

United Church of Christ

Local Church Profile



Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

4126 Ingersoll Avenue

Des Moines, Iowa 515.255.3149

Pastor of Congregational Care

The Iowa Conference of the United Church of Christ

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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

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- c. Compensation and Support
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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 link: <https://www.plymouthchurch.com/>

Additional ecumenical affiliations (e.g., denominations, communions, fellowships): The UCC is in full communion with the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), Evangelical Lutheran Church in America, Presbyterian Church USA, 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 Contact Person: Rev. Kendy Miller, Associate Conference Minister, 515-669-5243, kendy@ucctcm.org

Summary Ministry Description:

Plymouth is living out its 2020 to 2025 strategic plan — *practicing radical love everywhere and always*. We endeavor to practice meaning and purpose, hospitality and belonging, justice and kindness, and operational excellence.

Plymouth Church needs an experienced and energetic pastor with a passion for pastoral care and congregational engagement, who leads with curiosity and compassion, connects with people of diverse ages and backgrounds in both crisis moments and daily living, and builds opportunities for radical hospitality and belonging across our congregation.





Living in Des Moines:

Des Moines, the capital city of Iowa, is regularly ranked as one of the top 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. The surrounding suburbs provide 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 is approximately 850 (among our three services).

Languages used in ministry (other than English): None

Position Title: Pastor of Congregational Care

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 to 50 hours weekly). The scope of work for this position includes, but is not limited to, the following common pastoral activities:

- Prepare and lead worship services, including Scripture study, preaching, offering of prayers, weddings, baptisms, funerals, etc.
- Pastoral care in collaboration with pastors and lay people.
- Leadership development by working with people in the church to create ministry and programs.
- Faith formation and vitality through prayer, Bible study, service, identifying helpful resources and opportunities, and encouraging and helping lay persons take advantage of them.
- Community engagement and availability to the wider community as a church representative.
- 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 pastoral staff.
- Participate in wider church activities such as conference and association meetings.
- Administration responsibilities such as email, reports, and church management system.
- Faithful financial development and stewardship.
- Counseling, listening, and providing referrals as appropriate.
- Energizing and deepening spiritual connections and faith understandings of others in all they do.

Core Competencies:

Plymouth seeks a pastor who is caring, sensitive, and sociable.

1c. Compensation and Support

Salary Basis: \$70,000 to \$80,000

Benefits:

- 403b contribution of 14% of base salary
- 90% of employee's health insurance premium
- 90% of employee's dental insurance premium
- 4 weeks of paid vacation
- 2 weeks of professional development
- 4 additional weekends off per year
- Week after Christmas and week of July 4th off
- Some reimbursement for moving expenses is available
- Sabbatical after five years of continuous employment

Living situation for your next pastor:

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:

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

Residential/commuting expectations:

The Pastor of Congregational Care is expected to work primarily in-person at the church or on pastoral visits within the local community. While the pastor is not required to live within a certain distance from the church, practical aspects of this position should be considered when determining where to live, including the fact that the pastor will need to be available for services, meetings, and other church obligations as needed.

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
- Week after Christmas and week of July 4th off

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 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 our next Pastor of Congregational Care will oversee weekly pastoral care needs, including hospital/home visits and attentiveness to the general care of the congregation. This pastor will serve as the pastoral staff advisor for the Board of Congregational Care, collaborating with its various committees for meaningful and engaging ministry, including numerous support groups and affinity groups. This pastor will also provide pastoral leadership and support to Plymouth's Stephen Ministry.

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

While this pastoral position will focus primarily on internal ministries, Plymouth strives to be a place of radical hospitality and welcome within the broader community. Looking to follow the example of Jesus, our congregational care ministries focus on opportunities for Plymouth members and friends to eat, pray, play, journey, laugh, cry, and live meaningful lives together.

Our church needs a Pastor of Congregational Care who can work collaboratively to support and strengthen opportunities for our congregation to grow in love of God and one another.

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

We expect our next Pastor of Congregational Care to be able to speak English. Aside from this, we do not have any specific language requirements or culturally-specific capacities preferred.

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.

1. Caring for All Creation
2. Building Transformational Leadership Skills
3. Working Together for Justice and Mercy
4. Strengthening Inter- and Intra- Personal Assets

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, our neighbor, and creation. 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.

In 2019 and early 2020, a Strategic Plan was created with input from the congregation. This strategic plan was developed for 2020 through 2025. The strategic plan seeks to provide Plymouth Church with four foundational practices to help us become closer to the church God imagines.

