



Good News

Plymouth United Church of Christ

December 2013

Published monthly by

Plymouth UCC
2010 Moholt Drive
Eau Claire WI 54703
Phone: 715-835-5475
Web: pcucc.com

 PlymouthUnitedChurchOfChrist

Ministers: All the people

Pastor: Rev. David Huber
david@pcucc.com

Church Secretary/Editor:
Mimi Pederson
mimi@pcucc.com

Publication of this newsletter is sponsored by an anonymous benefactor.

Cross Illumination for December is sponsored by John & Sandy Moore in honor of their 46th wedding anniversary.

INSIDE

Birthdays.	Page 6
Calendar.	Page 7
Council Minutes.	Page 5
Pastor's Pen.	Page 4
Worship Notes.	Page 2

Candlelight Family Service of Lessons and Carols Tuesday, December 24 5:00 P.M.

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



GETTING READY FOR CHURCH

10:30 A.M. Worship

Communion the first Sunday of the month

December Worship Notes

December 1

First Sunday of Advent

St. Francis Food Pantry offering

Isaiah 2:1–5; Psalm 122;

romans 13:11–14; Matthew 24:36–44

December 8

Second Sunday of Advent

Prayers for the People

Isaiah 11:1–10; Psalm 72:1–7, 18–19;

Romans 15:4–13; Matthew 3:1–12

December 15

Third Sunday of Advent

OCWM offering

Isaiah 35:1–10; Psalm 146:5–11;

James 5:7–10; Matthew 11:2–11

December 22

Fourth Sunday of Advent

Christmas Fund offering

Isaiah 7:10–16; Psalm 80:1–7, 17–19;

Romans 1:1–7; Matthew 1:18–25

December 24

Candlelight Family Service of

Lessons and Carols at 5:00 P.M.

December 29

1st Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 63: 7–9; Psalm 148;

Hebrews 2:10–18; Matthew 2:13–23

In December, we are praying for these individuals/families: Gladys Green, Jeff & Lesa Green, Kathryn Hamilton (Allen Nall), Bea (John) Hancock, Harlan & Charlene Hartwich, Gordy & Audrey Heimstead, Joyce Holmen

Christmas Fund

For 110 years, the Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a means by which we, as members of the United Church of Christ, bring hope to those who have so faithfully and selflessly served. Your generous giving enabled the Church to provide \$1,536,460 in assistance and “thank you” gifts to nearly 1,600 clergy and lay employees and their families. Please consider supporting the Christmas Fund Offering again this year. Watch for a mailing with a special envelope to make your gift. We will receive that offering on December 22.

Food for Thought

There will be a pot luck on December 15. We will celebrate **Christmas!** Bring a special Christmas dish and let the family of Plymouth all gather to celebrate.

Also on that Sunday we will have a **Cookie Exchange.** Bring in a batch of cookies and take some different kinds home with you. Bring your own containers along to put your cookies in. We will have bags available for your use.



December Birthdays

- 4 Irma Shepler
- 5 Terri Gilbert
- 9 Aaron Adams
Pastor David
- 14 Sarah Hestekin Thearin
- 15 Isa Small
- 22 Cathy Stygar
- 31 Lorena Berge

Thanks!

Thank you to the congregation of Plymouth church for sending us to Moon Beach Camp. We made new friends and had new experiences. This year most of the normal Moon Beach staff and counselors were not available so we had help from Pilgrim Center counselors. They introduced new games and songs to the camp. Morgan's staff was from Australia. We swam, boated, hiked, and played other games. We also just caught up with old friends. Once again, thank you for your help to send us to Moon Beach.

Carter Jaenke and Morgan Jaenke

Bingo Night!

The Chippewa Valley LGBT group is holding another Bingo night at Plymouth on December 11, from 6–8 P.M., with food, drinks, and many prizes such as gas cards, gift cards and electronics! \$4 per card, or \$10 for three of them.

