

WHAT CONGREGATIONALISM MEANS TO ME

I was raised in a Congregational Church in Nutley, NJ, which was interestingly called Saint Paul's. I married a man who was raised Catholic and we married in my home church. When I moved to NYC I did not attend church but when my son was seven years old I decided it was time to find one. I was at second grade Packer picnic and two women were talking about their church. I was intrigued because they said it was Congregational. I attended and felt immediately at home. There was no church shopping. Plymouth Church of the Pilgrims is where I decided to stay.

My son, Jack, is now 37 years old and my daughter, Julia, is 26. Raising them at Plymouth is an important part of our family. Although my husband is not a member, he attends every important event, loves a Plymouth party, and cooked the Yankee Fair dinner a few times back in the day.

Since I have been a member so long, I have served on just about every committee and ministry. I have also been on search committees, participated in many small groups and attended many retreats. And, to me, this participation and service is the true meaning of Congregationalism. All of our hard work and devotion, our common drive to do God's work, and the successes that we have achieved, makes me very proud.

Reverend Al Bunis, one of our previous assistant ministers, once likened a Congregational church to a co-op board. I know what he meant, but to be honest, I was a bit offended. I believed that what we do is sacred. However, in fact there are parallels - we do come together for the common good and all have a voice and a vote in how we conduct our business. This self-governance is an important reason I choose Congregationalism.

I love our diversity and inclusion. I love our progressive history and I love that we continue to be progressive in our work for human rights and dignity. I love that we think not only of our own needs but give to those in need in Brooklyn and beyond. For me, being a part of Plymouth's community means that we join together to worship, work and serve together to express through our church and our individual lives our love and faith. As part of the Plymouth Church Covenant says "...to walk together in all His ways..."

~Susan Egan