letter of reference is attached.

REFERENCE 2

Rev. Dr. Cameron Barr

Senior Pastor

United Church of Chapel Hill

1321 Martin Luther King, Jr. Boulevard

Chapel Hill, NC 27514

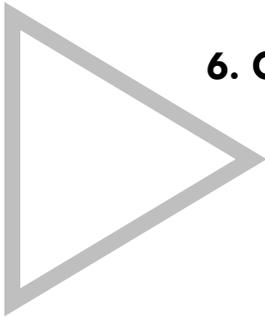
(919) 942-3540, ext. 108

cbarr@unitedchurch.org

Served as a TIM minister at Plymouth 2012 to 2014.

Letter of reference is attached.

REFERENCE 3



6. CLOSING THOUGHTS

- a. CLOSING PRAYER
- b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT
- c. CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION VALIDATION

6a. CLOSING PRAYER

Include here any prayer or dream for the minister you imagine journeying toward you... a poem, for example, or a Scripture passage or a piece of music that is meaningful to your Search Committee:

We aspire to Paul's definition of what it means to be a Christian:

"We have gifts that differ according to the grace given to us: prophecy, in proportion to faith; ministry, in ministering; the teacher, in teaching; the exhorter, in exhortation; the giver, in generosity; the leader, in diligence; the compassionate, in cheerfulness. Let love be genuine; hate what is evil, hold fast to what is good; love one another with mutual affection; outdo one another in showing honor. Do not lag in zeal, be ardent in spirit, serve the Lord. Rejoice in hope, be patient in suffering, persevere in prayer. Contribute to the needs of the saints; extend hospitality to strangers." (Romans, 12:6-13)

We are looking for a Senior Minister who shares our vision and can lead us on our journey.
Are you that Minister?

6b. STATEMENT OF CONSENT

The covenantal relationship between a church and those called by that church to serve as pastors and teachers and in other ministerial positions is strengthened when vital information is openly shared by covenantal partners. To that end, we attest that, to the best of our abilities, we have provided information in this profile that accurately represents our church. We have not knowingly withheld any information that would be helpful to candidates.

As the committee charged with the responsibility for identifying and recommending suitable new minister for our church, we have been authorized to share the information herein with potential candidates. We understand that a candidate may wish to secure further knowledge, information, and opinions about our church. We encourage a candidate to do so, recognizing that an open exchange of relevant information builds the foundation for continuing and healthy relationships between calling bodies and persons seeking a ministry position.

1. Which individuals and groups in the church contributed to the contents of this Local Church Profile?

The Senior Minister Search Committee, with input from our Congregation, Conference leaders, and Plymouth Ministers and Staff where appropriate.

2. Additional comments for interpreting the profile:

None.

Signed:



Caroline K. Valentine
Chair, Plymouth Senior Minister Search Committee
April 28, 2021

6c. VALIDATION BY CONFERENCE/ASSOCIATION

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named.

Staff Comment: Y

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete.

Staff Comment: Y

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly.

Staff Comment: Y

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature:



Name / Title: Rev. Samantha Houser Associate Conference Minister

Email: samantha@ucctcm.org

Phone: 402-350-1714

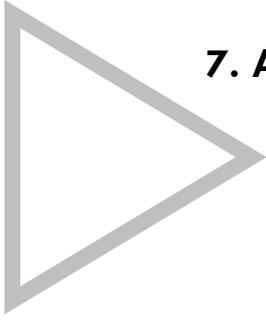
Date: 5-4-21

**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



This document is created through support to Our Church’s Wider Mission (OCWM) and is only possible through the covenantal relationships of all settings of the United Church of Christ.

“Jesus answered them, ‘Have faith in God!’” – Mark 11:22



7. ATTACHMENTS

- a. 2020-2025 STRATEGIC PLAN
- b. 11-YEAR REPORT
- c. 2021 BUDGET
- d. CONNIE RYAN REFERENCE LETTER
- e. CAMERON BARR REFERENCE LETTER
- f. VALERIE MILLER-COLEMAN REFERENCE LETTER

Plymouth

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

2020 – 2025 Strategic Plan

Practice radical love everywhere and always.