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. 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. Participations and Staffing
- e. Church Finances
- f. Historical Information

3a. Congregational Reflections

Describe your congregation's life of faith:

Plymouth's mission is to grow in love of God, neighbor, and creation. 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 all 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 benevolences and endeavor to make it a fruitful body of Christians.”

Inclusiveness and acceptance are guiding principles of Plymouth. Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are always welcome at Plymouth.

Our motto, as expressed by former Senior Pastor Stoddard Lane (1929–1943): “We agree to differ. We resolve to love. We unite to serve.”

Describe several strengths or positive qualities of your congregation.

With an active membership of more than 2,500, Plymouth is one of the largest congregations in the United Church of Christ.

Plymouth members are dedicated and passionate about the church and its mission. Our congregation appreciates intellectual and artistic engagement, and we love the consistent excellence in music and worship.

Plymouth's bold social justice presence is a hallmark in the community and is often cited as a reason for new members joining the congregation. We are committed to advancing justice, equity, and compassion in and beyond our community.

Describe what worship is like when your congregation gathers:

Plymouth offers three in-person services weekly, lasting about one hour each: Saturday at 5 p.m., Sunday at 9 a.m., and Sunday at 11 a.m. Sunday morning services are live-streamed on YouTube.

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 Saturday Night Band, featuring a mix of contemporary songs and traditional hymns. This service also includes weekly communion (the Sunday services offer communion monthly).

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 across the Des Moines Metro, serves as 9 a.m. worship leaders during the academic calendar year. Children's choirs for children in pre-K through 8th grade frequently sing during Sunday morning services as well. The 11 a.m. 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.

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 a guiding light for inspiring all to focus on the love of God, neighbor, and creation. When asked "Why attend worship at Plymouth?," the most common response relates to inspiring preaching. Plymouth ministers share preaching responsibilities, so the congregation hears from multiple 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 and to be challenged and educated by others.

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

Plymouth offers a variety of educational programming and faith formation for children, teens, families, and adults. Additionally, we have expansive educational programming for children and teens through our music programming. Some of our offerings for children, teens, and families include:

- Church School
- Creative Arts Camp
- Our Whole Lives
- Children's Choirs
- 7th and 8th Grade Confirmation
- Special Classes and Workshops
- Weekly Dinners
- Community/Social Justice Engagement

Faith formation for adults includes:

- Weekly Bible Studies
- Various Book Studies
- Regular and Special Classes
- Spiritual Retreats

Describe how your congregation is organized for ministry and mission.

Members approve and carry out Plymouth's mission, strategic plan, and programs. Members serve on Church Council, Executive Committee, boards, and committees. The Executive Committee establishes policies affecting Plymouth's operations, property, finances, and personnel and resolves time-sensitive matters. The Church Council serves as the ultimate governing body. The Church Council consists of the Senior Pastor, representatives from each of the 10 boards at Plymouth, a member at large, and Moderator and Moderator-elect, who act as the chair and chair-elect of the congregation. Other pastoral and program staff are non-voting members of the Church Council. Church Council meetings are typically open to all to attend.

The church bylaws govern the decision-making process. Decisions are communicated to our members and attendees in various ways, including weekly e-mails, pulpit announcements, a quarterly magazine, mailings, and an annual church meeting.

At least 20 committees meet monthly for 60 or 90 minutes. Generally speaking, each committee reports to one of Plymouth's ten boards:

- Board of Benevolences
- Board of Children, Teens, and Families
- Board of Christian Stewardship
- Board of Christian Social Action
- Board of Congregational Care
- Board of Deacons
- Board of Membership
- Board of Music and Arts
- Board of Spiritual Growth
- Board of Trustees

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

At least 20 committees meet regularly for 60 to 90 minutes per month. The ten church boards (plus the Plymouth Foundation Board) meet monthly for 60 to 90 minutes. The Church Council meets monthly for 1 to 2 hours. An approximate total of 45 hours is spent in meetings per month. Plymouth pastors 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 Pastor 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 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.

