



Good News

Plymouth United Church of Christ

December 2008

Published monthly by
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Christmas Fund

Our joy at Christmas is a response to God's promise of new life through the birth of Jesus. It is a joy we are called to share widely, through our witness and gifts, both to loved ones and to distant neighbors. The Christmas Fund Offering (formerly Veterans of the Cross), one of four Special Mission Offerings of the United Church of Christ, is an important way of sharing our joy at God's renewing and life-giving grace. Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care. The Christmas Fund offering will be collected in worship on Sunday, December 21. Please use the special offering envelope included in a mailing you will receive earlier that week.



*Sunday,
December 21
during worship*

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The newsletter is going green!

To be better stewards of our resources, and save on postage and also on paper, we wish to deliver the newsletter electronically to as many people as possible. We are posting our newsletter, including calendar, on the church web site. If you do not need a paper copy, please allow us to email it to you (it will come as a .pdf attachment). This will save money spent on postage, printing, and paper, and also save a lot of paper, keeping our planet greener. Please let Mimi know by December 31 if you wish to continue receiving paper copies of the newsletter or would like an electronic version.

GETTING READY FOR CHURCH

December Worship Notes

10:30 a.m. Worship

Communion the first Sunday of the month

December 7

*Second Sunday of Advent,
St. Francis Food Pantry offering,
Stewardship Commitment and
Celebration lunch*

Isaiah 40:1–11, Psalm 85:1–2, 8–13,
2 Peter 3:8–15a, Mark 1:1–8

December 14

Third Sunday of Advent

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11, Psalm 126,
1 Thessalonians 5:16–24,
John 1:6–8, 19–28

December 21

*Fourth Sunday of Advent
Christmas Pageant*

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16, Luke 1:47–55,
Romans 16:25–27, Luke 1:26–38

December 24

Christmas Eve

5:00 P.M. Service of Candles and Carols

December 28

1st Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 61:10–62:3, Psalm 148,
Ephesians 3:1–12, Matthew 2:1–12

Lessons and Carols

Wednesday, December 24
5:00 P.M.

*A family-friendly worship service of
praise for the birth of our Savior with
special music, a time for children, and
a beautiful candlelit Silent Night.*



Cross illumination for December
is provided by Jerry Tubbs
in memory of **Lenore Tubbs**

In December, we are praying for these families:

Dick & Rita Gosbin
Gladys Green
Jeff & Lesa Green
Kathryn Hamilton
Bea (John) Hancock
Gordy & Audrey Heimstead
Joyce Holmen
Paul Holmen
Peter Holmen

Be a sponsor!

Sponsor an issue of the newsletter or a weekly bulletin in memory or in honor of someone or in honor of a special event, or even just because! All sponsors will be recognized in the issue. Sponsorship for the bulletin is \$15 and for the newsletter, it's \$50.

Sponsor for the December issue of *Good News* is Dorothy Gilbertson.

Food for Thought

Our Youth are sponsoring a Christmas project for St. Francis Food Pantry. Their project is Christmas Bags. Just like we have been doing birthday bags, they would like to do Christmas Bags for the children of families at St. Francis Food Pantry. They need your help in donating items or money to buy the items. The items needed are: children's mittens or gloves, hard candy (*not chocolate*), little stuffed animals, card games, cards or small travel games and also Christmas bags. Please bring your donations in by December 14.

St. Francis Food Pantry can still use money and basic food items, grocery bags (plastic and paper), motel-size soaps, lotions, shampoos and body wash, and jars with lids (pint or quart size—washed and cleaned of course). We will continue to take our special offering for them on the first Sunday of the month.

December Birthdays

2	Parker Beastron
4	Irma Shepler
5	Terri Gilbert
9	Pastor David
14	Sarah Hestekin
15	Isa Small
19	Bill Knight
21	Becca Cooke
22	Cathy Stygar
28	Rianna Voss
31	Lorena Berge

From our Conference Minister, Rev. David Moyer

Rev. Moyer recently sent us a letter thanking us for our OCWM and other giving. Part of his letter included the following:

We all know that economic times are very hard right now, with the US stock market very vulnerable and the whole global economy reeling. The impact is especially felt on "Main Street," as our politicians like to tell us, and we know that it is also felt on "Church Street."

In the midst of these difficult times, you, the people in the churches of the Northwest Association and the entire Wisconsin Conference have remained remarkably faithful to your mission giving beyond the local church. OCWM giving is very much in line with past years, which means you are continuing to support your congregation as well as the wider settings of ministry that we share. You have also supported special offerings and appeals, and these are especially important, since at times like these we need to be even more supportive of one another and of those who are in need.

Bless your hearts, for your giving comes from the heart!

In 2008, you have given the following amounts to special offerings, all of which are above and beyond your pledge to Plymouth UCC:

St Francis/Souper Bowl	\$2,129
Neighbors in Need	\$318
One Great Hour of Sharing	\$665
Strengthen the Church	\$281
OCWM	\$2,385
Memorials	\$8,720
Christmas Fund (2007)	\$298

**We
are
5
for
5!**

PASTOR'S PEN



My friends of Plymouth,

We are entering Advent and Christmas and the busy go-go holiday season with all its glitter and tinsel and presents and food and fun. I love this time of year. Christmas carols, cookies, decorated trees, cups of hot chocolate while wrapped up in a blanket reading a book or watching a movie, meals with family, present opening, and of course the birth of our Savior. But there's a side of the holidays that doesn't make it to TV—the children whose families can't afford presents; children with a parent in prison or overseas in the military; those who have no food to make a feast and no warm home to serve it in; those who live with the threat of war on the birthday of the Prince of Peace. Some of those people live in Eau Claire and some are in our pews.