Through this strategic plan, we seek to provide Plymouth Church with four foundational practices to help us become closer to the church God imagines.

Practicing Meaning & Purpose

- We live our faith every day through study, through worship and prayer, and by being ministers of Jesus Christ at home, at work, and in the community.

Practicing Hospitality & Belonging

- We pray for the gift of difference as we celebrate and welcome all.

Practicing Justice & Kindness

- We pursue God's requirement to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.

*Practicing Operational Excellence:
We support our work with effective structures
and digital tools to create a frictionless
experience for everyone.*

Plymouth Church

2020-2025 Strategic Plan: Practicing Radical Love

Introduction

In June 2019, the Long-Range Planning Task Force of Plymouth Church (the five most recent Past Moderators, the current Moderator, and the Moderator-Elect) called for the creation of a new strategic plan for Plymouth Church. It had been 10 years since the crafting of the last strategic plan, “Fan the Flame,” and church leadership concluded that Plymouth Church needed a new plan that emerged from a “broad-based, highly participatory process to claim a fresh vision and set clear goals and priorities for the next 3 - 5 years to enable the Senior Minister, staff and Church Council to lead effectively” (from “Report and Recommendations of the Long-Range Planning Task Force,” June 25, 2019). Committee members were selected from names submitted by each Board of the Church Council, and the team was guided by our consultant Rev. Sarai Schnucker Rice.

And then, change. In March 2020, just as our data collection was about to conclude, our world, our nation and our lives changed more than any of us could have imagined with the COVID-19 pandemic. And then, more change. On July 21, Plymouth’s Senior Minister, Matt Mardis-LeCroy resigned. You might ask, how do you deliver a strategic plan without a Senior Minister? Because this vision for Plymouth Church comes from the life of this congregation, and because we have just gone through a very deliberate process of re-evaluating who we are and where we want to go, we see this strategic plan as a gift in the search for the next Senior Minister. We would ask that it be included as part of the profile for the search for the Senior Minister.

This new strategic plan, “Practicing Radical Love,” is the product of a participatory process spanning nearly a year and shaped by congregational input, relevant research, interviews, and hours of discussion, debate, and discernment among the members of the strategic planning committee.

In our research, the planning committee learned that mainstream Protestant churches like Plymouth are facing a critical moment in their history. Throughout the United States membership is declining, attendance at services is down, congregations are aging, and young adults do not find the current church environment appealing.

In order to learn more, we talked with leaders of vibrant, growing churches around the country, who described growth as an output of a clearly identified vision/mission and a relentless focus on a handful of key goals and priorities that shape all major decisions within the congregation. We also talked with members of Plymouth’s ministerial staff and other key staff and leaders about their hopes and dreams for our congregation.

Finally, to gather member data, we invited Plymouth members themselves into the conversation. More than 350 Plymouth members participated in small group sessions which we called Congregational Triad Conversations. Through the triad process, members sat in groups of three to answer six questions (see Appendices A and B), sharing their ideas and opinions about “what’s next for Plymouth?” (Unfortunately, the last scheduled triad meeting had to be canceled due to the COVID-19 pandemic.) To reach as many members as possible, we created additional ways for members to participate using email (25 responses) and Survey Monkey (52 completed surveys). Finally, in light of the pandemic and the church’s response to it, we also asked members to share their thoughts about what they had learned about themselves and the church during this difficult time (32 responses).

Through this approach, major themes emerged that would shape Plymouth’s vision, goals, and priorities, including:

1. A profound appreciation for Plymouth Church’s legacy of inspiring worship, beautiful music, and provocative and thoughtful sermons

The Sunday morning service continues to be well-attended, as does the Saturday night alternative worship service. The recent addition of more online options due to COVID-19 has also been successful, especially for members who are not always able to attend in person.

2. A stirring desire for Plymouth members to grow even further into the love of God and neighbor

Plymouth members want to engage in readings, classes, and discussion groups, both to explore new and diverse ideas and to further deepen their Christian love by practicing it in families, in workplaces, and in the community.

3. A yearning to move beyond the current polarization of conversations and beliefs

While members seek a place that is open to differing ideas and beliefs, it is a challenge to maintain and value diversity in today’s hyper-polarized environment, especially when polarization has already claimed close friendships, resulted in members leaving, and created awkwardness in conversations and relationships. If we are to continue to “resolve to love” and “unite to serve,” we may need to relearn how to “agree to differ.”