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

3b. 11-Year Report

(add here the 11-Year Report developed with the help of your conference staff, UCC Data Hub, and MissionInsite)

See Attachment

3c. Congregational Demographics

Describe those who participate in your church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
Number of active members:	2569	No
Number of active non-members:	2753	No
Total of church participants (sum of the numbers above):	5312	No

Percentage of total participants who have been in the church:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
More than 10 years:	60%	Yes
Less than 10, more than 5 years:	20%	Yes
Less than 5 years:	20%	Yes

Number of total participants by age:

0-11	12-17	18-24	25-34	35-50	51-64	65-80	80+	<i>Are these numbers an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
439	264	216	195	440	435	589	237	No

Education level of adult participants by percentage:

		<i>Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)</i>
High school:	95%	Yes
College:	70%	Yes
Graduate School:	30%	Yes
Specialty Training:	80%	Yes
Other (please specify):		

Percentage of adults in various employment types:

		Is this number an estimate? (check if yes)
Adults who are employed:	60%	Yes
Adults who are retired:	30%	Yes
Adults who are not fully employed:	10%	Yes

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? (list any and all worship planners, such as various lay leaders, pastors, musicians, other staff)
Adult Groups or Classes	250	Pastors and lay leaders
Baptisms (number last year)	16	Pastors
Children's Groups or Classes	350	Pastors and lay leaders
Christmas Eve and Easter Worship	3,000	Pastors
Church-wide Meals	350	Pastors and lay leaders
Choirs and Music Groups	300	Pastors and lay leaders
Church-based Bible Study	50	Pastors
Communion (served how often?)	Sundays, Monthly; Saturdays, Weekly	Pastors and lay leaders
Community Meals	250	Pastors and lay leaders
Confirmation (number confirmed last year)	14	

Drama or Dance Program	30	
Funerals (<i>number last year</i>)	30	
Intergenerational Groups	200	
Outdoor Worship	100	
Prayer or Meditation Groups	100	
Public Advocacy Work	100	
Retreats	100	
Theology or Bible Programs in the Community	100	
Weddings (<i>number last year</i>)	6	
Worship (time slot: Sunday 9 a.m.)	400	
Worship (time slot: Sunday 11 a.m.)	350	
Worship (time slot: Saturday 5 p.m.)	100	
Young Adult Groups or Classes	150	
Youth Groups or Classes	100	

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
Senior Pastor	Yes	Full time	Executive Committee	2021–Present
Pastor of Faith Formation & Social Justice	No	Full time	Senior Pastor	2024–Present
Interim Pastor of Congregational Care	No	Part Time	Senior Pastor	2024–Present

Associate Pastor (TiM Resident)	No	Full Time	Senior Pastor	2024-Present
Director of Music & Arts	No	Full Time	Senior Pastor	2017-Present
Organist & Associate Director of Music	No	Full Time	Director of Music & Arts/Senior Pastor	2022-Present
Director of the Matins Choir	No	Part Time	Director of Music & Arts	2023-Present
Music & Arts Administrative Assistant	No	Full Time	Director of Music & Arts	2013-Present
Director of the Saturday Night Band	No	Part Time	Director of Music & Arts	2007-Present
Creative Arts Director	No	Part Time	Director of Music & Arts	2023-Present
Director Operations & Technology	No	Full Time	Senior Pastor	2021-Present
Facilities Manager	No	Full Time	Director Operations & Technology	2015-Present
Administrative Assistant	No	Full Time	Director of Operations & Technology	2021-Present
Director of Children, Teens and Families	No	Full Time	Pastor of Faith Formation & Social Justice	2024-Present
Associate Director of Children & Families	No	Full Time	Director of Children, Teens and Families	2021-Present
Director of Communications	No	Full Time	Senior Pastor	2022-Present

Communications Associate	No	Full Time	Director of Communications	2019–Present
Director of Finance	No	Full Time	Senior Pastor	2023–Present
Accountant	No	Full Time	Director of Finance	2023–Present
Media Assistant	No	Part Time	Director of Communications	2022–Present

Reflection

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

Plymouth employs pastoral and program staff with outstanding talents to serve in their areas of experience and expertise. Carrying out ministry to the thousands of people who call Plymouth home requires a large, collaborative, and creative staff team.

3e. Church Finances

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

Source	Amount
Annual Offerings and Pledged Giving	\$ 2.1M
Foundation Draw (<i>beyond what is permitted by spending policy, “drawing down the principal”</i>)	\$ Grant application
Other Income (Investment returns, non-pledge, and special gifts):	\$ 500K
TOTAL	\$ 2.8M

Current annual expenses (dollars budgeted for most recent fiscal year): \$

Attach most recent church budget, spending plan, operating statement, or annual treasurer’s report as shared publicly with the congregation, or – if your church does not pass an annual budget – list current budgeted expenses here.

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

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

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? Special Review and Assessment

What is the church’s current indebtedness? \$0

Total amount of loan debt: \$0

Reason for debt: N/A

Are capital and other payments current? Yes

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.

