

## SHOWING UP

Summer is a dangerous time to contemplate matters that rest deep in the heart--almost seems “against the rules” for a season that is meant to be lazy and easy. But the unexpected passing of Mary Lou Wells sent me into a reverie about the responsibility that comes with being in a community--more specifically, part of a congregation. During these many months of the pandemic lifestyle, *showing up*, has taken on a progression of meanings. First, the mere physicality of “showing up” was forbidden, now having transformed into a nuanced variety of options: Tested or non-tested? Masked or unmasked? Inside or outside? Vaccinated or non-vaxxed? I imagine Mary Lou would not be confused during this time of *mass confusion*. One way or another, she always knew how to *show up*!

More than thirty years ago, my daughter, Rachael, brought me to Plymouth with her desire to join the Youth Choir. Its director, Narcissa Titman, had a reputation for creating Broadway musical extravaganzas that were a magnet for any child who wanted to perform. After being enlisted as choreographer, I realized I had rediscovered a fellowship, not unlike the one of my youth in Whittier, California, where the United Methodist Church on Bailey Street was central to my family’s daily lives. When I became a member of Plymouth in 1988, I enthusiastically threw myself into the congregational community by joining a succession of committees (Mary Lou chaired at least three) and served one term on the Board of Deacons (just prior to Plymouth adopting the unicameral structure.) From Lee Scott, Bonnie Parsekian and I learned how to run the Yankee Fair Silent Auction. Then, there was the time Amy Talcott-Farooqi and I temporarily lost (we had put it into a safe place for the night!) the lock box with the earnings from the Auction.

For a few years, I helped Peter Stoltzfus organize music and dance concerts as outreach for the community. In more recent history, this creative collaboration found its way to our worship services and the work with our (Plymouth-grown) talented young dancers, along with Bruce's keen musical direction and Jacque Jones's knowledge of hymnal text and liturgy.

These are very nice memories for me, painting a landscape of personal identity with community, while they are not meant to be a replacement of Plymouth life today. Throughout the pandemic, I have received many emails with announcements and invitations from the church staff and members of Plymouth to worship and participate in our ever-changing environment. Vigilant care and action has kept the work and spirit of our church vibrant and relevant, which brings me back to *lazy and easy*. While I watch some sailboats slide under the Newport Bridge, I reconsider what it means to *show up*. I try to dig a little deeper and come around to the fact I have not mentioned Faith or God once. Whether the former leads to the latter, or visa versa, this is where we are asked to show up. Plymouth's table has been set for many generations through faith and the grace of God. I am filled with humility and gratitude each time I am invited to come to it.

~ Robin Osborne Mooney