4. A critical need to focus on the youth of Plymouth Church and our community

Members recognize the vibrancy of our youth music programs, church school, and Matins, but yearn for a church that offers a variety of ways for youth to create community, engage in the work of the church, and explore their own faith.

5. A desire to feel more connected to each other and informed about the work of the church and its partners

Plymouth Church members want to be in community with each other and connected to the work of the church, but they also want to extend their commitment to justice and kindness beyond the walls of the church.

6. A continuing commitment to vigilance regarding matters of justice and compassion for those needing kindness

Plymouth Church is proud of having been on the forefront of social justice issues like gender equality, marriage equality, racial justice, and LGBTQ rights. Members want to continue this kind of work in the future, while acknowledging that, on some issues, it will be more important to partner than to lead.

7. A longing to become more diverse

Members have a clear interest in creating a more diverse congregation that reflects the growing diversity within the Greater Des Moines community.

8. A need to review the church's governance structures, systems, and decision-making processes

Just as Plymouth Church needs a fresh vision, it also needs to take a fresh look at its systems of governance and operations. A critical review of the church council structure, boards, committees, information systems, and decision-making processes is needed in order to support a dynamic, evolving congregation. Additionally, improved information systems and forms of communication will be critical to support the efforts of staff and the congregation.

9. An absolute requirement that Plymouth become more skilled in the kinds of communication and technology needed to reach and connect with members and empower staff

Plymouth needs to embrace the exponential growth rate of technology and adopt it as a critical means for achieving its mission.

Perhaps most important, we learned that despite all our differences, this congregation and its staff love Plymouth Church. Universally, people recounted stories about their first connection with Plymouth and how they “fell in love” with its people, its history, and the warm embrace of a Christian community that extends a welcome to all.

Plymouth Church is rooted in the history of the Congregational Church and the United Church of Christ. We are recognized nationally as leaders in progressive theology. We are big enough and we have enough resources to be excellent in anything that we undertake. As we turn toward

2025, we believe that we are called to be a congregation of God's people practicing radical love, a goal that will begin to be realized through the implementation of this plan.

Respectfully submitted, Plymouth Church Strategic Planning Committee members

Amy Anderson

Aaron Barker

Nathan Blake

Pam Kenyon, Chair

Sid Ramsey

Barbie Sullivan

Caroline Bettis Valentine

Appendix A: Triad Congregational Conversation Questions

Plymouth

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Strategic Plan 2020: God is still speaking; Plymouth is listening.

Congregational Triad Conversations Questions

Question #1: What about Plymouth feeds your soul or helps you grow spiritually, and how could our congregation do an even better job of helping you?

Question #2: If you could name one amazing thing Plymouth will do in the next 3-5 years that would make an incredible difference in the life of the community: (1) what would it be? and (2) what would you be willing to do to help?

Question #3: When an organization tries to move in a new direction or reach new people, it sometimes needs to stop some of its current activities. What could Plymouth stop doing, or do less of, in order to make space for something new?

Question #4: As you think about your answer to this question, do not limit yourself to activities that have to happen in the building or require current staff. If you think about family or friends who are not currently involved at Plymouth, what is one thing Plymouth could do that might be of interested to them?

Question #5: What is God calling Plymouth Church to commit to doing over the next five years?

Question #6: To you, what is the most critical issue facing Plymouth?

APPENDIX B - MEMBER DATA COLLECTION – Triad Questions

Congregational Triad Conversations

1. 9 of 10 scheduled congregational triad conversations were held (Edgewater, March 12, canceled)
2. 369 total respondents
 - a. 260 in-person triad conversations
 - b. 52 via Survey Monkey
 - c. 25 via confidential Gmail address
 - d. 32 respondents to pandemic survey question
3. Demographic breakdown

<u>AGE GRP</u>	<u>QTY</u>
13 – 17	62
18 – 24	05
25 – 30	03
30 – 49	44
50 – 64	72
65 – 75	77
76 – 86	34
87+	07
NA	<u>30</u> (demographic information not provided by respondent)
TOTAL	337
+	<u>32</u> (demographic information not provided by respondent)
	369

