

APRIL 2025
EASTER EDITION

INSIDE
COMMUNITY + MINISTRY & MISSION
HOLY WEEK & EASTER + MUSIC & ARTS + HISTORY

ROCK



PLYMOUTH CHURCH
LAWRENCE, KANSAS



SAFE SPACE

Plymouth is a congregation that speaks its mind. In the service of and belief in a loving and accepting God, we gladly own our role as disciples of Jesus Christ in our respective time and place in the world.

TO FIND US ONLINE, PLEASE VISIT:
PLYMOUTHLOWRENCE.COM



Baptism doesn't make God love you more. You are already, from your very first moment, completely and utterly beloved by your Creator.

The waters of baptism don't create God's love—*they help us recognize and celebrate what has always been true.*

Rev. Dr. Valerie Miller-Coleman

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EASTER EDITION

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THE View FROM Here

Rev. Dr. Valerie Miller-Coleman

Supporting the Sabbath Journey: Caroline's Upcoming Sabbatical

Dear Church Family,

Many of you have already heard that our wonderful Associate Pastor Caroline will be taking a three-month sabbatical beginning in May. I wanted to share a bit about what this means, why it matters, and how we can all be part of making this time meaningful—both for her and for our church community.

What's This Sabbatical Thing About, Anyway?

Have you ever noticed how the word "sabbatical" sounds a lot like "Sabbath"? That's no coincidence. Both come from the ancient idea that rest isn't just a nice break—it's a sacred practice woven into the very fabric of creation. God didn't just suggest rest; God modeled it.

In our UCC tradition, we understand that ministry is both deeply fulfilling and incredibly demanding work. Think about it—pastors journey with us through our highest celebrations and our deepest griefs, often in the same week (sometimes in the same day!). They're constantly pouring out spiritual, emotional, and intellectual energy.

A sabbatical isn't simply time off or an extended vacation. It's a deliberate pause for renewal that reflects a covenant between pastor and congregation. Most UCC churches offer pastors this opportunity every 5-7 years because we've learned that sustainable, vibrant ministry requires periods of deep renewal.

What Will Caroline Actually Be Doing?

During these three months, Caroline will engage in a thoughtfully designed program of spiritual renewal, theological exploration, and genuine rest. She'll have space to pray, read, reflect, and reconnect with her own spiritual journey without the constant demands of daily ministry. When she returns, she'll bring fresh insights and renewed energy that will enrich our entire community.



How We Can Support Caroline's Journey

- Give her the gift of true absence by directing any church needs elsewhere rather than reaching out to her.
- Keep her in your prayers during this renewal time—that it might be both restful and transformative.
- Jot down thoughts or stories about meaningful moments that happen while she's away, to share when she returns.
- Stay open to new voices and approaches that might emerge during this season of change.
- Welcome her back with patience, remembering that re-entry takes time and adjustment.

Questions You Might Be Wondering About

"Why three whole months? That seems like a long time!" Meaningful renewal doesn't happen overnight. From experience, church leaders have found that the first month often involves simply "decompressing" from work patterns. The second month allows for genuine renewal to begin, and the third provides space to integrate new insights before returning. Trust me, those three months will fly by!

"Can I contact Caroline if I really need something important?" This is where we can truly support her—by respecting a complete break from church responsibilities. Our staff team has developed a solid plan to make sure all bases are covered while she's away, so please bring any needs to me or our other designated leaders.

"How will things work around here without her?" I'll be taking on some additional responsibilities, and we'll have guest preachers and ministry leaders helping with various aspects of church life. This might actually be a gift—bringing fresh voices into our community

while ensuring continued quality of care.

"Is this unusual or something our church invented?" Not at all! Sabbaticals are a standard practice across the UCC and many other denominations. They're recognized as essential to healthy, sustainable ministry—not a luxury or special treatment.

More Than Just Time Away

When we support Caroline's sabbatical, we're doing more than just giving her a break. We're investing in the future vitality of our church community. Well-rested, inspired pastoral leaders bring renewed creativity and energy that benefits us all.

I'm looking forward to experiencing this sabbatical journey alongside you—holding Caroline in prayer while also discovering what God might have for us during this season.

With gratitude for all the ways we grow together,

Valerie

Exciting news about my sabbatical.

