



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 ~ January 2024 Reverend Wendy Holland



Two of my favorite online videos feature - surprisingly - Westboro Baptist Church (WBC). If you're not familiar, Westboro Baptist gained widespread notoriety around the early 90s, most notably spreading messages of hate, protesting at funerals and in other public spaces, and insisting that anyone not aligned with their very narrow definition of righteousness will forever incur God's wrath.

I have a lot of thoughts about their tactics, and their theology, and whether we can even define them as a church from a New Testament perspective (spoiler: we can't), but today I want to talk about people who went out of their way to connect with their members.

The first video opens with a group of WBC members on the side of a highway, holding up protest signs for passers-by. Suddenly a flatbed truck carrying the band the Foo Fighters comes around the bend and we hear the fully-amplified opening notes of the Bee-Gees "You Should Be Dancing." The flatbed stops directly in front of the protestors, and we hear Dave Grohl say, "I love you. I love everybody . . . Isn't that what you're supposed to do? Can't we just love *everybody*?" In the foreground we see a woman - holding signs that say "God is Your Enemy" and "God Hates Pride" - begin moving to the music, while her signs lower.

The second video features Russell Brand interviewing two of WBC's leaders on his talk show. He introduces them by saying, "Please welcome my guests, *with love* . . ." When his audience begins to boo, he says, "Don't be mean, don't be mean!" Brand goes on to ask the two men about their views, talk about the love of Jesus and his own understanding of what that looks like, and - while vehemently disagreeing with their stance - continues to express love for them as humans. While they never entirely soften, you see them visibly relax and open up when they realize that Brand is genuine in his love and concern.

Both videos have obvious entertainment factor. But they're also an example of connecting on a human level. It's easy to criticize with those with whom we disagree. We can engage in us-versus-them - making valid and necessary points - without ever meeting face to face, or finding some common denominator . . . but it's unlikely to make a difference.

We have the best chance of affecting real change when we acknowledge each other's humanity, look for common ground, *and build relationship*.

With Love,
Pastor Wendy

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<sup>7</sup> *Dear friends, let us love one another, for love comes from God. Everyone who loves has been born of God and knows God. 1 John 4:7 (NIV)*

# Greetings from the Diaconate Board



**Happy New Year!!! 2024 Unbelievable!!** Advent and Christmas were both beautiful and memorable at Plymouth Church. Now we plan for the new year.

**Taking down the greens will be on Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup>, immediately following church service. All hands needed!!**

Take a moment to stop by the bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall. Find a partner to do fellowship and sign up for a Sunday. Find a Sunday you can bring a plant or some flowers also please. If everyone signs up it would make it so easy to have all Sundays covered.

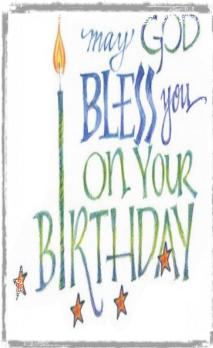
We passed around some clipboards at church. There were 4 different ones. The object was for everyone to find a small task where they could make a difference in someone's life, like making a meal, taking someone to an appointment, being on a prayer chain, or assembling cheer up mugs for someone that needs cheering up. If you did not get a chance to add your name, I will put them in the fellowship hall. Look for them the next time you are there and find one that suits you. We can all put a smile on someone's face.

Thanks to all of you who 'pitch in to help all year round'. We have a wonderful Church and it is because of all of you wonderful people.

*Blessings to all, Sharon Rowe*

## JANUARY CELEBRATIONS & CONCERNS

### JANUARY BIRTHDAYS



|                     |    |                |    |
|---------------------|----|----------------|----|
| Peter Sonney        | 5  | Maddy Wallace  | 15 |
| Cynthia Anthony     | 6  | Debbie Wallace | 15 |
| Natalie Rougeot     | 7  | Scott Mottard  | 17 |
| Donovan Holland     | 7  | Amy Baker      | 18 |
| Harleigh Learned    | 8  | Bruce Mark     | 19 |
| Michelle Richardson | 8  | Chuck Hope     | 23 |
| Nolan Severson      | 10 | Nancy Junge    | 24 |
| Erik Smit           | 10 | Robby Smith    | 26 |
| Linnea Schaefer     | 12 | Barbara Hill   | 28 |

### JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES



|                             |   |
|-----------------------------|---|
| Jessica & Mike Learned      | 4 |
| Paul Burkle & Joy Patterson | 6 |
| John & Linda Tubb           | 7 |



**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.
- † 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 Ronny in the church office: (805) 238-3321, [plymouthchurchpaso@gmail.com](mailto:plymouthchurchpaso@gmail.com)



## MISSION-OUTREACH NEWS FOR JANUARY 2024

By John Svinth

**A New Member!** We welcome Sally Vogl to the Mission-Outreach Team, which increases our board to five members! We are already benefiting from her ideas and energy.

**Our Plymouth Cares meal on December 7<sup>th</sup>** made 93 servings at the ECHO Paso shelter with our turkey dinners, PBJ bag lunches and our Christmas goody bags. An amazing 27 participants prepared and/or served this meal: • Turkey, mashed potatoes, corn & cranberries: Stu, Alex, Becky, Anne, Ronny • Green salad: Pearl • Buttered rolls: John & Linda T., Olivia, Melinda, Mary, Julia • Humungous M&M cookies: Meghan, Hazel, Argentina • PBJ bag lunches: Carlie & John S., Ronny, Mary, Terri, Britt, Julia, Anne, Sharon W., Olivia, Jim & Charity • Goody bags: Chris, Anne, Stu, Melinda, Olivia, Sharon W., Julia, Mary, Carlie • Servers: Stu, Deb, Ronny, John S., Julia, Lucy, Katie, Hazel. Special kudos to Stu for organizing, getting extra and preparing (over multiple days) the marvelous turkey, and for organizing and acquiring a portion of the items for the goody bags. Special thanks to Julia for bringing sisters Lucy, Katie and Hazel as wonderful servers. Being a blessing to those in need is a blessing to the helpers, and add the blessing of fellowship and we have an incredible formula for doing God's work. Our next Plymouth Cares meal is Tuesday, January 2<sup>nd</sup>, and help is always appreciated.

### UPDATE OF CHRISTMAS SEASON MISSIONS

**Our Paso Robles Toy Bank Drive** collected 23 wonderful toys that were delivered to the Toy Bank. All toys collected in the north county were distributed on December 9<sup>th</sup> to children in need in Paso Robles, San Miguel, Bradley, Shandon and Heritage Ranch. We helped make Christmas merry for families needing a helping hand.

**The Salvation Army Bellringers** from Plymouth were a success on December 16<sup>th</sup> at Walmart. The red kettle was full of donations at the end of the day from the ringing by Sandy, Kitty, Anne J., Becky & Alex, Mary, John T., Anne C., Carlie & John S. and little Ari. Extra special thanks to Anne C. for taking a second shift on short notice. The ringers were warmed by doing a most worthy deed and by the appreciation of donors supporting the Salvation Army, and no doubt enjoyed chatting with friends and passersby sharing holiday cheer.

**Our Zozu Youth Christmas Donations** collected a wonderful \$288 that was sent to Uganda to help make Christmas merrier for Daniel and Kizito, whom we sponsor through the Zozu Project. The money was evenly divided between the boys with one half for each placed in savings for their families, and the boys were taken Christmas shopping. Appreciation to our youth group who received Christmas cards from the boys and are the pen pals from Plymouth.

**The UCC Christmas Fund Offering** ends in January, so an update will be in the next Beacon. 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. Donations may be by offering envelopes marked for Christmas Fund, while checks should be payable to Plymouth Church with a notation for Christmas Fund.

**The Heifer Project "Living Gift Market"** ends December 31<sup>st</sup>, so an update will be in the next Beacon. The Heifer Project helps to end world hunger and poverty through success in agriculture by providing farmers training, resources and marketing support, after which the successful farmers pass on their training and resources to the next generation. Donations are going well; Terry Reid would be pleased!