(Compiled by Pam Kenyon, Chair, Strategic Planning Committee)

2020-2025 Strategic Plan

Practicing Radical Love Everywhere and Always

Assumptions and Beliefs

1. We believe God is calling Plymouth to be a center for joy, celebration, curiosity, reflection, inclusion and compassion.
2. Plymouth's deepest identity — radical love for its members and community — rests on four foundational practices:
 - 1) Practicing Meaning & Purpose. We live our faith every day through study, through worship and prayer, and by being ministers of Jesus Christ at home, at work, and in the community.
 - 2) Practicing Hospitality & Belonging. We pray for the gift of difference as we celebrate and welcome all.
 - 3) Practicing Justice & Kindness. We pursue God's requirement to do justice, love kindness, and walk humbly.
 - 4) Practicing Operational Excellence. We support our work with effective structures and digital tools to create a frictionless experience for everyone.
3. The culture in which Plymouth exists is rapidly and constantly changing, which means that Plymouth's work, its staff, its facilities, and its use of resources will need to change as well. We must be willing to disrupt our traditional ways of thinking and behaving, including letting go of long-standing programs and practices, if we are to adapt to the new world to which God calls us.
4. As the culture changes, our staffing design and the skills and competencies we require from our staff will change as well. We will need to look for new sets of skills and new learning and leadership capacities. An inclusive workforce is imperative.
5. Not all participants in Plymouth's programming will be members, and not all members will be participants in all things. We must be open to new ways of relating to Plymouth and we must search for new approaches to finding and engaging with members and participants.
6. The experiences that people have at other churches and in other groups will shape what they expect and need from Plymouth. The way we organize ourselves and the services and programs we provide will need to be both grounded in faith and attuned to the needs and expectations of our members and participants.
7. As we interact with the community, there will be times when we are called to be leaders, times when we are called to be partners, and times when we are called to be followers.

Strengths

1. Plymouth is known as a progressive and welcoming congregation in which members agree to differ, resolve to love, and unite to serve. It uses its expertise, voice and relationships with other congregations and organizations in the community to address community issues and create community solutions.
2. Plymouth's size and resources ensure that it is able to be excellent in all aspects of its work.

Key Objectives

1. Agility/Adaptability
We will experiment and adapt across all aspects of our work to better respond to the emerging needs of members and participants.
2. Member/Participant Focus
We will engage members and participants on their terms. This will require closer listening, a deeper understanding of their needs, and better tracking of their interests in response to our ministry. We will focus on providing a friction-free experience. We will provide extraordinary member care by investing in the right mix of people, processes, and technology.
3. Transparency
We will strive to ensure transparency to Plymouth's members and participants by making clear and adhering to all decision-making processes and by providing clear and comprehensive financial and other information.
4. Alignment
We will align all aspects of the church's work around our goals and our four foundational practices: meaning & purpose, hospitality & belonging, justice & kindness, and operational excellence.
5. Staff Development
We will attract, develop, and retain staff who are insightful, flexible, open to change, and gifted at envisioning and executing new, as well as known, ways of being church.

Initiatives

Through extensive congregational surveys, interviews, and prayer, we have identified these four practices which will serve as the core for Plymouth's ministry and operations for the next three to five years. To establish these practices, we developed 12 key initiatives listed below, each important enough to merit specific mention, attention, and investment. (Please note: We're including examples for each recommendation, designed to help you think about the initiatives. While they are not intended to be exhaustive or prescriptive, **copy in boldface** represents specific recommendations; *copy in italic* represents ideas or examples.)

We have dared to "dream big" as we fully expect the Church and the Foundation to utilize some of its reserves to make Plymouth closer to what we all know it can be. At the same time, these items are left intentionally high-level so as to allow for broad latitude in implementation by the Staff, Church Council, and the Congregation.

