

PLYMOUTH  
PRESBYTERIAN  
CHURCH

April  
2024

Dear friends,

I am writing this before we have celebrated Palm Sunday together. You know we have been getting to know each other now for 3 or so months since I started as your Supply Pastor in January. Well, what have we learned in this short time? For you, I think you have learned something of my fun loving side, where I poke a bit of fun at you and you poke it right back at me. We have learned we easily fit together as pastor and people. And that is good to know. For me, I have met an incredible congregation who love God and each other. I am eager to tell everyone I meet what a great church you are. You are a joy to know! I am getting fewer names wrong each time we greet. And, yes, I keep coming back and so do you! We have been meeting in study during the weeks in Lent, using materials from A Sanctified Art called A Wandering Faith. We have been learning the faith journey of disciple Peter. I think we've found it to be a wonderful discovery of seeing ourselves in Peter, and, this Lent, learning to be vulnerable and honest with each other. The study will continue into the first weeks of April. When we finish, it will be time to ask: How did it go? And, What's next to study?

**What's Next?** Will we choose to study something of a devotional nature? Something like Max Lucado's book "Facing Your Giants"? Will we choose something of a training nature? Will we choose something that will train leaders to improve leadership skills? Will we choose to train the entire congregation in speaking the language of faith and sharing that faith with others? What other skills do we need to have for the journey ahead? [Notice, that I use "we" language not "I" language for a reason. It's because I am a collaborative leader not a dictator.] And I know that I aim for you to be adopting this direction of training as your own. I can't get that buy-in without your input on what you are willing to do and willing to be part of. My style of learning is the type that takes something apart and puts them back together, like my first bike. The week after I was given a bicycle for my birthday, I took it apart to learn how it worked. My father thought I had lost my mind. I continue taking things apart in order to learn. I ask lots of questions. I view things from different angles to learn. I know this, the world looks very different when hanging upside down.

**Longer Range** What do I know about my brief time at Plymouth? We will experience some growth in our membership and budget. That growth will be modest. It will come in one of two ways: those who come back to church or those new to the community looking for the depth of love that Plymouth gives. Our real growth will come from some time of study, then the launching of a new ministry in our midst. (Take note that I haven't mentioned what type of ministry to launch. That direction will come out of the study.) It will include a new staff person or persons. It will take collaborating with an organization or organizations outside of ourselves for funding and/or a sharing of ministry hours. The new ministry could be a self-funded type where the skilled leader must raise his/her own support to cover personal living expenses. Bottom line, we can't do this alone. A new ministry of Plymouth church will take collaborating with our denomination, our Presbytery, and, perhaps as well, a local ministry organization or two to launch and sustain.

Well, I have run out of space for these broad strokes of dreaming of a new day in our congregation. I hope this leads to some healthy discussions among us. God is not finished what has been started in us. So for now. . .

In the grip of grace,

*Pastor Peter*

Pastor Peter J. Blank HR