As I am preparing for my sabbatical this May, June, and July, our Service and Justice team is working to ensure that mission moments are scheduled, and lay leaders are in place to maintain connections with our mission partners and sustain our direct service work. The Christian Education team is also preparing for upcoming spring and summer programming. During my time away, Colton Pasquale will be a valuable resource for the CE Board.

I wanted to share the details of my sabbatical and ensure everyone is informed. **Below is an article from last month in case you missed it.**



Dear Plymouth Community,

I am excited to continue to share the news that I am preparing for my upcoming Sabbatical. I will be taking the months of May, June, and July of this year to refresh and spiritually recharge. I am truly grateful for this opportunity.

You might be wondering, "What is a sabbatical?" In our tradition, called clergy members are often granted sabbaticals after a number of years of service in a congregation. A sabbatical is a designated period of time away from regular duties, intended for rest, study, and personal renewal.

My last day in the office before my sabbatical will be Wednesday, April 30th, and I will return on Sunday, August 3rd. Should you have any questions regarding my sabbatical or our programming this spring and summer, please don't hesitate to reach out as these dates approach.

During my Sabbatical, Rev. Valerie Miller-Coleman and Colton Pasquale will be excellent points of contact for you. I am grateful for this opportunity to continue to discover the gifts of sabbath practices in my personal and vocation life.

With Gratitude,

Rev. Caroline Lawson Dean

Associate Pastor

Plymouth Congregational, Lawrence, KS

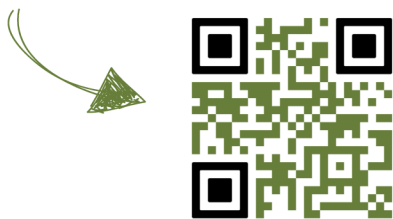


All things in moderation.

Rich Bireta - Plymouth 2025 Moderator

Speaking in the Name of Plymouth

Last month, Plymouth Church Council took up the question of approving a public statement drafted by our Open and Affirming Committee. This statement expresses our support for the LGBTQ+ community and criticizes the priorities of our State Legislature in the current legislative session. I encourage you to **read the draft statement on our website if you have not already done so.**



The statement was approved unanimously. It will be sent to the Lawrence Times and, hopefully, be published. The statement will be made in the name of Plymouth Church and represent the collective viewpoint of our congregation.

I believe this is the first time that we will issue a statement in the name of our church since the adoption of our policy in late 2023 titled, "Speaking in the Name of Plymouth." This policy describes the review and approval process for reviewing and approving a public statement by the church. The process requires a minimum period of two weeks for the congregation to review and comment on the proposed statement and also requires approval of the Church Council following the comment period.

Here are the key items that are important to understand about public statements made by the Church.

1. We have a documented process for issuing such statements. This process includes a two week period for member comment.
2. Public statements require Council approval.
3. We are following this process in reviewing and issuing the statement you may see in the Lawrence Times.
4. This is not a process that is able to react quickly to changing events.

The complete process includes considerations for lobbying public officials on specific pieces of legislation and is available on the church website under About: Plymouth Governance.

My email is printed in the bulletin each week and is available in the church office. I look forward to hearing from you on this or other matters that may be on your mind.

United Church of Christ General Synod 2025 - Kansas City

Last month I mentioned the General Synod of our denomination, the United Church of Christ that will be held in Kansas City this summer July 11-15.

More information can be found on **page 11!**



PROJECT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE UPDATE



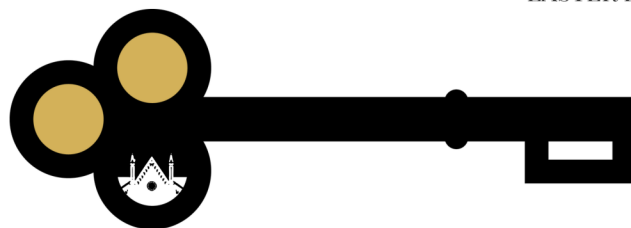
The PMC has agreed to share with the Plymouth Congregation a plan to change our historic sanctuary.

Emphasizing a plan to maintain historical significance; designing a plan to provide greater accessibility for all; and imagining a plan to improve the worship experience for everyone seems to be a TALL order! With the help of the design team of Steve Clark and Jane Huesemann, the Committee has reviewed and debated numerous concepts. The Plymouth Congregation received the newest iteration of sanctuary improvements on Sunday, March 30.