High-level Roadmap

- Upon approval by Church Council, this Strategic Plan will serve as the guiding document for Plymouth's Staff, Church Council, Plymouth Foundation, and Church Boards and Committees.
- To implement this plan, all staff responsibilities and goals will be updated to reflect accountability for execution of the Strategic Plan. In addition, all mission and vision statements for all Boards and Committees will be rewritten, where necessary, to conform to this plan.
- This Strategic Plan will be integrated into the recruitment and hiring process for both the interim and permanent Senior Minister. In addition, this plan will be used in all other hiring decisions for all positions at any level going forward, whether permanent or temporary.
- Church Council will serve as the official implementing body and hold ultimate accountability for adherence to this plan. Church Council will add a standing item to its regular meeting agenda to discuss progress on execution of this Strategic Plan. On a quarterly basis, The Council will formally evaluate and communicate with the Church Membership on progress in implementing the four practices and 12 initiatives to determine if change in operations is necessary to accomplish these objectives.

Practicing Meaning & Purpose

- 1. Create small group opportunities that offer venues other than the Plymouth building as sacred spaces.**

Examples might include in-home relational groups, prayer-in-the-park, off-site Bible study, Plymouth at coffee shops and breweries, and groups for people at different life stages (e.g., people whose children have left for college, Life After Death Of Spouse [LADOS], etc.).

- 2. Reimagine and invest in the Center for Spiritual Growth: Take advantage of the opportunity to invest in and utilize building spaces differently, create a center of excellence for communal as well as personal spiritual growth, develop additional inter-faith dialogues, and develop a curriculum that helps lay people discern if they are called to seminary.**

Practicing Hospitality & Belonging

- 3. Offer a hospitable and comprehensive program for all children and youth, including hiring a dedicated youth minister.**

What we heard from members, including many middle-schoolers and high schoolers, is that Plymouth does not have a full range of programming for children and youth. What we heard through interviews with other churches is that this is unusual for a church of our size. In particular, beginning with 7th grade our young people have only one path (Confirmation for grades 7 and 8, and Matins for grades 9 thru 12). This does not meet the diverse needs of our children nor does it support Plymouth's ability to welcome and embrace families with children. We need to prioritize excellence in faith development from ages 0 thru 18.

- 4. Continue to develop excellent alternative opportunities for worship and connection.**

The COVID-19 pandemic brought Plymouth to a whole new level of digital connectivity, making it possible for not only members but also strangers to worship with us. Many of Plymouth's members also appreciated the intimacy and accessibility of the spiritual and informational opportunities. Plymouth must sustain many of these efforts and continue innovating in ways that meet the needs of its members and potential members.

Practicing Justice & Kindness

- 5. Identify, create, and coordinate opportunities for members and participants to live their faith through volunteer service to others beyond Plymouth's campus.**

To make these opportunities more accessible and inclusive, create a volunteer section on Plymouth's website that makes it easy to find and sign up for both church-based and community-based opportunities.

6. Be in solidarity with People of Color in the community as we all seek to end systemic racism.

We heard in the triad conversations a lot of discomfort about the process of the Black Lives Matter banner decision. In the months since those conversations, the country has reached an inflection point. And so has Plymouth. To truly address systemic racism, Plymouth needs to commit to becoming an actively anti-racist church. Among other things, this means we need to recognize when we should lead, when we should partner, and when we should follow. For example, members can be encouraged to join and support actions that make progress on issues such as voting rights restoration.

7. Constantly strengthen our commitment to environmental stewardship.

For example, create an environmental stewardship plan and target zero emissions

Practicing Operational Excellence

8. Create a Marketing/Communications Plan, including a plan for expanded digital communication that informs both members and the wider community of the opportunities available at Plymouth.

9. Create a Facilities Plan that ensures the safety, beauty, and maintenance of the campus while providing for a welcoming environment and flexible use.

10. Establish an Information Technology (IT) staff to support all work of the church.

11. Implement hiring policies that ensure, as much as possible, that administrative and support positions are full-time, benefit-eligible positions.

12. Commit to a transparent and efficient governance structure, including reducing the number of voting members of Church Council. Meet less, pray more.