Wednesday 1/3; 1/10; 1/17; 1/31: Youth Band 6:30PM; Youth Bible Study 7:00-8:30PM

Friday 1/19: Date Night 5:30-8:30PM at the Youth House; Youth Group Overnight (6th grade and up) in the Youth House

Saturday 1/20: Overnight pickups 10AM at the Youth House

Sunday 1/21: Youth to Yogurt (6th grade and up) after service

Wednesday 1/24: "Let's Talk About That" 6:30-8:00PM at the Youth House

Sunday 1/28: Youth Sunday

Hello Plymouth families, and happy new year!

We will be kicking off the month with our Youth Band and Bible study. Every Wednesday at 6:30PM, Youth Group 6th grade and up are invited to join us for band rehearsal, followed by Bible study from 7-8:30PM at the Youth House. We will have a Bible-based activity and conversation with the youth, and youth are welcome to bring friends! The 4th Wednesday of the month will still be "Let's Talk About That", where we meet with Pastor Wendy to discuss topics chosen by our youth. This month, that will be Wednesday 1/24, at the Youth House from 6:30-8:00PM.

Our monthly Date Night will be the 3rd Friday of the month, January 19th from 5:30-8:30PM at Plymouth's Youth House. Youth of all ages are invited to join us for a night of themed crafts, games, snacks, and time with church peers. Youth are also welcome to bring along a friend! Parents, if you are available this month to provide food for the night and/or serve as parent volunteer for the event, please let me know. Thanks so much in advance! Date Night will be followed by an overnight for our Youth Group, 6th grade and up. We will stay overnight at the church for games, snacks, and time with friends. Don't forget a blanket and pillow! Youth are welcome to bring a friend. Pickups will be Saturday morning 1/20 at the Youth House at 10AM, and breakfast snacks will be provided. See you there!

Sunday January 21st is our monthly Youth to Yogurt! Youth Group members 6th grade and up are invited to join me after service to walk to the downtown Paso park for a frozen treat. We spend some time discussing upcoming youth events and plans. We are typically out for about half an hour before heading back to the church around 11:30AM.

Finally, the last Sunday of the month, 1/28, will be our monthly Youth Sunday. Youth of all ages are invited to participate in our service in whatever way they would like; they can read as liturgist, light the candles as acolyte, pass out bulletins as greeters, help with music, run slides, 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 wonderful and peaceful start to their new year, and I look forward to seeing you at this month's youth events.

Take care all,  
Julia Schulte, Youth & Family Director

**Journey of Faith ~** This poem touches upon the evolution of faith in a young person's life, reminding them of the constant presence of the Lord as they journey through.

- ✝ In every step, in every fall, The Lord's soft whisper calls.
- ✝ Through trials and joys, both big and small, He walks beside us all.
- ✝ As youth's fervor may ebb and flow, God's love remains, this we know.
- ✝ In His embrace, we learn and grow, Guided by His gentle glow.



# HERE'S TO A BETTER YEAR - 2024 - Submitted by Chris Macy

I know this is the time of year where many of us try to reign in our bad habits, start over, do better, resolve to eat less sugar and exercise more, and all that other stuff we think needs to change. You will not find me amongst that group of optimists, no way! To make a resolution is to make sure it never happens in my experience.

I did have an experience that gave me an idea though...

I went to San Miguel Mission for the celebration of the re-opening of the Mission after the earthquake damage was repaired. As we left, we were handed a star made out of construction paper with one single word printed on it, a word representing an admirable quality. I stuck it on the shelf above my computer and looked at it for the next year till I had a thought – instead of useless resolutions (in my case) why not throw an intention out there for the coming year and see what happened?

Upon reflection, I decided I needed to be braver in the areas of my life where I was not brave. So I wrote on a piece of brightly colored paper – “be brave” and taped it to the shelf above my computer. And, amazingly, that whole year I was thrown into situations where I needed to be brave. Not physical bravery, but emotional bravery. And boy did I grow.

Now I look forward to whatever my intention for the New Year is going to be because I know stuff is going to happen without me trying to make it happen. My part is to trust in the process. Every year, a month or two before the New Year, an intention gently floats into my mind and I know God has been thinking of the year coming up for me and knows what I need next. And the best thing is...