Your comments about these planning ideas are important!



The March 30 congregation sharing time was only one of several that will be provided. In order to proceed with guidance from the State Historical Preservation Office in Topeka and guidance from the local historical preservation office, the PMC plan draft needs to move along.



Keep up with the project and ask questions here!



Enter In

SANCTUARY AND ORGAN PROJECT AT PLYMOUTH CHURCH



The most recent plan of renovation features key aspects.

1. It maintains the historical look of the current sanctuary.
2. It provides additional flexibility for the use of the chancel while elevating the placements of piano, bell tables, areas for string/wind/brass presentations, and other large groups while improving sight lines for many.
3. It returns to a traditional use of a choir loft with the new organ console strategically placed for the organist/director.
4. The design provides for the best chance of receiving historical tax credits to aid in the funding of the renovation.
5. The design provides for the use of a hidden chair lift to aid anyone accessing the choir loft.

Let us know your thoughts via the comment link or by reaching out to any of the committee members directly.

Terry Schmidt, PMC Chair, Doug Eason, PMC Vice-Chair, Rich Bireta, non-voting member, Judy Burch, member, Stephen Carttar, member, Valerie Miller Coleman, non-voting member, Matt Del Vecchio, non-voting member, Valerie McGhee, member, Kim Manz, non-voting member, Dave Miller, member, Doni Mooberry, member

The Graceful Waters: An Invitation to Baptism

Have you ever watched water ripple across a surface and felt a sense of peace? There's something about water that speaks to our souls. In baptism, that simple element becomes a powerful reminder of God's embrace in our lives.

Already Beloved

Let's start with the most important thing: Baptism doesn't make God love you more. You are already, from your very first moment, completely and utterly beloved by your Creator. The waters of baptism don't create God's love—they help us recognize and celebrate what has always been true.

In our UCC tradition, we often say, "God is still speaking," and in baptism, God essentially says what has been true all along: "You are my beloved." Full stop. No conditions attached.

For the Young and Young at Heart


If you're a parent thinking about baptism for your child: We practice infant baptism because we believe God's love doesn't wait for understanding. When we baptize little ones, we're celebrating that they belong to God's family before they can even say the word "God." And when we do this together as a

congregation, we're promising to surround your family with support as your child grows in faith.

And if you're an adult who hasn't been baptized: Please know the waters are just as much for you. Many people find that adult baptism brings a remarkable sense of connection—both to God and to a community that will walk alongside you. It's never too late to publicly celebrate God's love in your life.



The waters of
baptism don't
create God's love—
*they help us
recognize and
celebrate what has
always been true.*



What Happens in Baptism?

In baptism, something beautifully simple yet profound takes place. Through ordinary water and spoken words, we experience an extraordinary truth:

- We're welcomed into the community we call the body of Christ
- We're claimed as God's own, marked with love that doesn't wash away
- We're filled with the Holy Spirit for a life of meaning and purpose
- We join a story of faith that stretches back thousands of years

Whatever your age or life situation, baptism declares that you belong—to God and to this community of real people trying to live faithfully together.

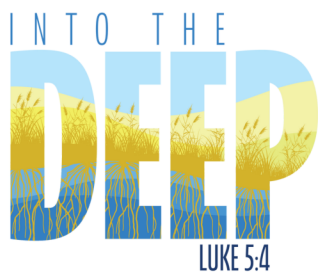
Next Steps

If you're considering baptism for yourself or your child, I'd love to have a conversation about it. Just drop me a line at **seniorpastor@plymouthlawrence.com** or catch me after worship on Sunday. We typically celebrate baptisms during our regular worship services because we believe baptism is meant to be witnessed and celebrated by the whole community.

In the coming months, we'll hold a special baptism Sunday and offer a casual conversation about what baptism means in our tradition for anyone who wants to learn more.

The water is ready. The community is here.
And you are already beloved.

In peace,
Valerie



United Church of Christ

General Synod 35

July 11-15, 2025



GS35TEAM

Every two years faithful members of the United Church of Christ gather for General Synod – a time for inspirational worship, fellowship, and learning more about the U.S. and global ministries of our beloved community.

