



Plymouth Congregational Church ~ UCC ~ 1301 Oak Street, Paso Robles, CA 93446 ~ (805) 238-3321  
Pplymouthchurchpaso@gmail.com ~ "No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here."

## Pastor's Letter ~ December 2023 Reverend Wendy Holland



Our Thursday morning Bible study is currently in the book of Acts, and this week we looked at chapter 3, where Peter and John encounter the man who has been unable to walk since birth. He shows up at the Temple gate each day, delivered faithfully by people who care enough to get him situated so he can beg for money.

When Peter and John pass by he calls out to them, desperate for any small contribution. Peter approaches and says, "Look at us." We had a great time discussing the implications of those three words: the invitation to human connection, the reality that Peter and John likely presented as financially needy themselves, and the impact it has when we *genuinely see* each other.

But the most profound thing happening here is that this man was asking only for the bare minimum, hoping for nothing more than to scrape by each day. Calling out to God for healing isn't even on his radar. But God has been paying attention to him all along. Peter tells him - in the name of Jesus - to stand up and walk, and the man is healed and transformed.

The Advent season is a reminder that God *sees* us. When the Hebrew people were waiting for the Messiah, in good times and in bad, they *called out* to God - in expectation, in frustration, with joy - but always trusting that God would keep that promise of provision and deliverance.

Because of Jesus, we share in that same anticipation of God's goodness in our lives. We can be fully expectant of provision and deliverance. We can call out to God boldly, excited for what comes next.

(And in the process, be grateful for those who get you from place to place, and who offer a hand up, because this *is* the work of the kingdom of God (and a whole other sermon. And in the process, be grateful for those who get you from place to place, and who offer a hand up, because this *is* the work of the Kingdom of God (and a whole other sermon. Thanks for the fantastic insight, Leslie. )

With love and gratitude,  
Pastor Wendy

64 *O that you would tear open the heavens and come down...  
3 When you did awesome deeds that we did not expect,  
you came down; the mountains quaked at your presence.  
4 From ages past no one has heard,  
no ear has perceived,  
no eye has seen any God besides you,  
who works for those who wait for you.  
Isaiah 64:1b, 3-4 (NRSVUE)*

T  
H  
E  
P  
C  
C  
B  
E  
A  
C  
O  
N  
Z  
E  
R  
D  
E  
C  
E  
M  
B  
E  
R  
2  
0  
2  
3

## *Greetings from the Diaconate Board*

December 2023 Beacon Article

It is a wonderful time of the year. Advent will begin December 3rd. We are asking all available bodies to come decorate the church on December 2nd at 9:00. We call it the "Hanging of the Greens". It is a very nice time for the whole family to get into the spirit of Christmas.

We are also asking anyone who is able, to bring a poinsettia and place in the front of the church. It looks beautiful when we have quite a few.

If you have wanted to be a liturgist or a greeter, but have not been asked, let us know. It takes no training.

Christmas Eve is on a Sunday. There will be no morning Church service. We will have our **Christmas Eve service at 5:00 that night.** It will be an all-family service with Candlelight to end the service with Silent Night.

Make a point of being in church all of the Sundays of Advent.

There is not a more caring or friendly Church than Plymouth. We are so blessed.

*Christmas Blessings, Sharon Rowe*



## MISSION OUTREACH

Submitted By John Svinth

Our Plymouth Cares meal on November 7<sup>th</sup> served 100 (ONE HUNDRED!) dinners and all 75 sack lunches to the unhoused and hungry on a cool and breezy evening at the ECHO Paso shelter. Our hardy shelter servers were Alex & Becky, Tanya, Stu and John S. The entrée was Alex and Becky's popular Hearty Hamburger Casserole. Pearl and Chris provided a refreshing green salad with Ranch dressing. John and Linda T. prepared the tasty buttered Hawaiian sweet rolls. Leslie baked and bagged delectable chocolate chip cookies (including what appeared to be Halloween chocolates!). The skilled PBJ sack lunch crew was Sharon W., Melinda, Tanya, Carlie & John S., Nikol & Andrew Rochez, and Jim & Charity. John & Linda T. also emptied the dishwasher of its cleaned load from the previous Sunday's fellowship. The hungry were fed and thankful, while the 17 preparers enjoyed the good work and wonderful fellowship. Our next Plymouth Cares meal is Tuesday, December 5<sup>th</sup>, where special Christmas goody bags will be created, so helpers are also appreciated for this special project.

