

*The Worship of God*  
September 25, 2016 - 11:00 a.m.  
*The Nineteenth Sunday in Pentecost*

**Prayers of the People**

(led by Jeff Bollerman)

*On this day* in 1867, Congress finalized the establishment of Howard University – the nation’s first all-black college. In 1926, Howard’s tenth president left academia when he accepted the call to be Plymouth’s Fourth Settled Senior Minister.

Let us pray.

Savior God, in this morning’s reading we recall the love that you have for your son, our savior Jesus Christ. We heard Jesus speak of his love for his disciples; and we heard him command his disciples to love one another. Please open our hearts to genuine love; and in difficult times, please grant us the patience to look *twice* at each other...so that we might see the *Christ* in each other.

Creator God, as we prepare to install our 11<sup>th</sup> Settled Senior Minister, we are grateful for the generations of servants that you have called to the pulpit of Plymouth Church. During our 170 years, you have used this pulpit to summon our nation to great moral causes, and we are humbled to have been your tool to shape history. We remember the lawyer who sat in these pews — who you made President. We remember the slaves who slept in this cellar — who you made free. We remember the visitor who told us about his dream — who you made a martyr. But nothing is more radical or revolutionary than the miracle you perform here every Sunday morning, when through the Gospel of Jesus Christ you offer to the dying...eternal life.

Protector God, we thank you for Brett Younger, who like each of his predecessors has abandoned a comfortable life elsewhere to accept the challenge to lead Plymouth Church. Help Brett to be a good shepherd, and help us to see the Christ in him when he challenges us. Forgive us, Lord, for we can be a willful and ragged flock, and at times we are difficult to love. Please be with Brett at these times, and help him to see the Christ in us. Inspire Brett to never cease to preach the Gospel. And grant him the confidence to know that if we can be *loved*, we can be *led*.

Lord, we recognize that Brett will not be ours alone. We thank you for Carol and Graham and Caleb, and we are grateful for their willingness to share Brett with us. Please be with the Youngers as we welcome them into our boisterous family.

Father God, on this historic morning we remember your commandment to respect our elders — and we thank you for blessing us with elders who are so easy to respect and to love. We would not be here without the most seasoned among us. We thank you for Plymouth’s oldest members. They have modeled the Christian life through their many decades of service to this church, and we are grateful for their example. Their wisdom, kindness, energy, creativity and stamina make it easy for us to believe that we — or at least they — are created in your image. They have seen

Plymouth in better days, and they have seen Plymouth in worse days, and yet their faith in Plymouth's future surpasses any nostalgia for Plymouth's past. They tell us that Plymouth's best days are yet to come. May we be worthy of their confidence.

Savior, Creator, Protector, Father, Redeemer God. We remember that you are also an Author. We remember that your plan for humanity begins in a garden and ends in a city. Behold and visit the cities of the earth, especially this, our beloved New York. Grant to Brett and to all those in positions of authority, the wisdom and strength to know and to do your will as we wait for your second coming and the New Jerusalem. We ask you to make us your tools and to keep us safe until that day.

In Jesus' name we pray. AMEN.

### **Prayers for Plymouth Church**

(led by John Scibilia)

Lord of all good gifts, we give thanks Brett discerned in prayer your call to ministry at Plymouth Church. Bless him as he lives his vocation among us and in this community.

Lord of wisdom, give Brett the courage and ever presence to lead us walking in front with vision and passion. Give him comfort and guidance in knowing his role as pastor, colleague and friend finding the way together as he leads walking beside us. Give him the patience to gently nudge if needed when leading behind us.

Lord of every day life, give Brett and the Plymouth staff your warm embrace as we minister together to serve you. Be a reminder all gifts and answers are not given to one person, but among all and in it together may truth be found. May our song be sung in harmony, with each voice being valued. Give us ears to hear, a voice to speak and wisdom on how and when to use each. Grant us purpose in ministry, persistence toward excellence, a sense of humor and peace in our hearts.

We pray all these things in the name of God who created us and creates in us each day, God the redeemer who gives the grace of salvation, God the sanctifier who asks to fill our spirit each day. We pray in the name of the one God, together in the unity of the Trinity.

