



Did you know Henry Ward Beecher...

In his heyday Henry Ward Beecher was the most famous man in America. He was also the son of Lyman Beecher, the most famous evangelist in America.

He began his pastoral career in Indianapolis, and under his leadership his church became the largest in the city. In 1847 Henry was invited by the newly formed Plymouth Church in Brooklyn, New York, to be its first pastor. He remained there until his death.

Beecher was a gifted and popular public speaker, because he had a knack of connecting with his audience through effective use of humor and country vocabulary. With Henry in the pulpit Plymouth Church flourished, and he spoke to a packed house every Sunday.

He was paid handsomely by his church, but he became wealthy by going on the national lecture circuit, charging high fees for speaking on political and other popular subjects. He was able to turn his speaking popularity into a national following which created a national audience for his published sermons and books.

Beecher was a transitional figure in American Congregationalism. He held fast to some Puritan traditions but let go of others. He abandoned the Calvinism and austere lifestyle of his father. He supported the temperance movement, was an outspoken abolitionist, and an early leading voice in favor of giving women the vote.

After the Civil War he sided with Industry against the Labor movement. He also endorsed Darwin's Theory of Evolution, seeing it as compatible with Christianity.

...was a Congregationalist?

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Call To Worship

L: Laus Deo.

C: Praise be to God.

L: This is the first inclination when we gather for worship.

C: Laus Deo. We gather to praise and thank God for this hour .

L: May our prayers and songs honor the saints of old and the presence of the Spirit among us.

Invocation (in unison)

Almighty and merciful God, we come to this hour seeking a vision, for a world which needs Your love and care. Imbue us with a pilgrim spirit, always willing to venture where You would have us go, always prepared to do our part to redeem the past for the sake of a more hopeful future. Gather us now, for we come with great expectations to be blessed. Amen

Historical story by: Rev. Norm Erlendson

Liturgy by: Rev. Tom Richard