### CHRISTMAS SEASON MISSIONS

**An important part of the Christmas season is helping those in need.**

**As you are able, please support our Christmas missions with gifts that share hope and love.**

**Paso Robles Toy Bank Collection through Sunday, December 3<sup>rd</sup>:** A Toy Bank collection box is in Plymouth Hall for donations of new, unwrapped toys for ages up to 12-year-old, which are given to children in need in Paso Robles, San Miguel, Bradley, Shandon and Heritage Ranch. Recommendations can be found online at [www.prtoybank.org](http://www.prtoybank.org). To let the Toy Bank do the shopping, money is donated directly to the Toy Bank at the website or by mailing checks payable to Toy Bank of Greater Paso Robles, to PO Box 2801, Paso Robles, CA 93447. (Please do not send money or checks to Plymouth Church for the Toy Bank.)

**Salvation Army Bell Ringing at Walmart on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>:** The Salvation Army provides Christian love and relief to suffering at home and abroad. Plymouth Church will ring the bell for the Salvation Army red kettle at Walmart on Saturday, December 16<sup>th</sup>, in one-hour shifts from 10 AM – 6 PM. Bell ringers can sign up on the schedule on the Outreach board or contact John Svinth at [jsvinth@pacbell.net](mailto:jsvinth@pacbell.net) or 805-674-9464.

**Zozu Youth Christmas Donations by Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>:** We invite the congregation to share in a modest donation of Christmas gift money to Daniel and Kizito, our nine-year-old boys in Uganda whom we sponsor through the Zozu Project. Donations can be given in the Sunday offering plate or delivered to the Church Office. **Checks should be payable to Plymouth Church with a notation for Zozu Christmas.**

**UCC Christmas Fund Offering on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>:** The Christmas Fund is an annual special mission offering providing support for financial difficulties among active and retired UCC clergy, lay employees, and their surviving spouses. **Checks should be payable to Plymouth Church with a notation for Christmas Fund.**

**Heifer Project "Living Gift Market" through December:** The Heifer Project helps to end world hunger and poverty through success in agriculture. It helps farmers succeed through training, resources and marketing support, after which the successful farmers share their training and resources with other farmers. Donating to the Heifer is a two-step process:

**A Living Gift Market Order Form is available after worship in Plymouth Hall, in the Church Office and emailed separately with the letter for Christmas Season Missions.**

**Completed order forms with money or checks payable to Plymouth Church with a notation for Heifer, can be sent to the Church Office or given to John Svinth on Sundays after worship.**

**Wishing you a blessed Christmas season!**



Submitted by Julia Schulte

**Saturday 12/2: Hanging of the Greens/ Youth House decorating 9AM**

**Sunday 12/3, 10, 17: Christmas Eve rehearsal after service**

**Tuesday 12/5: Youth serving with Plymouth Cares, 4:45-6PM**

**Wednesday 12/6: Youth Band 6:30PM; Youth Bible Study 7-8:30PM at the Youth House**

**Wednesday 12/13: Care Kit Making youth night, 6:30-8:30PM at the Youth House**

**Friday 12/15: Plymouth family Christmas party 5:30-8:30PM; Youth Group White Elephant; & overnight after**

**Saturday 12/16: Youth pickups 10AM at the Youth House**

**Sunday 12/17: Christmas Eve rehearsal after service; Family Caroling Day at local senior centers**

**Wednesday 12/20: Youth Band 6:30PM; Youth Bible Study 7-8:30PM at the Youth House**

**Friday 12/22: Youth Christmas Eve dress rehearsal 3-5PM in the Sanctuary**

**Sunday 12/24: Christmas Eve youth rehearsal 3PM; Christmas Eve service 5PM**

**Sunday 12/31: Youth Sunday**

Hello all, and happy December! This month will be full of youth & family Christmas events, and we would love to have you all join us for them. To start off, we will be having our annual **"Hanging of the Greens" at 10AM on Saturday December 2nd**, where we will decorate the church for Christmas. This includes decorating the Youth House, and having youth help with this would be wonderful!

Like we did in November, we will be holding youth rehearsals for our Christmas Eve service every Sunday after service for about 30 minutes. We will be **rehearsing December 3rd, 10th, and 17th this month**. All of our church youth who are interested in participating are welcome and encouraged to join us in whatever capacity works best for them.

