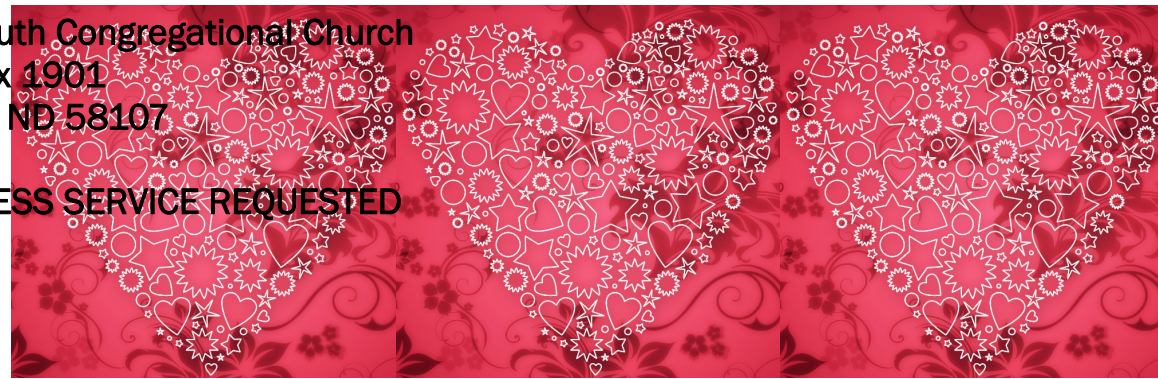


Plymouth Congregational Church
 PO Box 1901
 Fargo, ND 58107

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

We leave judging to God.

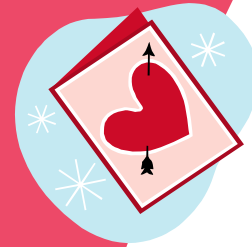


Plymouth Congregational Church
 901 North Broadway
 Fargo, ND 58102
 Phone: 701-235-9226
 E-mail: info@plymouthfargo.org
www.plymouthfargo.org

Amelia's office hours: Monday – Friday; 10 a.m.– 1 p.m.

We welcome guests any & every Sunday of the year! Worship is central to our life together and our worship facilities are accessible. We seek to come together to experience God's Spirit every week as we pray, sing, cry, & laugh.

Come as you are! Following the example of our teacher & guide, Jesus, we welcome you no matter who you are or where you are on life's journey. You are welcome here.



Special points of interest:

- *Pastoral Ponderings*
- *Love quotes*
- *Thoughts about Jonah*
- *Tom Payne's last Message from the Moderator*

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The Chronicle

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ
 Volume 12 Issue 2 February 2012

Pastoral Ponderings

Greetings to all!

In February our thoughts often turn to love commercialized in flowers, candy, and clever rhymes. That is the fun side of love, but deep, abiding loves requires more. It requires one to be strong and courageous in a myriad of ways. For in love each person is their own personal challenge and to live in love is life's greatest challenge. To love others, it is essential first to love yourself.

"You need strength to be a lover, for to be a lover will require that you continually have the subtlety of the very wise, the flexibility of the child, the sensitivity of the artist, the

understanding of the philosopher, the acceptance of the saint, the tolerance of the dedicated, the knowledge of the scholar, and the fortitude of the certain. A tall order! All of these qualities will grow in those who choose love for these are already a part of their potential and will be realized through loving. It becomes, then, a matter of loving your way to love. Before one can love all or anyone, their first responsibility in love is, and always will be, to themselves. The Gospel statement, "You shall love your neighbor as yourself," presupposes self-love and suggests that "shall" love others to the extent to which they love themselves... Suffice it to say that only to

the depth and the extent to which one feels responsibility to grow in self love, so can they feel this toward helping others to do so." We are told in Holy Scriptures by Jesus to "love our enemies" which is often beyond the understanding of most of us. This quote helped me to get a better perspective on this Christian imperative.

"In fact , to love our enemy is impossible, because at the moment we understand them, we feel compassion toward them, and they are no longer our enemy."
 –TN Hanh



Compassion for/with self/others and covenant with God,

Continued on page 6

Women's Fellowship News

Mayflower Circle will meet on Tuesday, February 21 at 9:30 am at Doris Ruby's. Nancy Weiser will be doing the devotions

Women's Fellowship will be having their annual meeting and soup & brownie luncheon on Tuesday, February 14th at 12:30 pm. The board will meet at 11:30 am.



Call Doris Ruby
701-232-5330



I have knives on hand or can order from catalog in the office. Pay when they arrive, in about one week.

Beth Begg and Susanne Driscoll are temporarily sitting in for Howard Etson as head of Called to Care. The meetings of Called to Care are at 9:45 am on the third Sunday of each month. Please feel free to contact Beth 701-298-9836 or Susanne 701-298-6083.

SEARCH UPDATE

The Search Taskforce is updating the church profile and clarifying Plymouth's requirements.



- February
- 1-Marsha Lauth
- 5-Lily Vargo
- 7-Courtney Schur
- 8-Ilean Maetzold
- 9-Duane Durr
- 18-Jim Martin
- 18-AJ Anderson
- 22-Walt Meidinger
- 23-Roxane Meidinger
- 24-Doris Ruby
- 25-Betty Bauder

Serving Groups

February
CO-CHAIR:
Marsha & Marlo Lauth
CO-CHAIR:
Jim & Marie Martin

Cindy Fritz
Lois Fritz
Duane Durr
Linda Trindade

"Real love always creates, it never destroys. In this, lies our only promise."

"Love and the self are one and the discovery of either is the realization of both."

