



## Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

We leave judging to God.

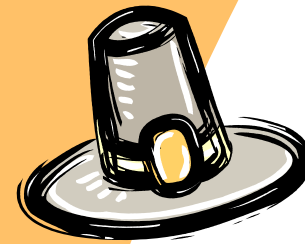


Plymouth Congregational Church  
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Amelia's office hours: Monday – Friday; 10 a.m.– 1 p.m.

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**
- **What's Happening at UCM**
- **Stewardship**
- **Turkey Dinner**

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# The Chronicle

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ  
Volume 11 Issue 9  
November 2011

"What we focus on becomes our reality. Organizations grow in the direction of the questions they ask. Organizations grow toward their images of the future. These images are socially constructed from the questions they ask and the stories they tell."  
-Rob Voyle, Psy.D

Another way to look at this concept is to think about plants. Plants will grow toward and into the things that are needed for them to thrive like sunlight, carbon dioxide, correct amount of space, and water. What happens if any of these aren't available? The plant is stunted or puny or dies.

"What we water with our attention will grow."  
- Anonymous

Our job at Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ is to ask ourselves questions and tell stories about where we want to grow into the future. Next we need to use our time, talent and resources (attention) to make that happen.

Sometimes we get so busy "doing" we fail to turn to the most important resource we have as Christians in the 21st Century.

..... In God all things are possible....

Often we do start with God but with a laundry list of what we want....."I want this God.....'Gimme this, God..... If you'll only give me this, I will....." Sound familiar? I venture that we all know this is often where our prayers begin.

Let us begin our prayers this time remembering the heritage of our ancestors the Pilgrims of Plymouth Plantation (1620) who survived their first year because of the kindness of the Indians who lived in the area and helped them. From this event in the very beginning of this nation, we come to the holiday we celebrate on the fourth Thursday of November in this country known as Thanksgiving.

It is always good to ask God for guidance. But let us always begin with thanksgiving in our hearts for all that we have been given. Not just words but truly with **thanksgiving in our hearts**.....yes, always, even in the midst of chaos or love, volunteer or paid work or loss of meaning, sadness or joy.....whatever works in your life this year, please begin with deep thanksgiving as they did

381 years ago.

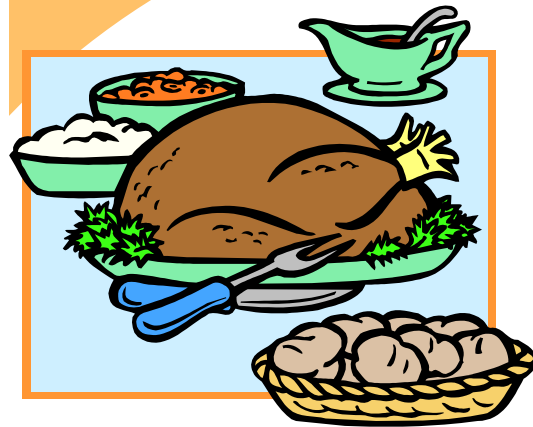
God, Thank you. Thank you, God. Thank you, God who created me. This is the day that God has made let us rejoice, be glad and give thanks for all God has made. Thank you God for my life, my loved ones and the air, food and water which nurture and sustain all life.

After your prayers of thanksgiving, please ask God to guide the questions and to support with productive answers God's community of people known as Plymouth Church in Fargo, North Dakota, USA, Continent of North America, Western Hemisphere, the Earth, the Solar System, the Universe, the Mind of God. Give thanks and ask that Plymouth trust and focus on God's answers and work to live into what God's Mind thinks possible. God's Mind always works toward what is the best reality in all things.

Shalom and safe travels during this Thanksgiving Season,

Pastor JoBeth





Please mark your calendars for the Plymouth Turkey Dinner Sunday, November 20 following church. Good food, games and fellowship so save the date.

## Serving Groups

November  
 CO-CHAIR:  
 Sandy & Tom Payne  
 CO-CHAIR:  
 Joanne Andres  
  
 Lorri & Al Johnson  
 Claudia & Chad Murray

## Birthdays

### November

10-Dale Larson  
 10-Chad Murray  
 10-Alison Zinck  
 11-Lori Schenck  
 12-Todd Lautt  
 16-Al Bauder  
 19-Steve Larson  
 24-Alma Levi  
 27-Caleb Mohr  
 29-Tacye Pearson



**GREENSNEAKERS**  
 Winning Steps to a Greener Tomorrow

You may say – what? Who wants green sneakers? It isn't the color it is the program that makes "Green Sneakers" so unique. What this program is about is recycling used or unwanted sneakers. You see, it takes a lot of petroleum to produce sneakers and when they are not used and put into the land fill it takes thousands of years to recycle them back to an earthly product. By recycling the unwanted or gently used sneakers we preserve our earth and give a needy person a foot cover.

