

Plymouth Congregational Church  
 PO Box 1901  
 Fargo, ND 58107

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



## Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ

We leave judging to God.



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.

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

### Special points of interest:

- **Pastoral Ponderings**
- **Giving Tree**
- **Cookies with Santa**
- **Stewardship**
- **Women's Fellowship**

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# The Chronicle

Plymouth Congregational United Church of Christ  
 Volume 11 Issue 10  
 December 2011

HAPPY NEW CHURCH YEAR TO ALL!

Advent is the beginning of the new Church Year. We often equate new with joy only, but Advent is a season of preparing and of waiting on God. We must move into Advent with a sense of humility and introspection. Perhaps it is disconcerting to some sensibilities, but it is true—because human rebellion and disobedience made it necessary for God to be born in Bethlehem. The miracle of God with us—Immanuel shows us God's love for us despite our turning away from God's path for a meaningful life upon the earth.

Advent announces that God was not willing to have a distant relationship with us—God's beloved creatures formed in God's image. Advent is all about God's willingness—even insistence—to be vulnerable, accessible, reachable and attainable. Advent breaks down the barriers between created and Creator. —Homiletics, Nov 2011, p.37 Still, a meaningful relationship can only occur if we open our hearts and let God inside. During Advent we need to create in our hearts a manger into which the Christ Child can

be born and can reside. It is up to us to do the work of preparing ourselves for this miraculous event to happen in our lives. At Plymouth UCC, our series for this Advent is RESTORATION. As we struggle daily, we humbly ask God to restore HOPE, PEACE, LOVE and JOY into our lives. The hope which begins Advent is not to be confused with wishing. They are two entirely different things. Humans of all ages confuse these two things. Eugene Peterson in *Living the Message: Daily Help for Living the God-Centered Life*, states it this way: "Wishing extends our egos into the future; hope grows out of our faith. Hope is oriented toward what God is doing; wishing is oriented toward what we are doing. We can picture wishing as though it were a line coming out from us with an arrow pointing into the future, pointing toward that thing we most want to possess. Hope is just the opposite. It's a line that comes from God out of the future, with its arrow pointing toward us. Hope means being surprised, because we don't know what is best for us or how our lives are going to be completed. To cultivate

hope is to suppress wishing -to refuse to fantasize about what we want, but to live in anticipation of what God is going to do next" —Ibid, . 40 HOPE is for all people who remember, have faith in, AND do God's will now and forever. During this chaotic earthly life, HOPE is the base ingredient. It makes it possible for God to then restore the PEACE, LOVE and ultimately JOY implanted in us before we were born. There has never been in all creation a God who works on behalf of those who wait for God and gladly do right by remembering God's ways. So whether we are in the Season of Advent, Christmastide, Epiphany, Lent, Eastertide, or Thanksgiving we are blessed always, but WE MUST CONTINUE TO OPEN OURSELVES TO THE MIRACLE. May the Hope, Peace, Love and Joy that is the Blessed Spirit of this Holy Season grace your lives throughout the New Year.

Shalom, Pastor JoBeth



**Serving Groups**

December

CO-CHAIR:

*Vi Taylor*

CO-CHAIR:

*Cindy Lura*

Curt Trautman

Andy Brandvold

Marlys & Jim Skaarer

Mary Schuldheisz

**Birthdays**

December

5-Nancy Weiser

13-Howard Etson

14-Marlo Lautt

17-Jonathon Kloster

19-Romelle Sperl

20-Dorothy Peltier

19-Steve Larson

21-Steve Martin

28-Betty Payne

The Giving Tree is up and names available for the children of Nokomis. We would like at least one toy and one article of clothing for each child to be placed in a gift bag but you can be as generous as you wish. Gifts will have to be returned by Dec.7th. Any questions, call Betty Bauder 281-0534

**Cookies with Santa & Christmas Open House**

December 18<sup>th</sup> from 2-4 pm

There will be goodies and music and a chance to meet Santa and decorate cookies. Open to everyone of the Church and the community.



**Green Sneakers**

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.



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 Henrietta Fiechtner

One definition of Stewardship is "the position, duties, and responsibilities of a steward." We are all stewards of the church which brings us to this second definition, "fulfilling an obligation to an organization."

