

Plymouth Presbyterian Church



2025

Dear Friends, Happy 2025!

As we begin this new year, Plymouth Presbyterian Church is facing challenges such as declining membership, an aging congregation, and a shifting culture. Yet, together, we can meet these challenges by embracing innovation, flexibility, and thoughtful planning grounded in Scripture, ensuring we remain a vital part of the St. Helens community. After all, challenges are just opportunities wearing a slightly grumpy disguise.

Innovative Approaches: We can leverage technology and creativity to foster connection and growth. Hybrid worship models—combining in-person and online services—are essential for engaging our diverse audiences. Hebrews 10:25 reminds us, “not to give up meeting together,” and technology enables this, especially for those unable to attend physically. Virtual small groups and tools like sermon archives and digital giving apps can strengthen our sense of community. (Who knew the Apostle Paul might have approved of Wi-Fi?)

Interactive tools such as live polls, Q&A sessions, and gamified Bible lessons for children make learning and worship dynamic. Partnering with local organizations for service projects or hosting events like concerts and art exhibitions can expand our reach. Just as Paul engaged the culture in Athens (Acts 17:22-23), we can meet people where they are to share God’s love—even if it’s at a coffee shop or pub armed with a latte or near beer.

Flexibility: Adapting to the needs of our multigenerational congregation is essential. This includes offering modern worship services for younger members and traditional ones for older members. Paul’s example of becoming “all things to all people” (1 Corinthians 9:22) encourages us to be flexible in worship and ministry. And let’s face it, finding a hymn that pleases both Grandma and the teens might just be our modern-day miracle.

Flexible ministry structures, such as lay-led teams, can lighten the burden on Pastor while empowering all of us to serve one another. This reflects the call in 1 Peter 4:10 to use our gifts for the community’s good. Addressing social and cultural issues with empathy and biblical wisdom ensures we remain a relevant voice, as Colossians 4:6 advises, “always be full of grace, seasoned with salt”—and maybe just a pinch of humor.

Thoughtful Planning: Planning for the future begins with prayer and listening to our congregation’s needs. Proverbs 16:3 reminds us, “Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and your plans will be established.” Regular surveys can help us adapt strategies and allocate resources wisely. Training volunteers in technology and budgeting for new initiatives ensures sustainability—and keeps us from the dreaded “technological oops!”

Partnering with schools, nonprofits, and businesses amplifies our mission. Offering shared spaces for community events embodies Jesus’ command to love our neighbors (Mark 12:31). Mentoring younger members for ministry roles aligns with Paul’s guidance to Timothy (2 Timothy 2:2). Let’s prepare them now so they’re ready—even if they’re currently distracted by their phones.

A Bright Future Together: By embracing innovation, flexibility, and thoughtful planning, we can face 2025’s challenges with confidence. Together, we will ensure Plymouth Presbyterian Church continues to shine as a beacon of hope in St. Helens. As Jesus calls us to be the “light of the world” (Matthew 5:14), let us move forward in faith, trusting in divine grace and guidance—and maybe having a little fun along the way.

May God bless you and the year ahead!

Pastor Peter Blank

JANUARY LECTIONARY READINGS

January 5 Second Sunday of Christmas

Jeremiah 31: 7-14 and Psalm 147: 12-20; Ephesians 1: 3-14; John 1: (1-9) 10-18

January 12 Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 43: 1-7 and Psalm 29; Acts 8: 14-17; Luke 3: 15-17, 21-22

January 19 Second Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 62: 1-5 and Psalm 36 5-10; I Corinthians 12: 1-11; John 2: 1-11

January 26 Third Sunday after Epiphany

Nehemiah 8: 1-3, 5-6, 8-10 and Psalm 19; I Corinthians 12: 12-31a; Luke 4: 14-21



ATTENDANCE

November 17 18

November 24 19

November 25 Full House!

(Ecumenical service)

December 1 29

December 8 24

HAPPY
Birthday

January 5 Roger Liefeld

January 10 Jonathan Dickson

January 12 Jan Falconer

January 17 Pastor Peter Blank

January 22 Sean Daly

January 24 Liam Trainer

January 24 Quinn Trainer

January 25 Marilyn Brinster

January 25 Pastor Chuck Falconer

January 26 Helen Purkerson

January 31 Gavin Trainer

MEETING SCHEDULE

Worship Committee will meet at the church on Tuesday, January 7, at 1:00 p.m.

DEACONS

The next meeting of the Deacons will be held on Thursday, January 9, **at 10:30, in person, at the church.** Hope to see all Deacons there!

SESSION

Session's next meeting will be on Wednesday, **January 8, at 5:30 p.m., on Zoom.** Please remember our new meeting time: **5:30 p.m.**

ONLINE GIVING NOW AVAILABLE

Plymouth Church can now accept electronic donations through a secure online portal provided by the Presbyterian Foundation. Instructions on how to access the portal are given below. There are also pew cards in the Sanctuary. After making an online donation, a receipt will be sent to your email's inbox or you can print one from the portal. This will be your giving record for any online donations as they will not be shown on Plymouth's giving statements. There will be a small administrative fee of 2% per transaction. This will be paid by Plymouth Church, unless you wish to add the cost to your donation.

How to make an online donation.



Using the camera function on your smart phone, aim the phone at this QR CODE. Tap the website link "secure.myvanco.com" that will appear on your screen. Vanco is the Presbyterian Foundation's administrator. The next screen you see will be Plymouth Church's secure online portal.



You can also type "https://plychurch.org" into your computer's browser. On the home page, scroll all the way down until you see this GIVE NOW button. Click the button to access the online portal.