In July 2025, members of the Kansas-Oklahoma Conference, along with the Missouri Mid-South Conference, will welcome thousands from across the country for the UCC's 35th General Synod in Kansas City, Missouri.

We have volunteer needs in the areas of hospitality, worship, delegate and staff support, and more!

We are expecting around 3,000 guests, so this is our chance to showcase our Midwest hospitality.

Please consider volunteering!

More information, volunteer shifts, and volunteer registration here!



Missouri Mid-South Conference





FAMILY PROMISE

It's time again for Plymouth to host families at Family Promise on Sunday, April 20 (Easter Sunday) through Saturday, April 26 and we need your help.

**PLEASE USE THIS LINK FOR MORE INFORMATION
AND TO SIGN UP TO HELP!**



Plymouth Plant Sale

Saturday, May 3

9am to 2pm





How can I help?

1. Donate plants from your own garden that you re-pot at least a week before the sale. Please label them!
2. Donate purchased plants that have a unit price of about \$5 or less.
3. Donate cash.
4. Spread the word, especially on social media!
5. Volunteer to set up the day before the sale on **Friday, May 2** in the Mayflower Room.
6. Volunteer to assist at the plant sale on **Saturday, May 3 from 9am to 2pm.**

The plant sale is a unique tradition featuring plants supplied by friends and neighbors that will thrive locally. We will also feature native plants for pollinators. However, all plants are welcome: perennials, annuals, flowers, bedding plants, vegetables, herbs, ground cover and houseplants. Please contribute to the inventory however you can! **All proceeds will support Plymouth missions.**

Contact Margaret Kramar with any questions:
kramarmt@hotmail.com
 785-318-2035

HOLY WEEK AT PLYMOUTH CHURCH

PALM SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday, April 13 • 9:30 & 11:30am
Our Holy Week pilgrimage begins.

MAUNDY THURSDAY SERVICE

Thursday, April 17 • 7:30pm
The journey to the cross intensifies.

GOOD FRIDAY SERVICE

Friday, April 18 • 7:30pm
Dramatic presentation of the Passion
Narrative using still life characters and
music.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES

Sunday, April 20 • 9:30 & 11:30am

Our journey culminates in the
celebration of resurrection life!
Christ is risen. He is risen, indeed!

MAUNDY THURSDAY & GOOD FRIDAY

AT PLYMOUTH CHURCH

Maundy Thursday Service

Thursday, April 17 • 7:30pm

Holy Week intensifies in this meaningful service of worship with communion. Liturgical elements are crafted with music, readings and prayers that draw our focus to consider Jesus' journey to the cross.

Good Friday Service

Friday, April 18 • 7:30pm

This powerful service is a dramatic portrayal of the Passion Story. Using readings, music and still life poses, the betrayal and last days and words of Jesus are recounted. Experiencing the acts of injustice and leaving the service in silence give a new understanding and depth of the Easter story.

EASTER SUNDAY

AT PLYMOUTH CHURCH

APRIL 20 • 9:30 & 11:30AM


Our journey culminates in the celebration
of resurrection life!

Christ is risen. *He is risen, indeed!*

Plymouth Easter Giving 2025

Ways to Give



- Give online. 
- Use the yellow offering envelope in the pews during Palm Sunday and Easter.
- Stop by the church office from 9am to 3pm Monday to Thursday.

Checks may be made out to "Plymouth Congregational Church" with "Easter Offering" in the memo line.

Dear Friends of Plymouth,

As we look forward to the hope of eternal life that Easter brings, we hold our mission partners and the needs of this congregation in our hearts.

Lent is a time of community and reflection, giving us an opportunity to walk together to deepen and renew our faith. Perhaps you have joined a Lenten Covenant Group, or you are making a commitment during Lent to focus on personal wellness, putting ministry into action with one of our mission partners or giving to a special cause.

In the spirit of new life and resurrection, the Service and Justice Board is asking for your help in supporting two worthy organizations with a special Easter offering: The 2025 United Church of Christ (UCC) Disaster Relief Fund and the Plymouth Language Program (PLP).

Funds collected on Palm Sunday (April 13) and Easter (April 20) will be given to these organizations.

