



PASTOR OF CHILDREN, YOUTH, AND FAMILIES

Position Description

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ, Des Moines, Iowa, seeks a full-time pastor of children, youth, and families. This is a senior-level leadership position, with the successful candidate working closely with the senior pastor to build on Plymouth's strong children and family ministry. We desire to have a premier program, creating and implementing successful ministry initiatives in Greater Des Moines and the wider United Church of Christ. Attention will need to focus on a holistic and robust theological formation program from birth through high school while also extending pastoral care to the adults walking alongside children and youth. Additionally, special care should center on developmental transitions with a goal of increased incorporation into the shared life of the congregation.

Plymouth seeks a person who is passionate about engaging social justice issues, and empowering children, youth, and families to embody a progressive framework that is both theologically informed and relevant. Intergenerational connections and formation are important to the fabric of Plymouth's community and will be an essential ministry component. Additional attention should focus on developing a program that offers a range of engagement opportunities, providing low-entry and accessible avenues of involvement for time-pressed families while simultaneously providing avenues where sustained growth and theological development can occur. The successful candidate will understand pedagogical goals, the importance of habits and rituals, and how to successfully integrate students and families into the broader life and ministry of Plymouth. Crucially, the successful candidate must be able to work with and value the many diverse family structures that are represented at Plymouth. We seek to be a place where children can grow, learn, and ask questions in a faith environment that is loving, accepting, and fully inclusive.

Qualifications

Plymouth is an actively growth-seeking congregation and would welcome candidates from various denominational backgrounds. Plymouth values diversity in all facets. All qualified applicants will receive consideration for employment without regard to race, color, sex, sexual orientation, gender identity, national origin, disability, or veteran status.

The key characteristics the successful candidates should possess are an openness to learning, the ability to work in a collaborative environment, a strong theological foundation, and a keen eye for purposeful innovation and relationship building.

- Seminary education (*MDiv, MTS, MA, MAR, etc.*) and ordination are strongly preferred
- At least three years of experience in a mid-to-large-size congregation
- Openness to the United Church of Christ and progressive theology
- Commitment to an intergenerational ministry model
- Organizational and administrative skills
- Strong influence and communication skills
- Experience with staff supervision, reporting, and administration
- Fluency with current technology, social media trends, and digital media best practices

Applicants with less experience are still encouraged to apply and may be considered for an associate youth and family pastor position.

Intangibles

- We value collaboration and teamwork.
- We care about one another and work to achieve common goals.
- Failures and successes are shared.
- We speak well of one another.

Salary and Benefits Package

- Base Salary of \$65,000 to \$80,000
- 403b Contribution of 14% of Base Salary
- 90% of Employee's Health Insurance Premium
- 90% of Employee's Dental Insurance Premium
- 4 Weeks of Paid Vacation
- 2 Weeks of Professional Development
- 4 Weekends Off Per Year (Not in Conjunction with Vacation Time)
- Reimbursement Provided for Moving Expenses
- Sabbatical after five years of Continuous Employment

The salary range listed above reflects a targeted base salary. Actual compensation for the role will be based upon work experience, education, and skill level. At this time, we are not considering candidates that need any type of immigration sponsorship or work authorization.

Additional Background

Plymouth Church first gathered in 1857, the same year that Des Moines was named the state capital. Throughout our history, the people of Plymouth have appreciated progressive theology and

embraced freedom, education, social justice, community involvement, and congregational autonomy in support of our purpose – to increase the love of God and neighbor.

During its 164 years, Plymouth itself has been blessed with outstanding pastoral and lay leadership. Many ministers and congregation members have been involved in creating a more compassionate, generous, peaceful, responsible, and loving world. Stoddard Lane, Plymouth's senior minister from 1929 until 1943, gave voice to the Plymouth motto: "We agree to differ. We resolve to love. We unite to serve."

Plymouth is one of the largest congregations in the United Church of Christ with an active membership of 2,500. Plymouth currently has three weekend services and plans to add a fourth weekend service in the fall of 2022. Plymouth's current senior pastor, Dr. Jared Wortman, came to the Plymouth staff in November of 2021. This is a time of new beginnings and exciting possibilities for all who call Plymouth home.

A Strategic Plan was adopted for the church in 2020 with an emphasis on practicing radical love everywhere and always with four overarching initiatives to live that out over the next five years: practicing meaning and purpose, practicing hospitality and belonging, practicing justice and kindness, and practicing operational excellence.

Plymouth Staff

Plymouth is a large congregation with more than 20 full-time pastoral and program staff members and more than 20 part-time program staff members. Many of these part-time positions support Plymouth's dynamic and expansive children and adult music programs. The successful candidate will join a pastoral team that includes:

- Dr. Jared Wortman, Senior Pastor
- LeAnn Stubbs, Pastor of Congregational & Community Care
- Lindsey Braun, Pastor of Education & Faith Formation
- Rushing Kimball, Associate Pastor
- Jack Mahoney, Associate Pastor
- Peter Strobel, Associate Pastor

Children and Families

Children's classes, called Church School, are held on Sunday mornings. Beginning in 7th grade, Plymouth offers a two-year Confirmation program that is small group-oriented, led by volunteer adult guides, and taught by pastors and lay leaders.

Plymouth has several age-based choirs for children ages 3 years old through 8th grade (with Matins Choir starting in 9th grade). Most choirs rehearse weekly and sing during worship once every 4-6 weeks during the program year. Currently, educational programming for children and youth is largely related to choral opportunities. Although Plymouth is known for having one of the best music programs for children and young adults, the incoming pastor will have an expectation to build on our current structure. We anticipate the creation of engaging programming with year-round opportunities to expand and deepen the theological vision for children, youth, and families at Plymouth.

Living in Des Moines

Des Moines, the capital city of Iowa, is regularly ranked as one of the top 10 best cities to live in by U.S. News. Great schools, affordable housing, a budding food culture, several annual festivals, and drivable access to several other large cities help make Des Moines a desirable city to live in. Extensive recreational trails, rivers, and parks all contribute as well to making Des Moines an easy place to enjoy time outdoors.

In addition to the amenities of the city, Des Moines is progressive for the region and has a welcoming culture. Surrounding suburbs provide many different living options within a short commute from Plymouth. People who live in the area describe it as having the best elements of both small towns and larger cities.

Summary and Application Process

Plymouth desires to actively engage children, youth, and family ministry and is looking for an energetic and visionary leader who is excited to build and create a one-of-a-kind program in Des Moines, Iowa, and in the wider United Church of Christ. Ideally, the successful candidate will begin, in person, starting full time before fall 2022. **The priority deadline for this position is June 15, 2022.**

If you sense this role and church culture could be a good fit for you, please submit a letter of interest and resume to Rev. Dr. Jared Wortman, emailing these materials to jwortman@plymouthchurch.com.