Our Youth Group members have been invited to help the **Plymouth Cares program serve our holiday meal for the people who are unhoused in our community on Tuesday, December 5th**. We will be **meeting at the Paso ECHO shelter from 4:45-6PM to serve**, so please join us if you can and help to spread some holiday cheer!

Our Youth Bible study and band will be happening this month, with some schedule changes to accommodate our special Christmas-time events. **Youth Group (6th grade and up) are invited to join us at 6:30PM at the Youth House for band rehearsal, followed by Bible study from 7-8:30PM, on Wednesday December 6th and December 20th.**

On **Wednesday the 13th**, we will be spending our 6:30-8:30PM time in the Youth House assembling the Care Kits to give to our warming shelter folks. Which means we will continue accepting donations for our care kit supplies up until the 13th! You can bring donations on Sunday mornings, or to the church office during business hours, and all donations will be prepared and given to our unhoused community folks.

**Finally, on Wednesday 12/27, we will NOT be holding our weekly Youth band and study, as people will likely be traveling post-Christmas. We wish safe travels to all!**

**In place of our monthly Date Night on Friday December 15th, we will be having a family Christmas party for our church!** Bring your favorite holiday potluck dish and join us in the Fellowship Hall from 5:30-8:30PM for a night of crafting Christmas ornaments, playing games, fellowship with our church friends, and singing Christmas carols. **Everyone in our Plymouth family is welcome to attend, so we hope to see you there!** After the Christmas party ends, our Youth Group members are invited to stay afterwards for a White Elephant gift exchange and an overnight in the Youth House, with pickups on Saturday 12/16 at 10AM.

We will be having a **Youth Christmas Eve rehearsal on Friday 12/22 in the sanctuary from 3-5PM**, where we will run through our youth program and incorporate costumes! We will also be running through our youth songs and the carols that we will be singing in service on Christmas Eve. **Youth who will be participating in our Christmas play are invited to come to church early on Christmas Eve for our final rehearsal of all of our youth parts and music, and more.** We will be meeting at 3PM to run through our program, and then our music participants will get together at 4PM to fine-tune our songs. Our Christmas Eve evening service begins at 5PM, and we hope to have you join us!

Finally, the last Sunday of this month, December 31st, will be our monthly Youth Sunday. Youth of all ages are invited to participate in our service in whatever way they would like, such as liturgist, acolyte, greeters, musicians, and more! It's a great way for them to be involved in our service and to showcase their talents and dedication to the congregation.

**I hope that everyone has a beautiful month and holiday season, and I hope that we see you all at our December festivities! Wishing all a wonderful holiday season!**

*Julia Schulte,  
Youth & Family Director*



The Desert at Dusk

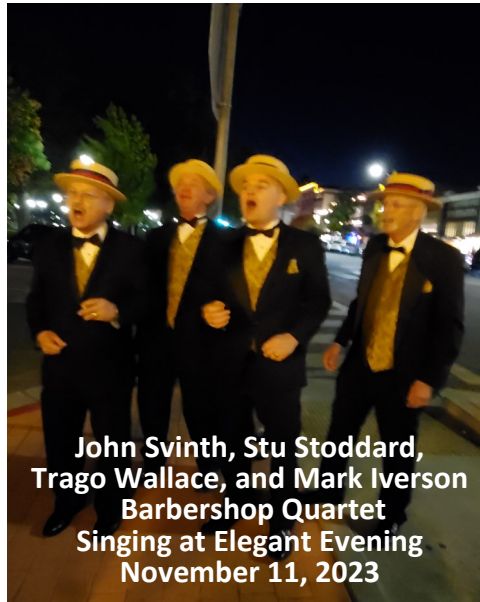
By Sally Vogl

The sculptor chisels the last pinnacle  
 tapers the top, packs her tools away.  
 She summons a maiden to dust the spire.  
 I quicken my climb to approach  
 the artist, but she's gone,  
 so pause near a lone mesquite  
 tucked in tiers of sandstone.  
 Arms outstretched, I reach for the sun  
 completing its westward volley.  
 It slips past, beds on the horizon.  
 Cirrus clouds--a striped serape  
 of orange and gray bands--  
 wrap around my shoulders.  
 A trio of saguaro breathes in smoky hues.  
 With measured steps  
 a housekeeper ascends the peak  
 to polish the moon and early stars,  
 I'm barely a brush stroke away--

Published in  
 The Christian Science Monitor



How adorable the kids are! Plymouth's Children ~ November 5, 2023



John Svinth, Stu Stoddard,  
 Trago Wallace, and Mark Iverson  
 Barbershop Quartet  
 Singing at Elegant Evening  
 November 11, 2023

Christmas

By Pearl Munak

True Love, True Wisdom and True peace  
 Are born in us on Christmas Eve  
 And again on Christmas Day,  
 And any minute of the year,  
 Even to the fictional Scrooge,  
 Who cared only about money,  
 When he remembered past sadness and joy,  
 Saw what was really going on now,  
 And contemplated the consequences,  
 And Tiny Tim did **NOT** die,  
 But received the best medical care,  
 And a proper diet.