We are very fortunate to have this building with the beautiful windows and interior, however, a building cannot be a church without people that are committed. We have 145 members and if each member donated one hour a month, which would be 145 hours. By the same token, the church cannot exist on just physical contributions. Unfortunately, there are repairs, replacements, maintenance, bills, and salaries to be taken care of. Of course, this means a financial contribution.

A CD I found in my brother's collection was by an African-American gospel group called "The Sensational Nightingales." The song "Christians We Are the Ones" says it all.

Ok, who should remember to let God abide and to always trust Him and keep Him in their lives.

Tell me, who should work hard in the vineyard everyday.

Who should do that? We that know Him are the ones. We are the ones.

Tell me, who should always remember to kneel down and pray for the ones who have suffered and fallen by the way?

Tell me, who should go to them with kind words to say?

Who should do that? We that know Him are the ones. We are the ones.

Listen to this, who should stand up together and work in one accord? Ok! Who should ask for strength and more power from the Lord?

Tell me, who should have love in their hearts for everyone?

Who should do that? We that know Him are the ones. We are the ones.

We can actually make up more verses like: Who should teach Sunday School, visit shut-ins, sing in the choir or ring bells, usher, or join a circle? Tell me, who should take care of the repairs and maintenance for our church building, rake leaves, shovel snow, or be on a committee?

Not everyone can sing, teach, visit shut-ins, or do maintenance, but everybody can do something.

Who can contribute financially? Every bit helps.

The chorus to this song is as follows: Tell me, who should do that? We that know Him are the ones. What did you say? We that know Him are the ones. We are the ones.

# Stewardship Team

## Count Yourself Blessed

This was the theme of our stewardship drive this year. Just as our theme each one of our six speakers had their own theme, all of which were very heartfelt in a very evident way.

It's so interesting to listen to our members as they express their concerns and thoughts about Plymouth and their Christian faith and how important it is to them. The Stewardship Team would like to thank the following people who agreed to come forward and step up to the pulpit and touch our Christian family: Judy Maxson, Carol Martinson, Tom Payne, Tammy Breuer, JoBeth Marshall and Henrietta Fiechtner.

God bless you from the Stewardship Team!

**Pledge update: We currently have 32 pledges totaling \$62,934.**

Women's Fellowship is ordering pizza for United Campus Ministry on December 11. If you would like to contribute to the cost, please contact Tammy Breuer or leave your donation in the church office. Your help is greatly appreciated.



Women's Fellowship will have their Christmas Luncheon December 13 at 12:30. The board will meet in the library at 11:30. All women of the Church and spouses are invited.

One of our mission projects for Women's Fellowship here at Plymouth is Church Women United. CWU is an ecumenical group that brings together women of all faiths in the U.S. and Puerto Rico. We have representation from more than two dozen churches here in Fargo.

We work for justice, caring, and peace. We invest our time, intelligence, energy, and money to strengthen families worldwide through health care and education. This year we gifted \$300 each to the YWCA, Nokomis, Churches United, and Native American ministry locally. These donations are in part financed by our Least Coin Offerings from participating churches.

The organization is open to all women. We meet six times a year on the first Friday of March, April, May, October, November, and December. COME! Join us!! You will be BLESSED!!

Connie Laite

I sincerely want to thank the following people who came out on Saturday morning, November 5, to help clean up leaves and flower beds around the church and the rental properties.

Jim Skaarer	Jim Martin
Marlo Lutt	Beth Walstead
Cynthia Mohr	Al Retzlaff
Mike Strang	

Walt Meidinger  
Team Leader, Buildings & Grounds

Thanks to those decorated the church for the Christmas season on Nov. 26th.

<b>December 2011</b>	27	10:30am 1st Advent Worship Service	28		29	6:30 pm Communion Worship 7 pm Bells 8 pm Choir	30	6:30 pm Communion Worship 7 pm Bells 8 pm Choir	1		2	9:30 am Church Women United @ Bethany	3		4	6:30 pm Communion Worship 7 pm Bells 8 pm Choir	5	6:30 pm Communion Worship 7 pm Bells 8 pm Choir	6		7																																									
	4	10:30am 2nd Advent & Confirmation Worship Service 8 pm Council Mtg	5		6	11:30 am Margaret Sherwood Circle lunch @ Holiday Inn	7	6:30 pm Communion Worship 7 pm Bells 8 pm Choir	8		9		10		11	10:30am 3rd Advent Worship Service	12		13	11:30 am WF Board 12:30 pm WF Christmas Lunch	14	7 pm Service of Hope & Healing Choir & Bells after	15		16		17		18	10:30am New Member & 4th Advent Worship Service 2-4 pm Open House & Cookies with Santa	19		20	9:30 am Mayflower Circle <b>January Chronicle deadline</b>	21	6:30 pm Communion Worship 7 pm Bells 8 pm Choir	22		23		24	5 pm Worship Service 11 pm Worship Service <b>Christmas Eve</b>	25	10:30 am Favorite Carols Worship <b>Christmas</b>	26	<b>Office Closed</b>	27		28		29		30		31							
	1	10:30am Bells & Carols Worship	2	<b>Office Closed</b>	3		4		5		6		7		8		9		10		11		12		13		14		15		16		17		18		19		20		21		22		23		24		25		26		27		28		29		30		31	