Hanging of the Greens



The Worship Commission invites you to help decorate for Advent and Christmas. This year we will decorate on Saturday, December 7, starting around 10 A.M. Lunch will be served. Please join us!

Note from a friend ...

Dear Council,

What a neat surprise I got when I came to church last Sunday. The meeting I thought I was going to attend after church was to talk about Jerry's memorial. Instead it was a party for "me." It was so nice—sad in a lot of ways—but a joyful occasion. The cake was delicious. I thank you from the bottom of my heart.

Plymouth Church has meant a lot to me in the last 64 years and I am sad to leave it, but I know my move to Minneapolis is for the best.

Thanks so much!

Joanne Lowry
3663 Park Center Blvd. Apt. 1305
St. Louis Park MN 55416
952-456-6468



Dear Friends and Family of Plymouth,

I just read an article in Christianity Today called “The State of the Church In America: Hint: It’s Not Dying.” It has encouraging news! You may have seen that church membership has been declining in the US for over 50 years. It has, but there is more to that story. The author, Ed Stetzer, divides the Church in the US into three roughly equal groups. First are the Cultural Christians who self-identify as Christians but have no church and little or no active faith life. Second are the Congregational Christians who are church members but participate infrequently and have little active faith life. The third group he calls the Convictional Christians, who are (in his words) “actually living according to their faith.”

Stetzer quotes research showing that the last group has remained stable since 1972, and that church membership losses are mostly from the first two. No longer feeling any societal pressure to be churchy, he says, “They feel comfortable freeing themselves from a label that was not true of them in the first place.” Churches have declined, yes, but there has been no decline in those who are faithful and active.

He continues: “Christianity may be losing its top-down political and cultural influence, but Jesus ... taught that God’s kingdom was subversive and underground. He used examples like yeast, which changes things from the inside, and mustard seeds, which are small and must be planted in order to grow up and out. ... [W]e will have to set aside any nominal belief systems and become active agents of God’s Kingdom.”

His words resonate with what I’ve read. Poll after poll shows that

Millennials and Gen Xers (atheists, too) want churches doing community mission. They want us to be “out there” living Jesus’ command to love our neighbors, take care of the poor, and accept people regardless of their clothes, financial or marital status, education, sexuality, race, and so on. Their hypocrisy meter is very sensitive.

This is another reason why doing ministry outside our walls is so important, such as our street and quilting ministries, our Open and Affirming status, and our gifts to St. Francis Food Pantry. We do them because Jesus calls us to do them, but they are also signs to our neighbors that we are the Convictional Christians who follow Jesus as “active agents of God’s Kingdom.” They will join that.

But as I have said here and in sermons, they can’t join if they don’t know we’re here, and they are not compelled to look for us. They need to be told. So this month’s evangelism tip is: talk about your church to the people around you. Tell what Plymouth is doing. Invite them to a fellowship activity. Invite them to Thanksgiving Eve or Christmas Eve or Sunday worship. Invite them in person, or by sharing our Facebook events, or whatever. But invite them. You can use the words from our website that summarize who we are: “Jesus said to feed the hungry... so we feed the hungry. Jesus said to welcome all my people... so we welcome all people.”

Plymouth has what a lot of people are seeking but don’t know where to find it. Help them find it.

Have a very blessed Advent and a merry Christmas season,

EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

November 11, 2013

Members present: Kay Stecher, Larry Kleist, Barb Kleist, Louise Partlow, Deb Zehms, Mike Henry, Rob Jaenke, and Pastor David

Barb called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The October minutes were read and approved.

Financial Reports:

As of October 31, 2013

Year to Date Income	\$90,268.68
Year to Date Expenses	\$89,740.66
Ahead (Behind)	\$528.02

Treasurer's Report:

Income for October was \$9,487.65; expenses were \$9,029.44 for a gain of \$458.21. Bank balance on October 31, 2013 was \$81.06.

Reserve Fund Report:

The balance is \$1,496.66.

Memorial Fund Report:

The balance is \$2,350.91.

Street Ministry:

The balance is \$236.00.