Capital Campaign for roof, masonry, organ, and kitchen is projected to launch in the fall of 2025. We are working with a campaign consultant and anticipate raising approximately 6.5M for this project.

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

Year(s)	Purpose	Result	Impact
2018-2021	TiM Fruitful Change	\$1.4M	Continuation of our Transition into Ministry (TiM) program until at least 2030
2018	Tower Renovation	\$400K	Complete necessary repairs on Plymouth's historic bell tower
2013-2015	Sanctuary Remodel	\$3M	Sanctuary was upgraded and remodeled

If a capital campaign is underway or anticipated, describe:

Year(s)	Purpose	Goal
2025-2028	The upcoming capital campaign will address the roof, masonry, organ, and our primary kitchen.	\$6.5M

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

By addressing key facility needs, the overarching goal of this project is to ensure that Plymouth can be a bold, vibrant, and intergenerational community of welcome for generations to come.

Does your church have a foundation? Yes

What is the market value of the assets? \$9.5M

Are funds drawn as needed, regularly, or under certain circumstances? Special grant application process

Other Assets: \$1.8M

Does your church have a parsonage? No

Describe all buildings owned by the church: In addition to the church property, the church also owns the land behind the building, including some private residences, and is currently renting this under a long-term lease arrangement with a property management group.

Which spaces are accessible to wheelchairs? (worship space, pulpit, fellowship space, facilities, etc.) 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 is strong, in large part because of the resources held by the Plymouth Foundation. The church building is an asset to Plymouth members, participants, and the surrounding community. The upcoming capital campaign will be a significant project, but we are confident we'll be able to address the critical needs of the building, enabling ministry for future generations. As with any large institution with significant assets, short-term and long-term financial planning are ongoing and vital.

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.

Plymouth Church has been an LGBTQ+ Open and Affirming congregation for over 30 years. We embrace diversity and affirm the dignity and worth of every person created in the image of God. We honor the guiding principle that discrimination is incompatible with Christ's message of unconditional love. We welcome members and friends of Plymouth Church who self-identify as LGBTQ+ persons. All are welcome and encouraged to participate in all aspects of Plymouth life and service. Plymouth continues to live into this history of inclusion and belonging, asking and responding to new questions. This past year, Plymouth helped lead the first-ever ecumenical worship service that took place on the main stage of the Des Moines Pride Festival.

As we approach 100 years at our current location, the upcoming Capital Campaign is an important moment in the life of the congregation as we seek to continue to be a place where the next generation can come to know the love of God.

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

As a congregation with more than 20 full-time and 25 part-time staff, staff transitions are an understandable reality at Plymouth. This pastoral position is open after the departure of a long-time pastoral staff member. With every change in staffing, there is both a loss and an opportunity to introduce someone new to a vibrant congregation.

Every church has conflicts, 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.

When facing conflict as a congregation, we often turn to our motto, “We agree to differ, resolve to love, unite to serve.” There has been no major conflict in recent years.

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

Staff member’s name	Years of service	UCC Standing (Y/N)
Jared Wortman	2021–Present	Y
John Tyson	2024–Present	N
Melody Webb	2022–2024	N
Sarai Rice	2020–2021	Y
Lindsey Braun	2016–2022	Y
Kathryn Palen	2015–2016	Y
LeAnn Stubs	2013–2024	Y
Valerie Miller-Coleman	2011–2019	Y
Matt Mardis-LeCroy	2005–2020	Y
Angie Witmer	2000–2013	Y

Pat Oberbillig	1999-2009	Y
Jim Newby	1997-2003	Y
Martha Hendricks	1995-1998	Y
David Ruhe	1994-2004	Y
Paul Johnson	1991-2004	Y
Janice Davis	1989-1992	Y
Faith Ferree	1984-2013	Y
Wayne Shoemaker	1982-1991	Y
Alden Hebbard	1981-1995	Y

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:

- **Food Pantry and Little Free Pantry:** With a drop-off station located at the church, their focus is food insecurity for residents of Des Moines.
- **Central Iowa Shelter & Services Meals:** Plymouth volunteers help prepare and serve 150-200 meals monthly.
- **Food Buddies:** Provides non-perishable, healthy, 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.
- **The Welcoming Migrants Committee:** Educates the congregation on immigration and travels to the border to witness conditions and provide assistance.
- **Pride:** Plymouth marches in the annual Capital City Pride Parade in large numbers and has been instrumental in leading an ecumenical Pride service with other affirming congregations.
- **Plymouth Nursery School:** This preschool has provided high-quality preschool experiences for children in the greater Des Moines area since 1954.

