

October 1, 2016

Dear Plymouth,

New beginnings are amazing. I am living in expectancy about what God will do with mine and yours in the very near future. I was able to visit Plymouth a few weeks ago. I admit that when I boarded the plane to LaGuardia I was a bit skeptical that my life would soon be in Brooklyn Heights. I have a full life in Gainesville, GA after all. But everything I have learned about God through scripture, seminary, and experience has taught me that openness is imperative. Imagination and curiosity are gifts from God to be used. So, off I went in a spirit of openness.

I had a great tour of Plymouth that Friday evening. What a cool place! I met Julia as she kept one loving eye on your children during movie night. I had dinner with Brett and Carol. Saturday morning I met your staff. You have a wonderful, kind-spirited staff. Saturday evening I made friends with some of you when you welcomed me into your home, prepared an amazing meal and even better conversation. And yet, it was somehow a surprise to me that on Sunday morning I completely fell for Plymouth. God called me to you. I attended your first session of "Dreaming the Church" and I had the great delight of hearing you describe who you believe Plymouth to be. I knew before I left that gathering space, that I wanted to be part of a church like you. I went into your beautiful sanctuary and worshiped with you. I walked out sure that God was bringing us together.

And so, I'm expectant. I'm excited, but that's what you say about a vacation. I'm curious, but that's what you say about meeting a stranger. This is more than that for me. I think that God is at work in Plymouth and I am expectant about how and about my role in participating, alongside you, in what God is doing.

Thank you for inviting me. I accept gratefully, joyfully, and with hopes for the coming season at Plymouth. Richard Rohr writes in *Falling Upward* about spirituality for the "second half" of life. He doesn't mean the second half based on median life expectancy. He means the spiritually deepening half of life when we become awake to the great meaning of God with us. I get the sense that I am entering into my second half, and I rejoice that it will be with you. Jesus taught often about faith; faith of a Roman officer, a sick woman, a widow, faith as a mustard seed and so on. I pray that our faith, together, will be as powerful for our lives and community as it was for those folks.

I'll see you November 13th!

Gratefully,

Liz Coates