Financial reports were reviewed and accepted.

Building and Grounds:

Lights have been repaired and replaced in the kitchen and closets. Thanks to Jim Welk for all of the extra work he does. Council was in approval mode. They approved all Jim's work, Rob's, Lynn's, and Mimi's and everyone who works to make Plymouth work.

Christian Education Commission:

Our "Halloween Hi-Jinx" party on October 27 was a great success! Twenty-one people attended. Thanks to all who helped prepare food and goodies! The Confirmation Class continues to study and prepare. They are also busy making items for the Bazaar on November 23. The Adult Education group continues an interesting discussion of "Women in the Bible." All are welcome! There will be no Christian Education classes on December 1 (Thanksgiving weekend).

Stewardship Commission:

Discussed Rob's reports. Fancy Nut campaign should make approximately \$1,000. Always a good and pretty easy project. 2013 campaign will be different this year. Info will be received in the mail. Pledge cards to be turned in November 24. Also discussed 2014 budget and Annual Meeting.

Worship Commission:

We celebrated November communion and All Saints' Day with roses and bell for saints from 2013. Plymouth will host Thanksgiving Eve service at 7:00 P.M. We will serve bars and coffee after service. Decorating or "Hanging of the Greens" will be done December 7 at 10:00 A.M. Lunch will be served.

Service Commission:

Visits are ongoing. Remember to fill out visitation cards—even for phone visits. Thank you!



Continued on page 6

Council *continued*

Women of Plymouth:

Met at 9:30 on November 10 to discuss the Bazaar and finalize plans.

Pastor's Report:

Pastor David has updated our web site and is working hard on evangelism.

OLD BUSINESS:

- Evangelism: Deb, Pastor David, and Mike are still working on ideas for this
- Property Use Policies: Council will review and see if changes need to be made

NEW BUSINESS:

- Nominating Committee: Deb and the Council will be working on this
- Rob will prepare the budget for 2014. It will be approximately the same as 2013

The next meeting is December 9.

The meeting adjourned at 8:30 P.M.

Respectfully submitted,
Louise Partlow

Great time to get SCRIP cards!

As you probably know, SCRIP cards are available for Mega, Gordy's, and Kwik Trip. It is a painless, cost-free fundraiser for our church. Right now we make a 10% profit on Kwik Trip cards, a 5% profit at Mega grocery, and a 10% profit at Mega Holiday convenience stores, and a 5% profit on Gordy's cards. Through November 17, 2013 we have made \$1,650 in profits.



The following is a list of items that are needed by the church. Next time you are in the grocery store and see these items, pick one up and donate it! This is one way to help out with the church budget!

1. Toilet paper
2. Paper towels
3. Garbage Bags-XL

Here is another way to help: Instead of donating these items, buy a SCRIP Card from Mega Foods and then someone can buy the items as needed. The church will get the items needed plus make a little money on it!



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<h1>December 2013</h1>						
1 St Francis Food Pantry offering 10:30 A.M. Communion Worship	2	3 10:00 A.M. Quilters	4	5	6	7 Christmas Decorating 10:00 A.M.
8 Prayers for the People 9:15 A.M. Sun Sch & Adult Study 9:30 A.M. Stewardship Commission 10:30 A.M. Worship	9 7:00 P.M. Executive Council	10 10:00 A.M. Quilters	11 6:00 P.M. Bingo	12	13	14
15 OCWM offering 9:15 A.M. Sun Sch & Adult Study 10:30 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Pot luck and Cookie Exchange	16 7:00 P.M. Christian Education Comm.	17 10:00 A.M. Quilters	18	19	20	21
22 Christmas Fund offering 9:15 A.M. Sun Sch & Adult Study 10:30 A.M. Worship	23	24	25 Christmas Eve Candlelight Lessons and Carols 5:00 P.M.	26 OFFICE CLOSED	27	28
29 9:15 A.M. Sun Sch & Adult Study 10:30 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Worship Commission	30	31				