

Upbeats

News and Views
from the
Jazz and Justice Church



May, 2010

IN THE MEANTIME . . .

Beloved Community,

My oldest son, Brandon, arrived in Afghanistan on Sunday. After some days of training, he will travel to Jalalabad and then fly by helicopter to a base somewhere near Asadabad, in mountainous eastern Afghanistan near the Pakistani border. If I heard these names in past, my ears would glaze over. If I hear these names now, my heart will leap into my throat.

All of a sudden, I belong to a tribe of women around the world who cry silent tears because their sons are in danger. I cry along with the other women, even though I know that, as an officer, he will be safer than most. And I know that as an Executive Officer, he'll be even more protected than many other officers. Finally, if I'm honest, I know that mothers in East and West Oakland worry about their sons every time they walk out the door.

As I said in my Easter sermon, as I anticipated this liturgical season, I said to a friend that I didn't feel like preparing for Easter, because I was entering an entire year of Lent. I wondered, "*How can I possibly preach an Easter sermon when I'm going into the longest Lent of my life? How can I preach hope and new life when I'm so afraid and sad?*"

Maybe you, too, are in the middle of Lent, aching for a lost one or fearful of the future. Maybe you're in Good Friday, where all around you is grim and hopeless. But if you think about it, that's exactly where Easter begins.

Easter begins in a cemetery. It begins in loss and suffering and death. It begins in despair and confusion and fear. And it stays there throughout the day of Easter and beyond. In each Gospel text, Jesus' friends need some kind of encounter with the Risen Christ before their hope and trust is renewed. They can't just hear about it from someone else; they must experience it for themselves. They can't just think of it as an intellectual exercise; they need to have some kind of visceral encounter before they, too, are transformed.

I don't know what will happen during the next year. None of us ever do. It is always just an illusion to know for certain that we'll be safe; that our loved ones will always be with us; that our lives will stay secure. But for Christians, Easter tells us that the Divine unfolding mystery that we call God is alive among all the dying and all of the rising.

Easter ends some might say with more questions than it answers. It doesn't necessarily answer the questions we're asking – Will my loved ones be safe? Will I survive? Why is this happening?

But it might answer questions that we're not thinking to ask – Where and how is God revealed in my life? How might I be renewed through a serious path of faith?

They might not be the questions that we are asking, but they are questions that call us to life. They are questions that reveal the Living God and the power of Divine Love.

Blessings of Peace,

Rev. Lois

What's Happening Within the Plymouth Community

HEALING AT PLYMOUTH CHURCH

Adult Education Speaker Series

Fireside Room

Tuesdays @ 7:00 pm

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|-----------------|---|
| April 20 | Healing in Haiti with Dr. Opal Taylor |
| May 4 | Healing Prayer with Carolyn Collins, M.Div., PhD |
| May 18 | Healing the Grieving Heart with Rev. Melissa Gardner-McBride |

A Letter from Haywood, Estela and Maya

Dear Plymouth Friends,

We want to share with you a challenge we are facing as a family. Estela is undergoing chemotherapy for breast cancer. She had successful surgery to remove the tumor, but she will need to continue treatment for several more months. The chemotherapy has taken its toll on Estela's immune system, and she's had some complications for that reason, so she isn't able to be around large groups right now. So she won't be able to attend worship services at Plymouth for a while.

As hard as this period has been, we are thankful that Estela has a strong prognosis for a full recovery once she completes treatment. We are hanging in and reminding ourselves of all we have to be joyful about, and Maya has been a champion in taking care of her mom. We so appreciate the support and prayers of Reverend Lois and Reverend Marjorie through this journey, and we would appreciate your prayers too.

Thank you for being such a welcoming and warm community; Maya and Haywood will see you soon, and we look forward to the day that Estela will be able to join all of us again too.

Gratefully,

Haywood, Estela and Maya Gilliam

Annual Meeting

May 2, 2010

We will gather in the Fireside Room immediately following worship on Sunday, May 2 for our annual gathering to conduct important business in the life of our church:

- Review our work from 2009-2010
- Plan our future for 2010-2011
- Elect new church officers
- Adopt our annual budget
- Approve updated bylaws

Please plan to be with us for this important meeting.



We Are an Open and Affirming Church

Plymouth Church is an "open and affirming" church. We welcome and affirm God's blessing for people of all ages, races, shapes, sizes, nationalities, economic levels, sexualities and abilities. We accept people who are single, married, partnered, divorces, widowed, LBGTQ. We practice the "extravagant welcome" that Jesus taught us. We say YES! to one another, help each other and thank God for our diversity!