PRUNING ~ PART 2 ~ Chis Macy



In the month of October, I shared a little piece on pruning, using **why** we prune our plants and trees as a metaphor for spiritual pruning in The Beacon. Well, watch out what you write! Less than a week went by when those big shears from the sky headed my way. And not just little maintenance snips here and there. Wow! I was in for the big prune – the “you don’t look like you used to” kind of pruning, which, **SPOILER ALERT**, is the ultimate point of pruning, spiritual or otherwise.

And boy, did I have my arsenal of responses at the ready, even though I know better. Grumbling, murmuring, complaining, moaning and groaning, feeling put out and put upon, like maybe I had a big X on my back, pissed off, and just a general attitude of Why me?; an underlying out-rage of What? Again?; Give me a break, why don’tcha?

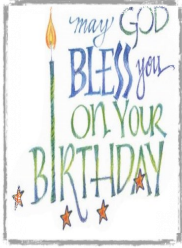
A wise pastor once told his congregation not to ask God, “Why me?”, but that the better question was to ask God, “What are you doing with me?” Oh yeah... I momentarily forgot about that.

God is always doing something – pruning is one of them. Let us be reminded that pruning is necessary for the ultimate good health of the plant; for vigorous growth, better and juicer fruit production, and an overflowing abundance of flowers. Sometimes what is impeding good and healthy growth has to go. Sometimes the overgrown, tangled and dead undergrowth has to be removed so the light can get in.

So, yes, I was pruned. But I already see teeny tiny little fresh green shoots emerging, and isn’t that what we all want? Fresh, new, vigorous healthy growth in our lives? As much as I kick and flail in the process, (when will I learn?) I know I do. I’m thankful that the Head Gardener sees promise in this sometimes unruly plant.

# DECEMBER CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS

## DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS



Kitty Hoffman	1	Argentina Louise Dudley	20
Finn Railsback	5	Vickie Fairchild	20
Sandy Tuttle	9	Carlie Svinth	24
Leslie Wallace	16	Jason Cybulski	25
Jim Davis	18	Dawn Stemper	29
William Wallace	18	Jessica Fullerton	31



## DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

Cynthia & Andy Anthony 29



**HOPE AND HEALING ~ “DEAR GOD, PLEASE BLESS US WITH GOOD HEALTH AND STRENGTH. HELP US TO TAKE CARE OF OUR BODIES AND MINDS, AND TO ALWAYS BE GRATEFUL FOR THE GIFT OF LIFE. AMEN.”**

- † Vivian Borden ~ A close friend of Chris Macy’s who was just diagnosed with lung cancer.
- † Dix DeGraaf ~ Has an upcoming surgery for an aortic embolism. Prayers for healing.
- † Pete DeGraaf ~ Parkinson’s
- † Maisie Egger
- † Lynda Feit ~ Heart Attack
- † Rachana Feit ~ Cancer
- † Rev. Wendy Holland and family
- † Prayers for Hart & Nancy Junge. ~ Hart is home, recovering well and glad to be home with Nancy.
- † Prayers for Strength & Recovery of Emily, JoAnne Stoddard’s niece, diagnosed w/Stage 3 breast cancer.
- † Carolyn Kelso
- † Anita Yates
- † For multiple families dealing with health and cognition issues.
- † For the continued good health of all.
- † For God to bless PCC with continued, abundant, love and unity, and to add to our numbers, as we can be a mutual blessing to those who join us.
- † Prayers for the people in all War Torn Countries.
- † May God heal, bless, comfort; and give wisdom to the doctors and all medical personnel.