(led by Carol Younger)

O God, you have been our help in ages past, and  
you are our hope for years to come.

When *we* see how deeply the world needs us to be your church, we feel small, and shallow, and overwhelmingly inadequate. But when *you* see how deeply the world needs us to be your church you delight in taking what we can give and making it more than enough.

*In your hands* two fish and five loaves became more than lunch for one; they fed a hungry crowd. *In your hands* offerings gathered in this sanctuary became more than routine collections; they freed enslaved children who you always love. You have been our help in ages past.

And you are our hope for years to come. May we place the gifts we *all* bring to Plymouth *in your hands*—our compassion, our questions, our stewardship, our friendships, our yearnings for community, our creativity, our practical mindsets, our care for the details that make things run, our love for your beauty and art and creation, our desires for the just world that you want, our humor and joy and playfulness, our love for teaching and learning, our vibrant imaginations, our dreams *and* our diligent pursuits of your big picture. *In your hands* may these become more than mere skills and personality traits. May they enliven your body, and make your church strong. Help us at Plymouth to see each other as *your* gifts. Make us people who seek what is possible *in your hands*. Make us people who give ourselves to whatever *you* long to do with us.

Through your grace and love and vision we pray, Amen.

*A Service of Worship*  
On the Occasion of the Installation of Brett Younger  
September 25, 2016 – 2:00 p.m.

**Prayers for Plymouth Church**

(led by Caroline Koster)

Lord, thank you for giving us the chance to be here today. We prayed countless times asking you to send us a servant to lead us and you have answered. Here we sit, stuffed with egg strata made with leftover hot dog buns from two different church barbecues and carrot cake and cheap champagne. We've spruced up the parsonage, cooked dozens of welcome meals, made lists of our favorite New York places and things are good Lord. This is just what we asked for and you answered.

But now what, Lord? Give us the faith and guidance to know what to do next.

Let us honor Brett's commitment to us. Like a pilgrim, he uprooted his family, moving from the South he knew to the wilds of Brooklyn based on a promise from us and a faith in your wisdom. He was not tempted by the safety of known places Lord and let us not be tempted to silence your voice and your plans for us by our own past or reticence or crankiness or envy or thin-skinnedness or know it all-otis or too busy-ness or judgementalness or general whininess. Help us hear you and let us step up when asked to do your work.

Help us to dream big when our leader asks us to dream this church. Let us laugh heartily when he prods us with his kind of humor. Let us feel deeply when he asks us for empathy. Let us forgive each other for past transgressions when he asks us to. And let us be open to Brett's

ideas even if they feel foreign or strange to us....for they are always your ideas.

And let us covenant with Brett to help him grow in his own faith, to comfort him when he needs us, to trust him to lead us, to bear him up when he wavers, to walk with him and to fight to hear you when a thousand voices are conspiring to drown you out. Look around...there are some big shoes to fill...But not that big, Lord, because we are here and you are with us.

Today, Lord, we pray for Brett Younger and his family and for Plymouth Church. Give us your strength and your love and your wisdom—show us your path, Lord, long after the china is washed and the silverware is stowed away. And give us the faith to follow it. We are all pilgrims here Lord, and your are our rock.

(led by Bruce Oelschlager)

Lord Jesus, our Christ and Savior, we give you thanks and praise this day for the great love that you have blessed this church with. Today we ask your continued blessings on us as we venture into this new era of ministry to our world. Send us the inspiration of your Holy Spirit so that we can live out the Great Commission which you gave us: to preach your gospel to the world. We also ask the comfort of your Holy Spirit in our times of challenge and need.

Music has graced this room in praise and prayer to You over these many years. Help us to use every art possible to draw us closer to you. We know that when we sing, we pray twice. May we find ways to use all the arts to glorify You.

Give us the courage to try new things to honor your name, and help us to hold fast to our traditions of love, charity, and service. We want to grow, learn, and serve in whatever way we can. Show us the way to ever be singing a new song to You. In Jesus' name we pray. Amen.