**God's doing something in me that I just can't quite manage to do on my own.**

**Give it a try – and have a happy 2024.**





Wishing All A  
Happy New Year!  
Plymouth  
Congregational  
Church  
January 2024

| Sunday                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Monday                                     | Tuesday                                                                                                                                                        | Wednesday                                                                                            | Thursday                                                                                                         | Friday                                                                                                                                                                                   | Saturday                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  <p><b>7</b> WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am<br/><b>HOLY COMMUNION SUNDAY</b><br/>‘Taking Down the Greens’ Immediately Following Service<br/>All Hands on Deck!!</p> | <p><b>1</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p>  | <p><b>2</b> Plymouth Cares - Dinner Prep 1:30 - 4:30pm (PH)<br/>Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>                                            | <p><b>3</b> Men’s Bible Study 8AM (PH)<br/>*Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM (Y/H)</p>  | <p><b>4</b> Pastor Wendy’s Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)<br/>Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>  | <p><b>5</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>6</b> God’s Garden 8:30 A.M.<br/></p>                                                          |
| <p><b>14</b> WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am<br/>*Diaconate Mtg. 11:30AM (L)</p>                                                                                                                                                                     | <p><b>8</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p>  | <p><b>9</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>                                                                                                | <p><b>10</b> Men’s Bible Study 8AM (PH)<br/>*Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM (Y/H)</p> | <p><b>11</b> Pastor Wendy’s Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)<br/>Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p> | <p><b>12</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>13</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <p><b>21</b> WORSHIP ~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am<br/>Youth to Yogurt After Service<br/></p>                                                                           | <p><b>15</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p> | <p><b>16</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)<br/>*Mission Outreach Mtg. 4:15pm (L)<br/>*Trustees Mtg. 6pm (L)<br/>*Council Mtg. (L) 6:45pm</p> | <p><b>17</b> Men’s Bible Study 8AM (PH)<br/>*Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM (Y/H)</p> | <p><b>18</b> Pastor Wendy’s Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)<br/>Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p> | <p><b>19</b> Plymouth Family Christmas Party 5:30-8:30 (YH)<br/>Followed by: Youth Group ~ White Elephant and Overnight for 6th graders and up. <u>Please bring a blanket/pillow</u></p> | <p><b>20</b> *Youth overnight pick ups at Youth House<br/><br/>(P/H) ~ All Day Beginning @ 8am</p> |
| <p><b>28</b> WORSHIP~ PCC SANCTUARY 10am<br/></p>                                                                                                               | <p><b>22</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p> | <p><b>23</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>                                                                                               | <p><b>24</b> Men’s Bible Study 8AM (PH)<br/>Youth: Let’s Talk About That ~ 6:30-8:30pm (YH)</p>      | <p><b>25</b> Pastor Wendy’s Bible Study 10:00-11:30 (PH)<br/>Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p> | <p><b>26</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>27</b></p>                                                                                                                                                                        |
|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                   | <p><b>29</b> PCC Office Closed Mondays</p> | <p><b>30</b> Friends of Bill W (C, WO) Mtg. 5:00-7:00pm (YH)</p>                                                                                               | <p><b>31</b> Men’s Bible Study 8AM (PH)<br/>*Youth Band AND Youth Bible study! 6:30-8:30PM (Y/H)</p> | <p><i>Happy New Year</i></p>                                                                                     |                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                         |

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

**The Gift of Empathy**

Empathy, a gift that is given to a few...  
A quality that is rare, yet so true...  
For in empathy, there lies a power...  
To feel and understand, in any given hour.

**JANUARY SUNDAY SERMONS:**

Week One (1/7/24): “What Comes After” ~ Acts 19:1-7  
Week Two (1/14/24): “Expect Greater Things” ~ John 1:43-51  
Week Three (1/21/24): “Ugh” ~ Jonah 3:1-5, 10  
Week Four (1/28/24) : “Love Builds Up” ~ 1 Corinthians 8:1-13

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!