The gently used sneakers are recycled by the "Green Sneakers" organization that uses us as a means of collecting the items and they will distribute them to reputable relief agencies that in turn send them to developing countries for distribution to the needy. They will pay charitable organizations, like us, 50 cents per pound or approximately \$1.00 per pair of used tennis shoes.

We can, with the money raised from the collection of these items, fund projects we are interested in. So, we are asking our friends, neighbors, and members to bring a pair of unwanted, gently used or whatever you may call your pair of discarded tennis shoes to church with you on Rally Sunday, September 11, so we can begin our project of "Green Sneakers". This project will run from September 1, through May 31, 2012. There is no cost to our church for this project and it will help the environment, a needy person and it will also employ people in developing countries who desperately need jobs.

We will collect sneakers at the church during normal business hours during the week. The hours at 10 am-1 pm Monday through Friday. We will also collect on Sunday mornings at church. Let's have fun with this and see how many shoes we can collect by asking everyone to support us. More to come on this topic.....Stay tuned.

Submitted by Margaret Kloster

I recently attended the "Stewardship as a Spiritual Practice" workshop held in Bismarck. Kate Huey, from the national UCC staff was the presenter. She handed out many resources and familiarized us with the Stewardship section of the national website. We looked at many scriptures in regards to abundance and sharing, did a bible study, watched pieces of films. Most of the workshop centered on the terms REMEMBER, TRUST, and SHARE.

The following hand out sums up much of the information that was given in one way or another.

### *An Overview of the Bible as God's Generosity and Abundance:*

1. A good and abundant creation: we are to have dominion over it—to be responsible for its well-being.
2. In the wilderness, when things were the worst they'd ever been, God provided enough—but not an excess—in order to teach us to trust and to share.
3. During the best of times, when abundance is obvious (the land of milk and honey), God reminds the people not to be arrogant, not to forget the source of the abundance, not to create false sources of abundance (idols): remember/trust the one who provides and then share.
4. When we don't listen, God sends prophets to remind us.
5. God's ultimate gift of grace is Jesus himself (John 1) - "gift upon gift."

### **So what happened??**

6. History happened, with different economic and social systems that eventually produced a middle class (a good thing), even though poverty has always been a problem. Did we come to believe that we can't change things, that the "systems" are more powerful than God?
7. The situation we find ourselves in today:
  - A wealthy but hurting country, a wealthy but hurting church
  - A world that has many more people much worse off than we are
  - The changes in our culture that caused this have been happening for a long time—more of us are feeling them in this economic crisis, and for many the results are intensified
  - In one way or another, every crisis is a blessing: will we be reminded to "remember, trust, and share"?
8. Walter Brueggemann says that we are in exile, like ancient Israel, always living in the shadow of one empire or another.  
 Today, the church finds itself not in the center but pushed to the margins, and struggling to be heard above the din of the empires of materialism, militarism, globalization, corporate greed, and incessant electronic stimulation.

### **A powerful tension: Abundance/Excess/Enough, Abundance/Scarcity**

**Excess: Check out online sources that tell us that most Americans are in the top 1% in income in the world: a sobering statistic.**

**Scarcity: Walter Brueggemann's *The Covenanted Self* p. 112-113 "No hoarding!"**

**Another serious question to complicate a theology of abundance: sustainability and population growth. How do we interpret, "Go forth and multiply"?**

**Justice as shalom—as the fullness of good for all of God's children—healing, wholeness, peace: remember, trust, and share.**

# Stewardship Team

## Submitted by Judy Maxson

### The Parable of the Pencil

A pencil maker told the pencil 5 important lessons just before putting it in the box:



1. Everything you do will always leave a mark.
2. You can always correct the mistakes you make.
3. What is important is what is inside of you.
4. In life, you will undergo painful sharpening, which will only make you better
5. To be the best pencil, you must allow yourself to be held and guided by the hand that holds you.

This parable was originally told to encourage people to know that they are special and have unique God-given talents and abilities. Never allow yourself to get discouraged and think that your life is insignificant and cannot be changed.

This parable can also apply to Plymouth Church.

1. The programs that Plymouth Church supports leave a mark.
2. Mistakes have been made, maybe feelings have been hurt, but there is forgiveness.
3. The people and the activities within the church are more important than the building itself.
4. Plymouth has gone through some very painful sharpening but they will only make us stronger and better.
5. We need to allow ourselves to be guided and held by the hand of God.

Everyone that attended services on October 2 received a pencil. Some of the pencils had broken lead and needed to be sharpened and maybe this is to make us think about where we are and what needs to be done to make the Plymouth congregation all that God intends it to be. Be positive, patient, pray, and remember the parable of the pencil.