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

Plymouth is engaged in association, conference, and national UCC settings. Additionally, the Iowa Conference business office is housed at Plymouth.

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.

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

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. Similarly, we're working toward being an Accessible to All congregation.

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

- AMOS (A Metropolitan Organizing Strategy)
- The Interfaith Alliance
- DMARC (Des Moines Area Religious Council)
- Inter-faith and ecumenical Bible studies
- Corinthian Baptist Church, Des Moines
- Ebenezer Baptist Church, Havana, Cuba
- Rainbow Faith DSM

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, neighbor, and creation. 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?

Ministry at and beyond Plymouth is a collaborative process involving the staff and the congregation. The Pastor for Congregational care and other ministers generally authorize and support these community ministries.

4b. Mission InSite

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

- As the population of the surrounding area ages on a median basis, focusing on and valuing the needs of older generations should continue.
- As family populations grow throughout the greater Des Moines area, strong ministry to children, teens, and families will remain a priority.

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 hospitality.

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

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, which 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 or have personal relationships with local, area, state, and national leaders. Community leaders note Plymouth's active stances, 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 also know Plymouth congregants to show up for social justice issues, regularly speaking to legislators and other elected and appointed officials.

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 what they've 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 participate 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. Others get involved at Plymouth because of our strong children, teens, and families program.

5. References

See Attached

6. Closing Thoughts

- a. Closing Prayer
- b. Statement of Consent
- c. Validation by Conference / Association

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:

Every Plymouth Board and Committee meeting begins with the prayer below. It guides and gives voice to bold ministry in an unknown future:

“O God, you have called your servants to ventures of which we cannot see the ending, by paths as yet untrodden, through perils unknown. Give us faith to go with good courage, not knowing where we go, but only that your hand is leading us and your love supporting us, through Jesus Christ our Lord. Amen”

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?*

Pastoral and program staff, Executive Committee, and pastoral search committee.

Rev. Dr. Jared Wortman
Senior Pastor
February 2025

6c. Validation by Conference / Association

The congregation is currently in good standing with the association / conference named. Staff Comment: Yes

To the best of my knowledge, ministerial history information is complete. Staff Statement: Yes

To the best of my knowledge, available church financial information is presented thoroughly. Staff Comment: Yes

My signature below attests to the above three items.

Signature: 

Name / Title: Jeff Hagan Designated Search and Call ACM

Email: jeff@ucctcm.org

Phone:

Date: 02/29/25

January 23, 2025

Dear Plymouth Church Applicant,

My name is Wes Mullins, and I am an ordained minister in the Metropolitan Community Churches, have my MDiv from Brite Divinity School, and am serving as the Executive Director of Capital City Pride, the largest LGBTQ+ organization in Iowa. We produce nearly 100 events each year, including PrideFest, the second largest festival in Des Moines.

I am writing today to endorse Plymouth and to specifically encourage any LGBTQ+ persons, *or our supporters*, considering this Congregational Care position to apply. While Iowa was the third State to legalize same-sex marriage back in 2009, we have seen increasingly withdrawn or hostile attitudes for queer people emerge from our legislature since that time. Like many other parts of the country, this has had especially painful impacts on trans and non-binary people in our schools and communities. *We need strong voices of faith to counter the persistent narrative that God does not love LGBTQ+ people.*

Plymouth is a remarkable religious community from which to perform this ministry. Known in our community as a staunchly supportive and welcoming congregation, Plymouth has been at the forefront of advocacy, with many LGBTQ+ members and years of hosting our local gay men's chorus rehearsals. Further, when I formed the Rainbow Faith Coalition of Greater Des Moines to connect LGBTQ+ supporting churches in the area, Plymouth was part of the initial group of 5 congregations, which has now expanded to more than 20.

To be clear, Plymouth is more than a single-issue congregation. Taking all forms of social justice, ministry, and worship seriously, Plymouth is a progressive powerhouse in the region...and for good reason. I moved here for my job after over 20 years of ministry in MCC congregations in Texas, Oregon, Colorado, and Missouri. This role is one I can confidently say is an opportunity not to be missed. In fact, if I was not so dedicated to my current role, for which I moved to Des Moines and began just 18 months ago, I would apply for this position myself.

If you are a progressive Christian voice, you are needed and wanted here in Des Moines. And, if your experience is like mine, within a short time you will find yourself feeling at home and surrounded by some truly wonderful Iowans.