UCC Disaster Relief Fund

Our church is part of a broader community, and as we have seen in the news, starting on January 7 wildfire activity began in Los Angeles County. The fires destroyed the Altadena UCC Community Church, as well as thousands of homes and businesses. All told, nearly 30,000 acres of property were consumed by the blaze, and 180,000 people have been displaced.

UCC's disaster response and recovery is

supported by the global HOPE team (Humanitarian Opportunities, Partnerships and Empowerment), which is assisting Southern California and Nevada Conference staff, churches and others affected by the wildfires. Your gift will help support the rebuilding of our sister UCC church and the broader community in LA County. Please give what you can to help the church and the community recover from these devastating fires.

Plymouth Language Program

The Plymouth Language Program offers free English and low-cost Spanish language instruction to adults within Douglas County, with the mission of promoting multicultural education, respect and understanding. Over the last three years, more than 175 students were enrolled in the Plymouth Language Program annually.

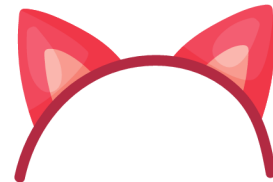
This vital English as a Second Language (ESL) program serves students from many countries and walks of life, including university students, service workers and families of immigrants. Spanish classes enable adult learners to learn a new language and cultural traditions. Language gives us the ability to understand and communicate, which strengthens common values and contributes to a more diverse and vibrant community. Your support says, "We see you and you are important."

Sincerely,
Plymouth Congregational Church's Board of Service and Justice

PLYMOUTH CHURCH PALM SUNDAY PARADE!

After Children's Choir on Palm Sunday, at approximately 11am, children and members are welcomed to meet outside the South/Head Start doors, and our Palm Sunday Parade will commence! We will have noise makers and palms to pass out.

We invite you to join us in the Mayflower Room for refreshments afterwards!



PLYMOUTH CHURCH EASTER SUNDAY PHOTO BOOTH!

We invite you to join us between services on Easter Sunday, April 20, for fun and fellowship with refreshments, goodies bags for children, and photo booths for whole family!

We ask that you sign a waiver before your photo is taken. **Photos will then be posted on FB!**



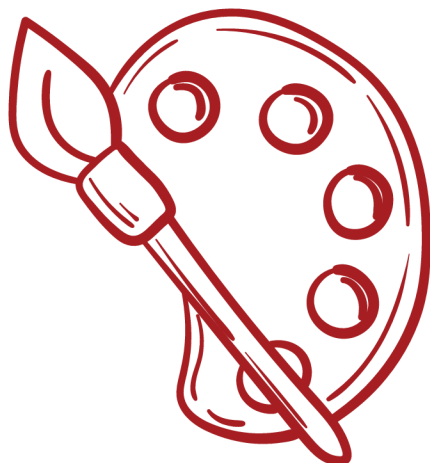
Music & Fine Arts at Plymouth



Plymouth Brass

The Plymouth Brass will be playing for worship at 9:30 on Easter Sunday, April 20. There will be one rehearsal on Saturday, April 19 at 10am.

Please contact Kim Manz at **music@plymouthlawrence.com** if you are interested in playing in the ensemble. Music is available in advance for practicing.



Plymouth Art Classes

Art Classes coming this summer and fall!
The MFA Board will be hosting arts classes in various mediums for all ages this coming summer and fall. If you have a special art talent and would be interested in teaching a class, please contact Kim Manz at music@plymouthlawrence.com.
The sky is the limit . . . clay, watercolor, fiber, glass, wood, sculpture, photography, acrylic, sewing . . .

Plymouth Art Show – October 19-26



SPRING MAJOR CHORAL WORK

Sunday • May 11 • 2025

Dan Forrest's CREATION honors the 225th anniversary of Haydn's similarly titled masterpiece. This work for chorus and orchestra is less a strict narrative, and more of a celebration of the wonders and beauties of our world, using a variety of ancient texts as thematic commentary.

The Chancel Choir will be singing the Creation Suite from CREATION. In six movements you will experience the mysterious vastness before the dawn of time, the breaking of light, the sanctuary of a garden, the representation of flying creatures, the deep blue sea and its inhabitants, concluding with God's pinnacle of all creation . . . humanity and its capacity to love.