	2017 Actuals	2018 Actuals	2019 Actuals	2020 Actuals (Unaudited)	2021 Budget
Income:					
Pledges	1,794,128	1,771,971	1,796,359	1,529,159	1,500,000
Non-Pledge Gifts	312,955	320,366	231,087	290,988	260,000
Other Income	72,891	77,673	167,862	66,966	75,000
Total Income	<u>2,179,974</u>	<u>2,170,010</u>	<u>2,195,308</u>	<u>1,887,113</u>	<u>1,835,000</u>
Expenses:					
Total Personnel Expense	1,421,284	1,469,940	1,329,815	1,406,545	1,449,643
Christian Education	12,875	12,080	16,808	4,831	5,000
Membership	2,896	2,416	4,171	2,027	2,000
Music and Fine Arts	24,295	24,643	25,594	21,599	22,000
Benevolence					
Our Church's Wider Mission	122,811	125,267	122,135	111,032	110,000
Other Benevolence	11,255	9,517	12,276	11,473	11,000
Total Benevolence	<u>134,066</u>	<u>134,784</u>	<u>134,411</u>	<u>122,505</u>	<u>121,000</u>
Christian Social Action	18,077	26,658	21,549	19,442	19,000
Other Boards/Committees	27,220	23,618	20,054	5,954	6,000
Building/Operations	520,314	519,881	514,936	561,865	479,000
All Other	9,858	11,945	11,589	5,221	5,000
Total Expenses	<u>2,170,885</u>	<u>2,225,965</u>	<u>2,078,927</u>	<u>2,149,989</u>	<u>2,108,643</u>
Net Income	<u>9,089</u>	<u>(55,955)</u>	<u>116,381</u>	<u>(262,876)</u>	<u>(273,643)</u>
PPP Forgiveness					<u>207,000</u>
					<u>(66,643)</u>
					(66,643)

Net Income w/PPP Forgiveness

**UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST
ELEVEN YEAR CHURCH PROFILE BASED ON DATA REPORTED IN UCC
YEARBOOKS**



Church#: 220660

Assoc: 256 **Schedule:** 0 Plymouth Congregational UCC Des Moines IA 50312

YEAR	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	CONFIRMATION	CONFESSION	TRANSFER OR REAFFIRM	DEATHS OR TRANS OUT	OTHER LOSSES	NET MEMBS ADDS-REMOVED
2009	3063	741	850	31	18	53	44	19	39
2010	3136	798	850	36	21	64	25	23	73
2011	3138	804	850	34	14	37	41	42	2
2012	3191	798	850	26	20	64	39	18	53
2013	3231	827	850	34	9	74	42	35	40
2014	3296	818	850	42	12	70	51	8	65
2015	3382	768	850	34	14	79	29	12	86
2016	3450	784	600	28	13	70	23	20	68
2017	3438	787	650	27	13	64	39	77	-12
2018	3311	767	650	23	5	43	51	147	-127
2019	3311	767	650	0	0	0	0	0	0

YEAR	CURRENT EXPENSES	CAPITAL PAYMENTS	BASIC SUPPORT	TOT OTHER UCC GIVING	TOTAL OCWM	OTHER GIFTS	WIDER MISSION	BASIC SUPP% CURR LOCAL	TOTAL EXPEND	PLEDGES AND OFFERINGS
2009	\$1,844,432	\$240,068	\$116,457	\$25,388	\$141,845	\$18,005	\$159,850	6.31	\$2,244,350	\$2,184,560
2010	\$1,902,017	\$144,345	\$118,786	\$32,696	\$151,482	\$151,273	\$302,755	6.25	\$2,349,117	\$2,118,794
2011	\$1,966,320	\$71,466	\$120,020	\$26,809	\$146,829	\$127,355	\$274,184	6.10	\$2,311,970	\$2,057,435
2012	\$1,848,065	\$100,314	\$122,073	\$16,025	\$138,098	\$91,460	\$229,558	6.61	\$2,177,937	\$2,104,968
2013	\$1,916,708	\$1,608,794	\$130,583	\$18,233	\$148,816	\$110,158	\$258,974	6.81	\$3,784,476	\$3,477,413
2014	\$2,159,864	\$1,778,671	\$122,811	\$15,408	\$138,219	\$118,157	\$256,376	5.69	\$4,194,911	\$3,308,756
2015	\$2,053,098	\$123,663	\$122,811	\$12,556	\$135,367	\$120,576	\$255,943	5.98	\$2,432,704	\$2,711,514
2016	\$1,888,801	\$0	\$122,811	\$14,435	\$137,246	\$110,283	\$247,529	6.50	\$2,136,330	\$2,485,746
2017	\$2,173,928	\$0	\$122,811	\$11,929	\$134,740	\$107,818	\$242,558	5.65	\$2,416,486	\$2,137,699
2018	\$2,257,782	\$0	\$125,267	\$10,145	\$135,412	\$130,307	\$265,719	5.55	\$2,523,501	\$2,527,421
2019	\$2,257,782	\$0	\$122,135	\$20,118	\$142,253	\$0	\$142,253	5.41	\$2,400,035	\$0