Plymouth Church Calendar - May 2010

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Worship - Communion 11:00 am Annual Meeting	3	4 National Teacher Day Healing Prayer Carolyn Collins, M.Div., Ph.D. 7:00pm	5 Cinco De Mayo Scripture Meditation 1:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm	6	7	8 New Members Brunch 10:00am to 12:00 noon Rev. Lois' home
9 Mothers' Day Worship 11:00am Birthday Sunday OKPC 1:00pm	10	11 Church Council 7:00 pm	12 Scripture Meditation 1:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm	13 Fellowship Luncheon 12:00 noon North Oakland Village 5:00pm Asilomar.....	14Asilomar.....	15 Armed Forces DayAsilomar.....
16 Worship 11:00am OKPC 1:00pmAsilomar	17	18 Healing the Grieving Heart Rev. Melissa Gardner-McBride 7:00pm	19 Scripture Meditation 1:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pm	20	21	22 National Maritime Day NVC Group - Angela Spell 2:00pm Oakland Care Center 3:00pm
23 Worship 11:00am PENTECOST Wear Red! OKPC 1:00pm	24 Rev. Lois Vacation.....	25Rev. Lois Vacation.....	26 Scripture Meditation 1:00pm Choir Rehearsal 7:00pmRev. Lois Vacation.....	27 Arts and Crafts Group 7:00 pmRev. Lois Vacation.....	28Rev. Lois Vacation.....	29Rev. Lois Vacation.....
30 Worship 11:00am OKPC 1:00pmRev. Lois Vacation.....	31 Memorial DayRev. Lois Vacation.....					

We Give Thanks and Praise to God

For the Gifts of Life

Those Celebrating Birthdays During May Include

- | | |
|---|------------------------------------|
| 3 - Patricia Henning | 20 - Rev. Marjorie Matthews |
| 5 - Joanne Grimm
Sofia Gleason | 21 - Jim Connors |
| 14 - Nancy Chapman
Yonique Clarke | 24 - Linda Dealy |
| 16 - Rev. Kay Wellington | 28 - Sam Anderson-Moxley |
| | 29 - Eric Eppler |
| | 30 - Ayanna Moore |

Stewardship Update

We are deeply grateful to all of you who have submitted your pledge for the coming year. So far we have received pledges from 24 pledging units (sometimes families of more than one person) for a total amount pledged of a little more than \$48,000.00

For those who may not yet have made your pledge, we encourage you to do so.

Interested in Becoming a Member of Plymouth Church?

Come have brunch with us and learn more about membership!

Saturday – May 8th

10:00 a.m. – 12:00 noon

Pastor Lois' Home

641 Fairmount Avenue

Oakland, CA 94611

For more information, contact Pastor Marjorie at revmarjorie@comcast.net or (510) 654-5300, X. 3

Our

“Jazz and Justice” Church

Micah 6:8 tells us
“to do justice, love kindness,
and to walk humbly with our
God.”

Jazz is an improvisational art
form that relies on the
musicians' willingness to play
without knowing in advance
all of what is going to happen

Jazz is a metaphor for the
way that God invites us into
the process of co-creation.

Jazz has also become a
metaphor for our walk of
faith.

How to Contact Us:

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(On the corner of Oakland Ave.)

Oakland CA 94611

510-654-5300

510-654-5301 - fax

<http://www.plymouthoakland.org/>

Rev. Lois Mueller, Pastor

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Rev. Marjorie Matthews, Associate Pastor

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Bruce Tutcher, Office Manager

plymouthoakland@sbcglobal.net

What's Happening in the Wider Church In & Around Our Neighboring Communities

Northern California-Nevada Conference

United Church of Christ

Annual Gathering

May 13 - 16, 2010

Asilomar Conference Center

Pacific Grove



The theme for this year is
A WONDERFUL HARMONY
Transforming Lives, Churches
And Communities

Everyone is welcome to join our Pastors and delegates Duncan Falls and Susan Ode. Although only designated delegates are able to vote on business items brought to the meeting, the weekend includes many interesting workshops, worship experiences and opportunities to meet and greet friends from our sister congregations from throughout the Conference.

For more information go to

ncnccucc.org/annual-gathering/wonderful-harmony

or call the Conference office at

510-247-8990

GAY PROM 2010

The annual Gay Prom sponsored by Lambda Youth, "Sweet Sixteen," will be held June 12, 2010 from 7:00 p.m. to midnight at Hayward High School, 1633 East Ave., Hayward. The prom is for all LGBTQQI and their allies and supporters age 20 and under. The Gay Prom gives young LGBTQQI individuals an opportunity to celebrate together in a safe, alcohol and other drug free environment.

This event also provides a special opportunity for the wider community to show our support for these young people. There is always an interfaith receiving line of Bay Area clergy and lay people who welcome the prom participants as they arrive.

Rev. Kathryn Schreiber says "We dance, clap, wave, smile, cheer and generally make a happy fuss over the young people as they enter the Hall to surround them with lots of affirmation." This group gathers at 6:30 p.m.

The prom also needs adult volunteers to serve in a variety of ways. You may find more information about the prom by going to: www.gayprom.org or by calling 510-247-8200.

North Oakland Village

Most of us want to stay in our own homes and neighborhoods as we age. Across the country, communities are developing creative ways of providing the supportive services that can enable us to remain active, engaged and independent for as long as possible.

North Oakland Village is part of a movement enabling seniors to live well and access the services they need in their own homes. Come learn about our commitment to providing choices for aging in place, our plans for launching a supportive community for you and your neighbors in 2011, and how you can be involved.:

Thursday, May 13, 2010 - 5:00 to 7:00 pm

Fireside Room, Plymouth UCC

Plymouth United Church of Christ is a vibrant, warm, relaxed and diverse community of faith. We gather to nurture, share and celebrate the wonder of life. We are spiritual seekers who find joy in community, meaning in living faith-filled lives, purpose in seeking to promote justice and compassion in our world, direction in following in the way of Jesus and peace in getting to know God. No matter who you are, no matter where you are on life's journey... YOU are welcome here!

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