The USDA just released a report on food insecurity in the United States. It shows that about 691,000 children went hungry in 2007, more than 50 percent more than in 2006. Close to one in eight Americans struggled to feed themselves adequately. Over 12 percent of Americans don't have the money or assistance to get enough food to maintain active, healthy lives. The number of adults and children who have gone hungry has risen over 40 percent since 2000.

This is a good time of year to remember those with less. And it's a good time of year to take some action about it. My family has decided not to exchange gifts this year, because we already have more than we need. Instead, I will give what I would have spent to St. Francis Food

Pantry and other causes. One preacher at the Preaching Conference I attended in May talked about how his church asked its members to make donations equal to what they spent on Christmas gifts. They raised thousands of dollars to help the needy. You might consider the meaningfulness of giving hand-made gifts. There is a movement that started a few years ago called Advent Conspiracy, which calls people to move away from a debt-laden consumption-based Christmas, and into one that worships Christ more meaningfully by giving relationally to friends and family and loving all by giving to those most in need. My facebook page has a link. It's a faithful way to look at Christmas; not as a time to recklessly add debt and try to consume our way to happiness, but to slow down, enjoy life, appreciate what we already have, and focus on Jesus, who is, after all, the reason for the season.

I wish you all a safe, stress-free, enjoyable, and above all, a holy and blessed Christmas!

Blessings,

Advent Conspiracy:

<http://www.adventconspiracy.org/>

USDA report:

<http://ers.usda.gov/Publications/ERR66/ERR66.pdf>

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

November 10, 2008

Members present: Jim Welk, Rob Jaenke, Larry Kleist, Barb Kleist, Louise Partlow, Mel Rude, Nancy Wendt, Gene Peissig, Char Kozlowski, and Pastor David. Larry called the meeting to order. Gene opened the meeting with a prayer.

The October Council minutes and Special Congregational Meeting minutes were reviewed and approved.

Financial Reports:

As of October 31, 2008

Year to Date Income	\$89,894.05
Year to Date Expenses	\$96,261.71
Ahead (Behind)	(\$6,367.66)
Building Fund Balance	\$30,701.62
Memorial Fund Balance	\$4,355.16

Financial Secretary Report/ Treasurer:

Income this month was \$5856.55 expenses were \$11351.84 leaving us with an October loss of \$5495.29 and a check book balance of -\$5652.17. Major expenses this month were a pension payment, health insurance payment. \$6500 of the Reserve Fund was transferred into the General Fund, along with a donation from the Women of Plymouth of \$3000.00.

Memorial Fund Report:

The balance for the end of the month is \$4355.16.

Building Fund Report:

The Building Fund balance as of October 31 is \$30,701.62

Financial reports were reviewed and accepted.

Christian Education Commission:

The Halloween party was a success. The Sunday School children will have a special table at the Bazaar with handmade items for sale. On Stewardship Sunday they will be pledging talents and learning about the stewardship concept. The Christmas Pageant will be on Sunday, December 21.

Stewardship Commission:

The Stewardship Campaign will include three mailings. Pastor David has come up with a narrative on how the budget money is spent. Dedication Sunday will be December 7, with a dinner following the service. They discussed the 2009 budget. The official kick off of the "Nut" program will be at the Bazaar on November 15.

Worship Commission:

Dec 6 will be the decorating day for Advent and Christmas. Laity Sunday was great, especially with the Gospellers there. The pot luck was a success and we had lots of food.

Service Commission:

No report.

Building and Grounds:

Eau Claire Installation is set to start the repair work after Thanksgiving. Ron is getting bids for snow removal. Mel replaced the breaker for the kitchen outlets. Jim is working on the electric eye outside.



*Minutes continued
on page 6 ...*

*Council Minutes
continued ...*

Women of Plymouth:

The election bake sale was a success. They made over \$500 on it. Twenty-two people attended the play, "The Church Basement Ladies." The Bazaar is November 15.

Pastor's Report

Pastor David made 50 visits in October. We are trying to get the website listed in the newspaper ad, but that hasn't happened yet. The blowers in the Sanctuary are now programmed to turn off at 10:30, so the breeze should stop now during worship time. A projector, microphones, microphone stands and music stands have been purchased. Money was in the Memorial Fund. Pastor David is updating the website weekly. It has the schedule to the end of the year on it, the current newsletter and a calendar. The visitors to our website have been slowly increasing. Thanksgiving Eve service is at First Congregational and Pastor David will be preaching. The Ecumenical worship service for the Week of Prayer for Christian Unity is January 19 at Lake Street United Methodist Church. Pastor David is also preaching then.

Nominating Committee Report

The slate is full for next year, except for Moderator Elect. Nancy asked for suggestions to fill this spot.

Old Business:

- We will be serving at the Community Table on Saturday, November 29. The Mission Committee is coordinating.
- Last month Jerry Foote talked to us about the Listening Sessions. There was some discussion as to the time it will take these people and the type of

people we would need on this committee. We will make a decision on this during the December meeting.

New Business:

- The Personnel Committee needs to meet for reviews. The committee this year will be Larry, Nancy and Rob. Larry brought up the issue of raises. The issue isn't whether the raises are deserved; it is whether, due to our economic situation, we can afford to give the raises.

Gene closed with devotions. Meeting adjourned 8:15 P.M.

Respectfully Submitted, Barb Kleist