% CHANGE	MEMBERS	AVG WEEKLY ATTENDANCE	CHR ED/ FAITH FORM	TOTAL ADDITIONS	TOTAL REMOVALS	CURR LOCAL EXPENSES	TOTAL OCWM	TOTAL EXPENDITURE
2014-2019	0.46	-6.23	-23.53	-100.00	-100.00	4.53	2.92	-42.79
2009-2019	8.10	3.51	-23.53	-100.00	-100.00	22.41	0.29	6.94

Please note: Zero values ("0" or "\$0") may reflect missing information in some years. Christian Education/Faith Formation refers to Church School Enrollment for all figures before 2007.



April 26, 2021

Emily Chafa
Vice Chair, Sr. Minister Search Committee
Plymouth UCC Church
4126 Ingersoll Ave
Des Moines, Iowa 50312

Dear Emily,

I am writing in support of Plymouth UCC Church as you seek to discern the best candidate to fulfill the role of Senior Minister for your community. Thank you for the honor of asking me to write this letter of support for your congregation.

I have been professionally connected to Plymouth Church for 20 years as well as for many decades as a resident in the Des Moines area. Additionally, my mother served for ten years as one of the associate pastors and I have many friends who attend. Plymouth Church is near and dear to my heart and I am so proud of and grateful for your progressive, faithful leadership in our community.

Plymouth Church is a leader and role model in our community and to other congregations. Some churches talk the talk; Plymouth Church walks the walk. You were an early and persuasive voice of love and affirmation for the LGBTQ+ community, including the rights they must enjoy equal to all other people. You have been a vocal advocate for peace in all its varied forms. You courageously placed a banner on the front and visible outside of your building proclaiming "Black Lives Matter" before it was the "in" thing to do, and even when some members disagreed with its placement and message.

Plymouth Church is not afraid to take on the hard issues, but also does so in a manner that allows room for those who disagree to do so with dignity. Your motto is an indicator of this commitment to be in relationship, and an apt descriptor for your community, in general: "We agree to differ. We resolve to love. We unite to serve."

Plymouth Church cares for people. Through your many compassionate ministries such as Stephen Ministry and through your broader social justice work, your ever-present, unwavering understanding of God's call to care for all of God's children – whether a longtime member or a complete stranger – is remarkable.

Plymouth Church is not without faults and foibles. You continue to find your way through the rocky path built by our society on some of the social justice issues of our times. Some members believe you to be too bold and others struggle that you are not bold enough. What is impressive is that your members are committed to the process and more importantly the dialogue and, for the most part, remain at the table.

Perhaps what I appreciate most about Plymouth Church is that you are a valued partner and, conversely, I am certain we are a valued partner to you as well. Interfaith Alliance of Iowa was born out of a conversation more than 25 years ago hosted in your building. You have continued to be an important ally in and supporter of our work, as well as the work of many non-profits and ministries that exist outside your walls. You understand that you do not need to reinvent the wheel on every issue but can join the efforts of others already doing God's work in the world.

One example of our strong partnership is your welcoming our organization into your building each month for luncheons in Waveland Hall for the past 13 years (minus the last year with the Covid pandemic). Our Crossroads monthly luncheons are designed to model how to have civil dialogue on important issues in our society. You have expended resources such as valuable staff time to support our program and you have done so without ever charging us a penny. You are a committed partner in our work, and we are grateful.

I wholeheartedly endorse the mission and ministry of Plymouth Church and the vital community that makes up your congregation. You have a long history of being an amazing community with strong, progressive leadership. I know you will continue to honor that history as you live out your renewed vision into the future with a new, faithful leader at your helm. I wish you all the best in your search and look forward to meeting your new Senior Minister when they arrive in Des Moines.

