

## **WHY PLYMOUTH CHURCH?**

As a child growing up in the United Kingdom, I was raised within the Church of England; an alto choir boy until the age of 8 (\$2 for a solo at a wedding!) and a Church of England primary school until the age of 11. As is common for many, I then drifted away from the community of faith and worship until I returned to a flock at Plymouth Church in 2006.

New York City was emerging from the trauma of September 2001, and as a young couple we had moved from the West Village to Brooklyn seeking more space for our limited housing budget. It was a scary move “across the river”. We were looking to build connections in our new community and raise our new born child in an inspirational, compassionate and thoughtful spiritual environment. Plymouth Church exceeded all our expectations.

So began a long and beautiful relationship with Plymouth Church for our family. Melanie (15), Owen (13) and Jackson (10) have and continue to sustain special friendships with fellow children of the congregation that are valuably distinct from the social orbit of their school and family friends. Plymouth and its community has been there for our family in times of personal joy and sorrow.

On joining Plymouth Church, the prospect of reconnecting with God filled me with great apprehension; feelings of guilt for being absent from God for so many years, fear that I would not be able to find my faith, and nervousness that I would be an outsider. Fortunately (and admittedly profound relief) I needn't have worried on this second point. My family and I were welcomed with open arms and we quickly gained a new set of friends that are still dear to us today. The matter of faith was a slightly longer journey...

Defining faith is complicated. And its meaning is deeply personal. As a generally pragmatic and analytical person, I naturally lean towards seeking

evidence based answers to questions. The journey of personal discovery and development to a place of contentment with my faith when fundamental life questions don't have clear-cut answers may not have been possible without the inspirational worship and deep community of Plymouth.

The journey is ongoing. Who knows what curveballs in life lie ahead. But I'm confident that Plymouth will be an anchor, a trusted safe place and a center of strength for me and my faith.

It is my sincere hope that my children will also be fortunate enough to find their Plymouth as adults. Wouldn't they be so lucky as to find a community of compassion, vibrant activism, and selfless giving, like Plymouth?

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Adrian Swift