Another month has gone by. November has been a good one. Yes, “Jesus has left the building” a phrase we have heard time and again at worship. This does not mean He has left our presence it just means we carry his goodness and grace with us as we sojourn to where we go after worship. We spread His fellowship, kindness and thanksgiving everywhere. We come back again the next week to renew our faith, hope, and lose our burdens. We are renewed taking the spirit of God with us.

I have enjoyed the past months, actually years, in our church. I have grown in faith through God and will continue to embrace His teaching throughout my life. We are spreading His kindness and yes. “God is still speaking.”

Thank you to all who gave generous donations to fund the roof repairs. Thank you also, for the generous gift for the elevator repair. God does work miracles and when the tough times come, the grace of many people solves the problems we face. We look forward to all who have been coming to our pancake breakfasts. The free will offering funds our sandwich ministry and you all have done a great job. Thanks to Judy, Marlo, Howard and Sandy, for helping out cooking and cleaning up.

Pastor JoBeth, I thank you for your Sunday messages. They are inspiring and give all of us a sense of direction and faith to continue our daily living.

We have had good attendance at the church council meetings. We do need volunteers for the Worship Team, CE Team, Stewardship Team and Trustees. We need all vacancies filled before the annual meeting in January. We did get volunteers for Moderator, Treasurer, Assistant Treasurer, Financial Secretary, Assistant Financial Secretary, and Recording Secretary. We have 3 of six positions filled on the Board Trustees too. We need a volunteer for Assistant Moderator. Take a RISK (Run into someone kind) and volunteer.

Thanks to everyone who learned how to bleed the air out of the heating lines. We have solved, so far, the heating problem in Pastor JoBeth’s office and the church office, the sanctuary seems to be warmer, and the fellowship hall is warmer too.

Thank you for allowing me to represent Plymouth Church at the National UCC conference in Detroit this past month. The excitement, reverence and fellowship with other churches was very enlightening. Just getting to know that we are not alone in the quest for increasing membership, increasing youth participation, and how to address that our present membership is maturing. These are problems many churches face. We are a religious group that is not gaining in popularity. Maybe it is because we do not get out in the public eye enough and our “dogs don’t bark” loud enough to be heard on the issues needing attention. We need to take a stand and let people know who we are, what our church stands for and that we are an open and reaffirming congregation. We do make a difference. Write those letters to our Congressional representatives and join in the joy of worship on Sunday or Wednesday evening.

Remember take the - R (unning)  
I (nto)  
S (omeone)  
K (ind)

Tom Payne  
Moderator

We are rapidly heading toward the end of the semester as December approaches. The students only have two more weeks of classes and then a week of finals because their winter break. Prayers are needed for the students as they wrap up their classes with lots of tests, papers, and projects.

Because the students leave for their vacations more than a week before Christmas we always decorate the center and put up our Christmas tree in the middle of November. That is one of my favorite times of the year at the center, because our worship space is transformed with colorful lights and a big tree with ornaments made by our students over the years.

Our last worship of the semester is on Sunday, December 11 and it is our Candlelight and Carols service. We sing carols and let students light candles for people they love and situations that are effected them. We will have our usual fellowship time preceding the service with a meal provided by Plymouth, which we greatly appreciate. During this time we will also give students a chance to make an ornament to add to the tree to preserve their time at UCM.

We at UCM thank you for everything you do for us and we hope that you have a wonderful Christmas season!

Amelia Shoptaugh, UCM Associate Campus Minister

## Treasurer’s Report

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

January –Nov. 24	YTD
Operating Income \$	\$134760
Operating Expenses \$	\$146185
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	\$900.00