In Solidarity,



Wes Mullins
CCP Executive Director
CaptialCityPride.org

January 28, 2025

To: Plymouth's Next Pastor of Congregational Care,

Allow me to introduce you to Plymouth Church—a remarkable community of faith that has stood as a beacon of love, care, and connection for decades. If Plymouth were a person, they would be someone whose heart beats for others, whose hands are always ready to serve, and whose doors are wide open to all. Plymouth seeks a leader who will love the people wholly and walk with them faithfully.

This church is a place that welcomes everyone, just as they are. It is a congregation that believes in the transformative power of simple acts of care and connection. It is a people who seek meaning and purpose in their lives and yearn for a pastor who will help them discover and deepen that purpose.

Plymouth is searching for a Pastor of Congregational Care, someone whose presence radiates compassion and whose leadership inspires trust. This pastor will be responsible for creating a space where all feel cared for, connected, and welcome. They will work with the Stephen Ministers, those laypeople who embody the spirit of walking with others through grief and life's challenges. They will stand at the threshold of life's most significant moments—weddings that celebrate joy and new beginnings, funerals that honor lives and offer comfort in the midst of loss. They will provide guidance and leadership.

This pastor must embody the love of God and bring with them a spirit that is welcoming, healing, and uplifting. Plymouth's perfect partner is someone who can weave the profound with the practical, who can provide spiritual guidance while tending to the everyday needs of the congregation.

Plymouth has a unique story to share, one that is steeped in history, community, and radical hospitality. We are an Open and Affirming congregation. We are a Just Peace congregation. For decades, this church has been a sanctuary for all—a place of refuge, celebration, and meaning. We would love to tell you more about how this community has been transformed by love and purpose and how you could help shape its next chapter.

As a guardian and steward of this church, I can say without hesitation that Plymouth is ready to embrace the right pastor with open arms. This church will love its pastor fiercely, nurture their growth, and celebrate their successes. In return, Plymouth asks for a pastor who will bring their whole self—mind, heart, and spirit—to the work of caring for this beloved community.

If you are the pastor who feels called to walk this journey with Plymouth, know that you are applying to more than a position. You are stepping into a sacred partnership with a community that longs to do God's work together, hand in hand, through the grace and guidance of Jesus Christ.

Love Never Faileth,
Pam Kenyon, Lay Leader

Current: Board of Congregational Care; Chair Funeral Reception Team, Secretary, Rainbow Action Network.

Former: Moderator-Elect; Chair, Board of Membership; Sr. Deacon; Transition into Ministry; Board of Trustees

January 19, 2025

Dear Pastor for Congregational Care Candidate,

I am glad you are considering a call to Plymouth United Church of Christ as the Pastor for Congregational Care. It is a wonderful opportunity.

By way of introduction, I am the congregation's Moderator for the '24-'25 program year. My wife and I joined Plymouth in 1996. She and I have served on numerous boards. Our boys were baptized and confirmed here. This is all to say, I believe I can offer some observations that might help you decide if Plymouth—and this position—is right for you.

Plymouth as a congregation takes a great deal of collective pride in its history. You can see that in the building, the church's record on social justice, and the arts performed and displayed throughout. Plymouth shows keen interest in its members from education in everything from support groups to lecture series. The pastoral care position fits most closely in this latter sentiment.

Plymouth is a large church. The vast bulk of members participate moderately, attending services, church school, or performing in the many music groups. There is, of course, a modestly fluctuating group of very active members. And many of those are blessed with extraordinary skills and talents. Plymouth as a whole enjoys the collective blessing of individual investment.

Over the years, I have come away impressed at the advantages and challenges that this presents. Relative to the position you're considering, Plymouth members generate a myriad of initiatives that will help or enrich other members. Nearly all these people offer solid professional or ecumenical expertise. Discerning which of these initiatives to pursue or maintain can prove challenging. The pastor who accepts this call will get to work with a bevy of knowledgeable and well-meaning lay-leaders.

Over the years, Plymouth has enjoyed strong pastoral and staff leadership. It helped Plymouth weather COVID-19, the outside political climate, and other stressors. The current leadership has proven steady and inspirational for the congregation. The senior leadership emphasizes coordination and collaboration even as it prizes individual initiative.

In conclusion, Plymouth is a wonderful place to work and worship. Plymouth members—casual and involved—want the next pastor to thrive and stay. The leadership—lay and pastoral—support that. I hope you'll give prayerful consideration to this position for the manifold benefits it would bring for everyone.

Sincerely,



Darrel Mullins
Moderator