To add to the prayer list, or make changes, please call or email, the church office: (805) 238-3321, [plymouthchurchpaso@gmail.com](mailto:plymouthchurchpaso@gmail.com)

## Plymouth Recovery Ministries






\*Friends of Bill W.  
(Closed ~ Women Only Mtg.)  
Tuesdays and Thursdays  
5:00-7:00pm (Youth House)

\*Just for Today -NA Mtg.  
Location Library 6PM  
(Pls Note: use 13th St. Entrance)  
Held Each Friday  
except the 3rd Friday of the Month  
to accommodate Date Night

# Christmas

A SAVIOR IS BORN

Wishing All A Blessed December!  
 Plymouth Congregational Church  
 December 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
<p><i>Unto Us A Child Is Born</i>  <i>Isaiah 9:6</i></p>					<p><b>1</b> * Just for Today -NA Mtg. Location Library 6PM (Pls Note: use 13th St. Entrance) ~ Held Each Fri except the 3rd Friday of the Month- to accommodate Date Night</p>	<p><b>2</b> Hanging of the Greens                      9:00 A.M.  </p>
<p><b>3</b> WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am                      HOLY COMMUNION ADVENT BEGINS 12/3-12/24                      Christmas Eve Rehearsal ~ After Service</p>	<p><b>4</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p>	<p><b>5</b> Plymouth Cares - Dinner Prep 1:30 - 4:30pm (PH) (Youth Serving)                      Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>6</b> Men's Bible Study 8AM (PH)                      *Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM (Y/H)</p>	<p><b>7</b> Pastor Wendy's Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)                      Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>8</b> * Just for Today -NA Mtg. Location Library 6PM (Pls Note: use 13th St. Entrance) ~ Held Each Fri except the 3rd Friday of the Month- to accommodate Date Night</p>	
<p><b>10</b> WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am                      *Diaconate Mtg. 11:30AM (L)                      Christmas Eve Rehearsal ~ After Service</p>	<p><b>11</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p>	<p><b>12</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>13</b> Men's Bible Study 8AM (PH)                      *Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM                      Assembling Care Kits</p>	<p><b>14</b> Pastor Wendy's Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)                      Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>15</b> Plymouth Family Christmas Party 5:30-8:30 (YH)                      Followed by: Youth Group ~ White Elephant and Overnight for 6th graders and up. <u>Please bring a blanket/pillow</u></p>	<p><b>16</b>                        *Youth overnight pick ups at Youth House</p>
<p><b>17</b> WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am                      Christmas Eve Rehearsal ~ After Service                      Family Caroling Day At Local Senior Centers  </p>	<p><b>18</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p>	<p><b>19</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)                      *Mission Outreach Mtg. 4:15pm (L)                      *Trustees Mtg 6pm (L)                      *Council Mtg (L) 6:45pm</p>	<p><b>20</b> Men's Bible Study 8AM (PH)                      Youth: Let's Talk About That ~ 6:30-8:30pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>21</b> Pastor Wendy's Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)                      Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>22</b> * Just for Today -NA Mtg. Location Library 6PM (Pls Note: use 13th St. Entrance) ~ Held Each Fri except the 3rd Friday of the Month- to accommodate Date Night</p>	
<p><b>24</b> CHRISTMAS WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 5PM                      NO AM Service</p>	<p><b>25</b> Merry Christmas  </p>	<p><b>26</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>27</b> Men's Bible Study 8AM (PH)                      *Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM                      Assembling Care Kits</p>	<p><b>28</b> Pastor Wendy's Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)                      Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>	<p><b>29</b> * Just for Today -NA Mtg. Location Library 6PM (Pls Note: use 13th St. Entrance) ~ Held Each Fri except the 3rd Friday of the Month- to accommodate Date Night</p>	
<p><b>31</b> WORSHIP PCC Sanctuary 10am  </p>						

December Worship Plans ~ We hope you are able to join us for our November Sundays, 10am, Church Sanctuary

### DECEMBER SUNDAY SERMONS:

- Week One (12/ 3/23): "Meet Us Here" ~ 1 Corinthians 1:3-9
- Week Two (12/10/23): "More Powerful" ~ Mark 1:1-8
- Week Three (12/17/23): "Anticipate Joy" ~ Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11
- Week Four (12/24/23): "CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE" ~ 5PM ~ (Please note: NO SUNDAY MORNING SERVICE)
- Week Five (12/31/23): "Seeing Salvation" ~ Luke 2:22-40

To access our online worship; To Find out more about Plymouth Church; or  
 To make an offering online; please visit: [plymouthchurchpaso.com](http://plymouthchurchpaso.com). May God bless us all!