Creation Suite is scored for flute, oboe, clarinet, horn, solo violin and cello, harp, percussion, and organ. Each movement creates its own landscape of sound and textures for the theme it portrays. Dan Forrest has been described as having "an undoubted gift for writing beautiful music....that is truly magical" (NY Concert Review). He received his doctorate in composition from the University of Kansas.

Are We There Yet?

Children's and Youth Musical
Sunday, May 18 9:30 am

Are We There Yet? By Tom Long and Allen Pote is a retelling of the story of Moses.

Moses as a baby, God calling him, confronting the Pharaoh to free God's people, the Ten Commandments, and a few surprises. Filled with catchy music and characters, you won't want to miss this Sunday!



MAGNIFICAT

Taylor Scott Davis

Thank you!

Sometimes an amazing opportunity arises that is difficult to ignore.

In December 2021, Plymouth's Chancel Choir sang Magnificat by Taylor Scott Davis. Published in 2021, Plymouth was one of the first choirs to perform this work. Because of that performance, the choir was invited to sing in a massed choir performance of Magnificat at Carnegie Hall on April 7, 2025.

In addition to reviving this work for the December 2024 major work, the choir has held additional refresher rehearsals. Recordings were submitted to insure the concert production company that the choir was prepared.

On Friday, April 4, 29 choir members and 15 spouses, family members, and friends will depart for New York City. Other family members and friends will support the choir by attending the concert.

While in NYC, the choir will rehearse 4 hours each day, with Monday, April 7 being a full day of rehearsal, sound check, concert, and reception all starting at 1 pm and concluding at 12:30 am the next day.

Other highlights of the trip will be attending a Broadway Show together, Top of the Rock at Rockefeller Center, and other sightseeing opportunities.

For some this will be their first time to NYC and for all, the first opportunity to sing at Carnegie Hall.

For the support, love, prayers and financial assistance that has been shown to the choir, we are all humbled and grateful. Thank you!

Soli Deo Gloria

Plymouth's 50 Plus Year Member Spotlight

by Stacy England

Harold and Donna Riehm

Harold and Donna Riehm met at North Central College, a Methodist college in Naperville, Ill. Harold was raised in Northern Indiana, and Donna grew up on a farm in Michigan. "We're a product of small churches. We probably had a couple hundred members at my church. Donna's church probably had 100," said Harold.

Donna said, "I went to a beautiful little rural church. It's where we got married."

After graduating, Donna taught school in Lombard, Illinois, near Naperville. They moved to Carbondale, Illinois, for Harold to finish his master's degree at Southern Illinois University, and then Boulder, Colorado, to pursue his Ph.D.

In 1965 the Riehms moved to Lawrence, and Harold joined the KU political science faculty.

The Riehms had always been Methodists but decided to go church shopping. Harold said, "Over several weeks, we would try a different church on Sunday mornings—which was a hassle because we had three small kids, with the fourth in the hopper.

"So, we see this big brick church downtown. We're only vaguely familiar with Congregationalism and decided to check it out. We went to church one Sunday morning, enrolled the kids in their appropriate classes, got about 10 minutes into Paul Davis's sermon, and looked at each other."

Donna said, "This is where we want to go."

Harold said, "The church was so welcoming. Six months later, Paul left. You can sum up what mainly attracted us to Plymouth by an opening comment that was used on Sunday morning, 'No matter where you are on life's journey, you are welcome at Plymouth.' We have a great variety of people and interests in our church, a chief attraction for us."

"We fell in love with Lawrence. It's an outstanding place," said Harold.

After teaching at KU for four years, Harold directed a state agency that advised the Legislature and Governor on intergovernmental relations. He then directed

a Charter Commission for two years on the reorganization of the Johnson County Government, followed by directing another two-year study on combining the governments of Des Moines and Polk County, Iowa. A position as Senior Performance Auditor for the Kansas Legislature followed.

Harold then served as Executive Director, lobbyist, and medical education director of the Kansas Association of Osteopathic Medicine, representing the more than 600 D.O.s practicing in Kansas. He did this for 17 years, along with similar work for the Kansas Chapter of the American College of Surgeons.

Donna taught elementary education (second grade) for 25 years, mostly at Deerfield School. "At this age, they wanted to learn," she said. "I wanted them to not just learn to read but *love to read*."