"Love has meaning only as it is experienced in the "now."

"When one has love they are no longer at the mercy of forces greater than themselves, for they become the powerful force.

"Perfect love is one that gives all and expects nothing."

"Love can only be given and expressed freely." "Love is in everyone awaiting actualization."

"To cheat oneself out of love is the most terrible deception; it is an eternal loss for which there is no reparation, either in time or in eternity." -Kierkegaard

"A total immersion in life offers the best classroom for learning to love."

"Love is like a mirror. When you love another you become their mirror and they become yours....And reflecting each other's love you see infinity."

"One does not fall 'in' or 'out' of love. One grows in love."

"Love is always open arms. If you close your arms about love you will find that you are left holding only yourself."

"There is no love where there is no will." -Gandhi

"Scientists are discovering at this very moment that to live as if to live and love were one is the only way of life for human beings, because, indeed, this is the way of life which the innate nature of man demands." -Ashley Montagu

"To learn to love is to be in constant change. The process is endless, for one's potential to love is infinite."

Shoes in Church

I showered and shaved – I adjusted my tie. I got there and sat, in a pew just in time. Bowing my head in prayer as I closed my eyes, I saw the shoes of a man next to me touching my own. I sighed. With plenty of room on either side, I thought, “Why must our soles touch?” It bothered me, his shoe touching mine, but it didn’t bother him much. A prayer began: “Our FatherI thought, “this man with the shoes, has no pride. They’re dusty, worn, and scratched. Even worse, there are holes on the side!” Thank you for blessings, the prayer went on. The shoe man said.....a quiet Amen.

I tried to focus on the prayer, but my thoughts were on his shoes again. Aren’t we supposed to look our best when walking through that door? “Well, this certainly isn’t it. I thought, glancing toward the floor. Then the prayer was ended and the songs of praise began. The shoe man was certainly loud, sounding proud as he sang. His voice lifted the rafters, his hands were raised high. The Lord could surely hear the shoe man’s voice from the sky. It was time for the offering and what I threw in was steep. I watched as the shoe man reached into his pockets so deep. I saw what was pulled out, what the shoe man put in Then I heard a soft “clink” as when silver hits tin. The sermon really bored me to tears, and that’s no lie. It was the same for the shoe man, for tears fell from his eyes. At the end of the service as is the custom here, we must greet new visitors and show them all good cheer. But I felt moved somehow and wanted to meet the shoe man. So after the closing prayer I reached over and shook his hand. He was old and his skin was dark. His hair was truly a mess. But I thanked him for coming for being our guest. He said, “my name is Charlie,” I’m glad to meet you, my friend. There were tears in his eyes, but he had a large, wide grin. Let me explain, he said, wiping tears from his eyes. “I’ve been coming here for months and you’re the first to say Hi”. I know that my appearance is not like all the rest, but I really do try to always look my best. I always clean and polish my shoes, before my very long walk, but by the time I get here, they’re dirty and dusty, like chalk. My heart filled with pain and I swallowed to hide my tears. As he continued to apologize, for daring to sit so near, he said. By the time I get here I know I must look a sight But I thought if I could touch you, then maybe our souls might unite. I was silent for a moment, knowing whatever was said, would pale in comparison I spoke from my heart, not my head. Oh, you’ve touched me I said and taught me in part that the best of any man is what is found in his heart. The rest, I thought, this shoe man will never know. Like just how thankful I really am that his dirty old shoe touched my soul.

As we sit next to a visitor, new face or just another unknown person, let our hearts feel the spirit of our soul and our friendship spread to them. We may not know what sorrows are behind their eyes and what has happened in their lives that brings them to our community. Share the goodness God has given to us with our daily bread, friendship and love. Also let old friends know you have not forgotten them and given them a call when the urge moves you. They may just need a lift and kind voice to make their day more meaningful. Everyone needs a friend and will always hold their friends in highest esteem.

Tom Payne, Outgoing Moderator

I am always so glad to see the story of Jonah come into the lectionary readings. It is the only book of the Bible that I required students to read ‘from cover to cover’. Not too much of an assignment, since it is all of four pages long. The fish part of the story is pretty minor when put in the context of the motivations of this strange hero. As Eugene Peterson puts it: “Jonah is not a hero too high and mighty for us to identify with—he doesn’t do anything great. . . we



find Jonah as a companion in our ineptness. . . Even when Jonah does it right, he does it wrong.” But God works with Jonah’s ineptness and stubbornness to accomplish the desired end, the repentance of Ninevah. My favorite part is the fourth chapter where we find Jonah sulking and arguing with God. He had finally done what was asked of him, to preach to the Ninevahites. He probably had visions of God’s anger punishing those Gentiles, but instead his God, whom he knew to be full of grace and mercy, had changed course and forgiven the repentant people. Didn’t quite go as Jonah had envisioned it. The balloon of Jonah’s bluster had been popped. And Jonah was angry with God, sitting there doused in ashes, sulking and fuming.

We are so like Jonah, fighting for what we want, the way we want it—the way we think it should be. But sometimes God has other ideas and changes direction, because he is “sheer grace and mercy, not easily angered, rich in love, and ready at the drop of a hat to turn your plans of punishment into a program of forgiveness.” (Jonah 4:2, The Message) We must remember that our plans and directions may not always be the direction that God is taking us in. We need to listen. God is still speaking.

Shalom,
Marilyn Rich

Treasurer’s Report

PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH
Operating Income and Expenses for 2012

January –Jan. 24	YTD
Operating Income \$	\$13866
Operating Expenses \$	\$5785