There's also an App for your Smart Phone.

Plymouth Church is also listed in the Vanco Mobile App, making online giving on a smart phone even easier. Plymouth has a unique invite code for the Vanco Mobile app, which can be used as a search term. Our unique invite code is HDXSQ9.



Plymouth Church OCTOBER OPERATING BUDGET Income & Expense Summary

DESCRIPTION	OCT 2024	YTD 2024
Total Income *	\$ 13,953	\$ 87,001
Total Expenses	\$ 6,061	\$ 85,753
Net Operating Budget	\$ 7,892	\$ 1,248

* Included transfers from savings to offset one-time projects funded by the Alice Brewer Bequeathment.

Plymouth Church NOVEMBER OPERATING BUDGET Income & Expense Summary

DESCRIPTION	NOV 2024	YTD 2024
Total Income *	\$ 3,173	\$ 90,174
Total Expenses	\$ 4,960	\$ 90,713
Net Operating Budget	(\$ 1,787)	(\$ 539)

* This November QuickBooks report of income does not include a \$2,642 deposit made into savings instead of checking. The deposit was corrected on 12/10/24 so will be reflected in the December Operating Budget Summary.

GO PAPERLESS!

If you currently receive paper copies of the PPC newsletter, consider going paperless. All you need is a computer. The PPC newsletter will be emailed to you monthly. The advantages to this are: faster delivery, adjustable print size, it's environmentally friendly, and a cost saving to the church for stamps, paper, and labor in preparation. If this is a good option for you, contact Gina Harrington and let her know you want to go paperless. Our newsletter is also available on our website at <https://plychurch.org>. Our website also has up to two years' worth of prior issues of our newsletter.

JANUARY 6: EPIPHANY

(This is taken from the PCUSA website.)

Epiphany is the celebration of God's manifestation or self-revelation to the world in Jesus Christ. In particular, we celebrate the revelation of God's promise and purpose to the nations of the world, as the magi came from the East to worship the Christ child, and God's covenant of grace is extended to all who believe the good news of Christ Jesus. The symbolism of light is important: not only because of the star that guided the magi, but as it relates to the bright dawning of God's self-revelation in Christ.

The word "epiphany" (from the Greek *epiphaneia* or *theophaneia*) means "appearance" or "manifestation" of God, and has roots in the word for sunrise or dawn.

In ancient times, an epiphany meant either a visible manifestation of a god or the solemn visit of a ruler venerated as a god.

SPECIAL PRESBYTERY MEETING

Saturday, January 25, 2025

9:30 – 12:30 p.m.

In-person at Savage Memorial-Portland

At this meeting, the Conflict Assessment Referral/Resolution/Response Team (CART) will be presenting their Conflict Report to the Presbytery. This report was commissioned after the public conflict regarding the Presbyterian Church of Laurelhurst property transfer to the Future Generations Collaborative for the Barbie's Village project. All those involved or impacted by the recent conflict in our Presbytery are encouraged to attend this meeting. A copy of the report will be made available to the Presbytery at least one week ahead of time.

In addition to our special meeting, please mark your calendars for the **Stated Meeting of Cascades Presbytery on Wednesday, January 29th, 2025.** This meeting will be held online via Zoom from 6:00-8:00pm. Additional information, including background papers, will be shared in the new year.



The deadline for the February newsletter is **January 20.** If you have articles you would like to see in the newsletter, please send them to pfb1202@yahoo.com, or phone her, or give her articles on Sundays, or send them to her home: 459 NE 3rd Ave, Hillsboro, 97124. **Articles received after the deadline will be posted in the next month's newsletter**



Sunday Volunteer Schedule

January 5, 2025	Communion Set-up: Communion Servers: Greeter/Usher: Helen Purkerson Lay Leader: Pat Berger Coffee hour: Sharon Fraser, Karen Roldan
January 12, 2025	Greeters/Ushers: Ken and Zelda Anderson Lay Leader: Gina Harrington Coffee hour: Jill Turner
January 19, 2025	Greeters/Ushers: Marilyn Brinster and Jill Turner Lay Leader: Bill Eagle Coffee hour: Ken and Zelda Anderson
January 26, 2025	Greeters: Mark and Kathleen Dinwiddie Lay Leader: Karen Roldan Coffee hour: Anita Kjos

NEWS FROM MAKINDU

2024 Annual Report

Education

- 552 children enrolled in school
- 338 children received a new school uniform

Health

- 548 children were screened and dewormed three times
- 916 received health care services at the local clinics
- 1200+ received care at the volunteer health clinic hosted by Makindu Children's Center, International Assist Medical Mission and Makindu Sikh Hospital

Safety and Shelter

- 199 solar lanterns were distributed
- 28 birth certificates were recorded, legitimizing children's identities
- 25 houses were rebuilt or repaired

Guardian Empowerment

- 311 guardians were trained on animal husbandry and successfully raising goats, chickens and bees
- 380 guardians have been trained on human rights, will writing, record keeping and basic financial literacy.

January 2025

SUN	MON	TUE	WED	THU	FRI	SAT
			1	2 Deacon meeting, 10:30, at the church	3	4
5 Worship 10:30 Avamere Worship 12:30	6 Epiphany of the Lord	7 Worship Committee 1:00 at the church	8 Session meeting 5:30, on Zoom	9	10	11
12 Worship 10:30 Baptism of the Lord	13	14	15	17	18	19
20 Worship 10:30	21	22	23	24	25	26
27 Worship 10:30	28	29	30	31		

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FIRST CLASS MAIL