Harold bragged a bit about Donna's teaching skills. He added that to this day, former students from 25 years or more ago often greet her with a hug and a thank you.

At Plymouth, Harold and Donna are perhaps best known for their portrayals of Richard Cordley and his wife, Mary. Cordley was Plymouth's pastor for 38 years, ending in 1904.

He said, "This was our most extensive involvement with Plymouth and something we loved doing. It was historically informative and let us express our great interest in both Plymouth history and the portrayal of famous Kansans."

It started when the Riehms asked Plymouth minister Peter Luckey if they could comment on the upcoming Sesquicentennial celebration at Plymouth. The plan was to give a five-minute presentation as part of a Sunday service. At the last minute, Peter asked Harold to do a longer commentary and perhaps tie it to the planned sermon of the day.

The second presentation was the actual 150-year celebration service. This was on the life and activities of the Cordleys. Harold chose the scripture and hymns, and the Riehms donated music for the choir to sing "Home on the Range." For this and subsequent portrayals, Donna appeared as Mary Cordley. Both were dressed in period-appropriate attire.

In 2013, the final performance was on Cordley and Quantrill's Raid in recognition of the 150th anniversary. The performances were well received. They later performed these portrayals throughout northeast Kansas.

"Of all the things I've done with and for Plymouth, this was my most active involvement. I enjoyed it," said Harold.

The Riehms have been involved at Plymouth in other ways during the 60-plus years they have been members. They sang in the choir for about 10 years, making friends during rehearsals and Sunday mornings. Harold said, "We thoroughly enjoyed our time in the choir."

They were members of the history committee for years, and Harold continues to serve. They also used to fold the bulletins once a week.

Harold was an usher for 10 years, off and on, and was a member of the Endowment Committee for several years.

Donna taught a third-grade Sunday school class and was a deacon.

She served as president of Plymouth Women for many years and was treasurer for the Thrift Shop. "I was president, but not all the time. We all took turns. We all took something to eat, so we had lunch and a meeting. A lot of times, we brought in a speaker or something interesting." She said, "I miss Plymouth Women."

The Riehms have had more friends in Plymouth than from any other community connection. "It's probably true of many people

our age.” Harold said, “I was thinking of accepting the Des Moines job. We sat down and talked about what we would miss. Right away, I said, ‘I would miss Plymouth.’ Most of our friends are at Plymouth.”

In the early years, they formed friendships through their children and became friends with their parents.

Harold and Donna have four adult children, who were all confirmed at Plymouth. Jodi was born in 1960. She lives in Midlothian, Texas, near Dallas with her husband, Steven Meyer, who grew up a mile from the Riehm house. Jami, born in 1962, lives in Ottawa. Michael, who was born in 1964, lives in Lawrence. Juli was born in 1967 and lives in Centennial, Colorado, with her husband, Ethan, who grew up less than a mile away. Jodi has two stepchildren, Juli has three children, and Michael has one child. The Riehms have six great-grandchildren.

Harold and Donna recently retired after 40 years of reading for the blind as part of the KU Audio Reader Service. They ushered at the Lied Center, and Donna prepared meals for Meals on Wheels for several years.

Harold spoke about his wife. “Donna is modest, so I’ll say something for her. She has, I’ve always said, three great passions in life.

The first is her family, which she loves and which dearly loves her.”

“The second is teaching.” It started when she went to a one-room school. With only a few kids in the whole school, the teacher would often utilize the older kids to teach the younger ones. “You aren’t supposed to brag about your spouse, but I will in this case.”

Donna’s third passion is travel. The Riehms have been to every state and 39 countries.

“Travel is a great way to educate yourself,” said Harold.

Life changed dramatically last year. The Riehms had moved to Brandon Woods shortly before the fire in August 2024, and it affected their health. “I was in the hospital in Intensive Care with septic shock. I am still in physical therapy. It’s too bad because I want to go back to Plymouth, and we hope to,” said Harold.

For now, they are back in their home.

Until four or five years ago, they were active in the church. “Health conditions have kind of changed that,” said Harold.

