

OF CABINS AND MCMANSIONS

(Some of you may remember Rev. Sharon Blackburn's sermon from the summer of 2001)

I was raised Catholic with a Lutheran dad in a small town in Wisconsin. My Catholic experience was positive.

I remember having a persuasive conversation with our priest explaining to him that I could not have my First Communion if my daddy was not allowed to participate because he had taught us that "God loved everyone!"

Everyone included the Lutherans and my daddy.

Father E nodded and my daddy was on my right side during my ceremony. I continued attending church all through college at the Catholic center on Washington Square park at NYU. They were smart holding mass on Sunday evenings at 7:00 PM.

I married on June 30, 2001 and was "church shopping" for a church to raise our children. My agnostic, Jewish husband, Josh, agreed that I could raise our children Christian as long as it was not the Catholic religion or a fundamentalist one.

I attended different services in Brooklyn Heights to find "our fit."

I thought Episcopalian would work because it is "Catholic light" after all.

But it didn't go as planned...

I was invited to the church house with others and the icebreaker was: "dead or alive who would I like to meet?"

Others who attended were very polite with answers like "Jesus, Mary, Job, etc..."

I answered Lucille Ball, Michael Jackson, and Adolf Hitler." The room went silent and I knew I was in the wrong place.

The search continued and Josh asked, "why are you not checking out the church around the corner?"

I answered "because I don't know what the Congregational denomination is." He handed me a copy of "The Puritan Dilemma: The Story of John Winthrop" by Edmund Sears Morgan and I read it.

On a Sunday in August, 2001, I walked around the corner intrigued by the title of the sermon, and found the doors locked to the sanctuary.

I started to walk home, but heard singing.

I walked slowly through the garden and entered through the side door to find a very intimate service beginning in the arcade.

Suki Kwak welcomed me and Mary Lou Wells wrote down all my info, This is where I shall end my formal essay because my spiritual journey changed that day. God was already working on me and still is. I was meant to find Plymouth and I joined this eclectic Congregation in November of 2001.

What Congregationalism at Plymouth is to me:

~LOVE!
~CARE!
~COVENANT!
~Dear lifelong friendships!
~ Every Plymouth member and every person who walks through our doors on a personal journey with God!
~Yankee Gala 2001 in the gym (post 9/11): this event is where Josh and I made the decision that our family could belong here.

- red, white, & blue hung prominently
- Packer jazz band
- Susan Egan dancing with her son, Jack
- Robin Osborne-Mooney dancing the waltz beautifully with David Blackburn
- Valerie Velazquez de Louzonis, “dressed to the nines”
- lots of food
- Plymouth punch
- lots of dancing,
- waiting for the floor to open to a pool like in “It’s a Wonderful Life,”

~Metanoia ministries
~Sunday morning bible studies
~Dorris’ Reid Cain’s reading class
~Adult Christian Ed: Forbes Hill, Dennis Trott, Joan Roll, Wendy Davis, Mary Lou Wells
~Youth Group: Rev. David Huber, Jim Schneider, Andrew Goodrich

- Appalachia Service project
- Maine
- Alaska

OUR GUIDES:

~Rev. Sharon Blackburn & David Blackburn
~Rev. Steve Reid
~Rev. Randy Parks & Lori Parks

~Rev. Don Smith & Lori Smith
~Rev. Dr. David Fisher & Gloria Fisher
~Rev. Tom Lenhardt & Lynn Lenhardt
~Rev. Al Bunis & Lynn Bunis
~Rev. Dr. Brett Younger & Carol Younger
~Rev. Jane Huber
~Rev. Liz Coates
~Rev. Erica Cooper & Chris Cooper
~ Bruce Oeschlager & Rini Hughes

~Prayer Group: approx. 18 years
•Pete Valentine, Mary Lou Wells

~Wednesday Women's Bible study: 10 retreats from 2010-2019
•Wendy Davis, Mary Lou Wells

~*Plymouth Nursery*: Gladys, Katie Glaeser, Angela Jones
~*Gail Rose and Plymouth Church School*: teachers/staff
~*Julia Rassman*: Discovery land, (aka: Sunday School)

~Yankee Fairs
~Snow Ball
~Advent & CHRISTmas
~Lent & EASTER
~All-Church retreats
~Lay Service
~Shelter
~Missions School of Hope: Rev. Charles Sagay
~Plymouth Book Club:
~All church Barbecues and picnics
~Even annual meetings

~Grace Faison, Dick Yancey.
All the elders...OUR WISDOM!
~Kalia, Amelia, & Nora Hamilton.
All the Plymouth youth and children...OUR FUTURE!

...births-deaths...

Together through it all...'til we meet again!
Congregationalism is the "God" in each of us.
We are a faith community and we need each other!

Kathleen A. Wolf