## Treasurer's Report

### PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH Operating Income and Expenses for 2011

January –Oct. 24	YTD
Operating Income \$	\$112372
Operating Expenses \$	\$113862
Extra Income Taken out of Accounts	
Money Market	\$3000
UC C Foundation Stocks	\$10000
Special Donations January 1, 2011-July 31, 2011	
Churches United for Homeless	\$250.00
Food Pantry	\$500.00
Loan Reduction	\$1000.00
Deficit Reduction	\$500.00



<b>November 2011</b>		5	12	19	26	4-7pm Churches United	3	10
		4	11	18	25	Veterans Day - Office Closed	2	9
3	10	17	24	1	8	9 am Men's Retirees Group meet at Fry'n Pan	1	8
2	9	16	23	30	7	6:30 pm Wed. Night Worship 7 pm Bell Choir 8 pm Chancel Choir	1	8
1	8	15	22	29	6	8pm Council Meeting	1	8
31	7	14	21	28	5	1 pm Mayflower Circle	1	8
30	6	13	20	27	4	10:30 am Worship Service 11:30am All Church Meeting	1	8
						10:30 am Communion Worship Service & Sandwich Ministry		
						10:30 am Worship Service		
						10:30 am Worship Service & Sandwich Ministry Turkey Dinner		
						10:30 am Worship Service		
						10:30 am Confirmation & Communion Worship Service		

Galatians 6:9 "let us not become weary in doing good for at the proper time we will reap a harvest if we do not give up."

We have all taken the steps to prepare for winter in our own homes. It is time again for us at Plymouth to prepare for our annual budget. It is time to put into place the budget for the next calendar year. Team leaders who request monies from the church council and treasury need to have their requests in by November 20, 2011. There will be a budget team meeting on November 20, after the morning church service. The team leader members needing to be in attendance are:

1. CE Team
2. Worship Team
3. Trustees
4. Stewardship Team
5. Building & Grounds

Each team should get together before November 20 to decide what is needed to complete their mission and what their budget will look like so the budget can be presented to the budget team on November 20. The budget team will meet in the library as soon as we can after the church service. We will then decide how to proceed with the meeting because our annual Turkey Dinner is also this day. Melissa Toepke-Peterson will be asking for donations, assistance and, of course, all of you to be there for a great meal.

The year is coming to a close very quickly and we need to be looking forward to the future of our church. We need to fill positions on all the teams, especially the Board of Trustees and the Worship Team. If you are interested in helping out, let me, Judy Maxson, or Pastor Jo Beth know of your desire. We need all the help we can get. This may sound like a broken record, however, every organization goes through the same process, year after year, after year.

I want to thank all of you folks for supporting the "Green Sneakers" project. Green Sneakers has picked up three bags of shoes (they were very heavy). We can't wait to hear the news of how many pounds of shoes we collected. It is very exciting. Remember - dig in the closet or thrift store for those gently used sneakers not being worn and drop them off in our collection bins when you come to church.

Remember - God loves a cheerful giver.

Tom Payne  
Moderator

We are more than halfway through the fall semester and things are just now starting to quiet down. We had an amazing first month of classes, with lots of activities to welcome students to campus and to introduce them to UCM. Our semiannual pig roast in September was a big success as always and our weekly worship attendance is up from last year. I want to say thank you to all the churches that have been providing meals on Sunday nights, the students love your food and it gives them a fun time to gather and get to know each other.

This past month we also held our third annual silent auction and gala at Calvary UMC. We had about 100 people attend and 25 students helped by decorating, serving and singing in the choir. Thank you to all those that attended and to those that donated items to the auction. We raised over \$3,000 at the auction alone!

We also welcomed two new associate campus ministers this fall. Mandy Bass, who will be working at First UMC with 10<sup>th</sup>-12<sup>th</sup> grade youth, and will be heading up our MY (Metro Youth) Ministry, and Wil Wilson, who was placed with us as part of the UMC's US-2 program, will be heading up community service and weekend activities. We are blessed to have them as part of our team and we look forward to all the ministry we'll do together.

Amelia Shoptaugh, UCM Associate Campus Minister

United Campus Ministry held its fall Gala on Sunday, October 16 at Calvary United Methodist Church. The gala included a silent auction, dinner and worship service. United Campus Ministry is a mission project of Plymouth Women's Fellowship and six members of Plymouth attended. Our church secretary Amelia Shoptaugh is an associate campus minister at UCM and was co-chair for the event. After a delicious dinner, a worship service was held in the church sanctuary with Bishop Deborah Kiesey of the United Methodist Church Dakotas Conference as guest speaker.

As has been announced before, Plymouth Women's Fellowship is providing three meals for UCM during the 2011-2012 school year. The first was held on Oct. 9, and I would like to thank Ilean Maetzold, Betty Bauder, Cynthia Mohr, and Judy Maxson for making the dinner and Walt Meidinger for transporting the food to UCM. Our next dinner will be December 11 and I will be taking donations to help pay for the meal.



Tammy Breuer