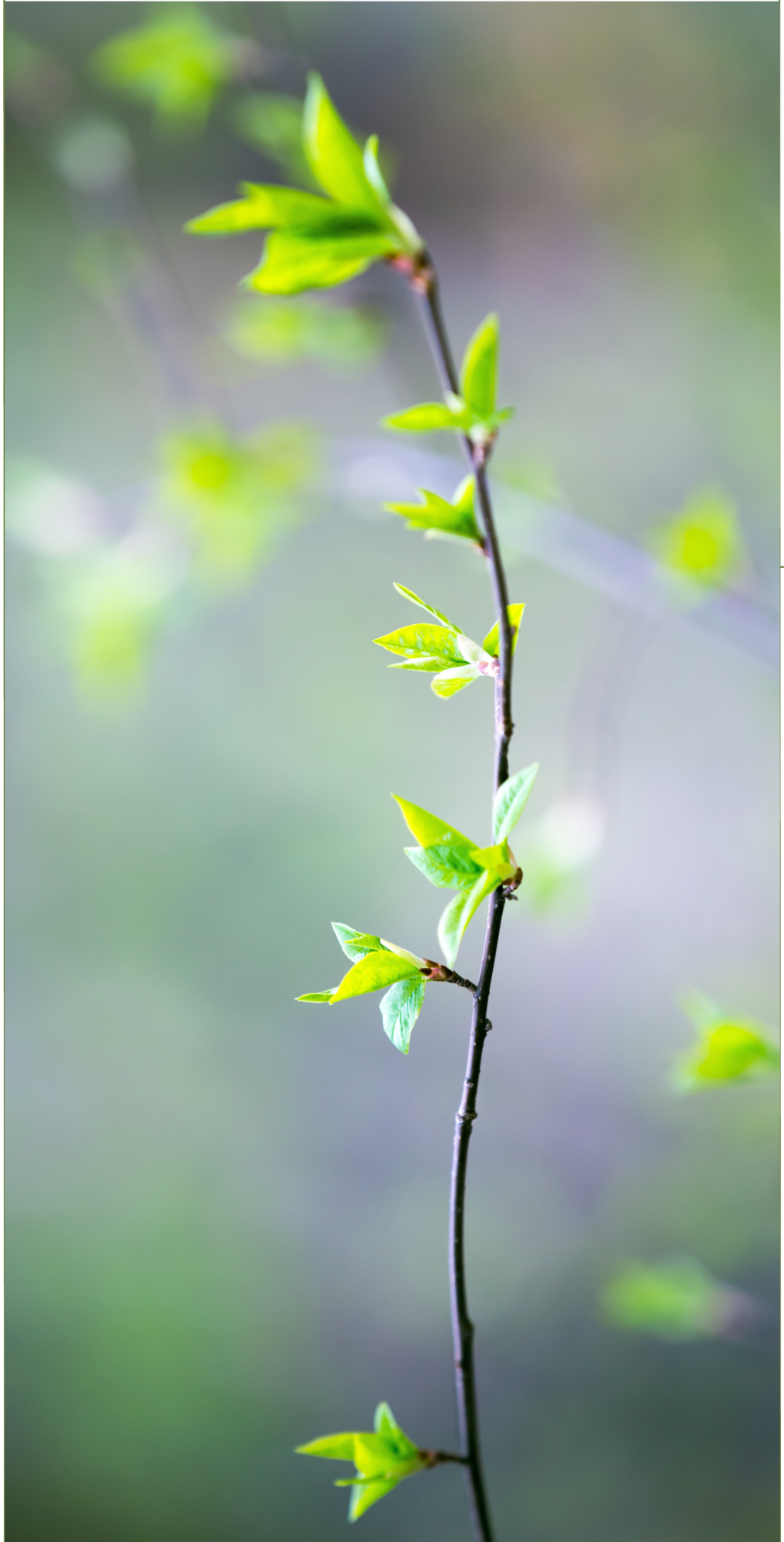
Fortunately, that happened about the same time that Plymouth services went online, so they have been able to watch from home. “It was very convenient,” said Donna. “Up until the last year, I hardly remember missing church. It was just something—Sunday was church.”

When they attended church in person, they sat about one-third of the way back on the right-hand side of the middle section “We sat in those same seats for more than 50 years,” said Donna.



Rock

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administration@plymouthlawrence.com
785-843-3220 • www.plymouthlawrence.com

925 Vermont Street
Lawrence, Kansas 66044