Thank you for the opportunity to sing your praises and for all that you do to make the greater Des Moines community better and more inclusive of all God's children.

With appreciation,

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "Connie Ryan".

Connie Ryan
Executive Director

April 16, 2021

Dear candidates for ministry:

Like many other alumni of Plymouth Church in Des Moines now serving in varied ministries throughout the Wider Church, I am a pastor today largely because the generosity and love of this remarkable congregation laid a strong foundation for my life and work. Plymouth called me to serve as an Associate Minister through the Transition into Ministry program in 2012. During my time on Plymouth's staff, I was mentored by gracious and wise senior clergy, energized every day by a collaborative staff of genuine colleagues, and blessed by the prayers and support of a mission-oriented and values-driven congregation. All that I received and practiced with this teaching and learning congregation has sustained me in ministry ever since.

When I think about the opportunities and challenges facing Plymouth's next Senior Pastor, I find myself reflecting on the political and cultural realities of the past few years. Whereas many faith communities have responded to our political climate by leaning harder toward one pole or the other, Plymouth remains a community where differences have space to flourish. Perhaps it's due to Plymouth's large scale, its capital city location, or its history of civic engagement - this is a congregation where people with different viewpoints find themselves in covenant with each other. You won't attend too many coffee hours before hearing that Democratic and Republican governors and lieutenant governors have chosen to worship in this place. Don't miss the significance of the motto attributed to Stoddard Lane, called to serve as Plymouth's Senior Minister in 1929, which has endured for nearly a century. "We agree to differ. We resolve to love. We unite to serve." Plymouth continues to use this language to return to its covenantal purpose because God has drawn a circle wide enough around this congregation to welcome differences - in wealth, generational location, political ideology, and lived experience.

This enduring commitment to covenantal community where differences are blessed has made Plymouth a leader in social justice. Plymouth has been among the most powerful religious witnesses to LGBTQ inclusion in the state of Iowa. In the past decade, the resources of the TiM Program have brought ministers to Plymouth's staff who identify as queer or as people of color. Differences in identity and lived experience such as these have shaped the quality of conversation about external witness for racial justice as well as internal traditions like the Thanksgiving pageant. With these dialogues in mind, Plymouth members have experienced how the struggle for justice and equity involves cultivating faith practices, honest self-reflection, and communal discernment. Plymouth is a big and complex place. So change in this congregation is sometimes slower than many desire (slower than the Gospel demands), but the strength of Plymouth's covenant has meant that the congregation approaches its challenges with unifying

processes of decision-making. The best of Plymouth reminds me of a certain proverb - "If you want to go fast go alone. If you want to go far, go together."

Perhaps the greatest benefit and privilege afforded Plymouth's next Senior Pastor will be the chance to work with highly engaged, deeply invested, and incredibly gifted leaders. Plymouth's staff and lay leadership are the best you can ask to work with in the United Church of Christ. While some large churches are sustained by the charisma of a clergyperson's personality, Plymouth is a more process-driven congregation. The church will expect excellence of its Senior Pastor - as a preacher and communicator, as a competent Head of Staff, and as a loving pastoral presence - yet the minister's success will be defined not just by their skills as an individual agent but by their willingness to enter into a genuine partnership with lay leaders called forward by the church.

All these qualities together - the differences that animate the congregation, the day-to-day practice of excellence, the mutual investments made by clergy and lay leadership - make Plymouth Church an exceedingly gratifying place to serve in ministry. It was an immense privilege for me to begin my pastoral vocation at Plymouth. Each day I enter my office, I see Plymouth's watercolor portrait, which I received when my ministry there concluded in 2014. This painting reminds me how much I learned and grew as a minister on Plymouth's staff. These memories inspire me every day to serve God's people with integrity.

I know Plymouth's next Senior Pastor will be similarly challenged, supported, and blessed by Plymouth's covenant.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in cursive script that reads "Cameron Barr". The signature is fluid and elegant, with a long, sweeping underline that extends to the right.

Rev. Cameron Barr
Senior Pastor, United Church of Chapel Hill
Vice-Chair, United Church of Christ Board