



# Good News

Plymouth United Church of Christ

December 2014

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PlymouthUnitedChurchOfChrist

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## Candlelight Family Service of 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 and a beautiful  
candlelit Silent Night.*



*Christmas Eve*

# GETTING READY FOR CHURCH

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## December Worship Notes

### 10:30 A.M. Worship

*Communion the first Sunday of the month*

#### December 7

*2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*St. Francis Food Pantry offering*

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

#### December 14

*3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*Prayers for the People*

*Stewardship Sunday*

Isaiah 61:1–4, 8–11; Psalm 126 or Luke  
1:47–55; 1 Thessalonians 5:16–24;  
John 1:6–8, 19–28

#### December 21

*4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Advent*

*OCWM & Christmas Fund offering*

2 Samuel 7:1–11, 16; Luke 1:47–55 or  
Psalm 89:1–4, 19–26; Romans  
16:25–27; Luke 1 26–38

#### December 21

*Blue Christmas Service of Healing and  
Wholeness at 6:00 P.M.*

#### December 24

*Christmas Eve*

Candlelight Family Service of  
Lessons and Carols at 5:00 P.M.

#### December 28

*1<sup>st</sup> Sunday after Christmas*

Isaiah 61:10–62:3; Psalm 148; Galatians  
4:4–7; Luke 2:22–40

**In November, we are praying for these individuals/families:** Joyce Holmen, Paul Holmen, Peter Holmen, Sadie (Jacob) Hulke, Judy Insteness, Nicole (Sonny) Ivkovich, Rob & Linda Jaenke

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## Food for Thought

We will gather our St Francis Food Pantry offering on December 7. There will be a pot luck, Sunday, December 14 to celebrate the dedication of our Stewardship pledges and the Christmas season. Bring your favorite dish to pass.

Please don't forget the Plymouth Street Ministry. Winter is here and those nights are very cold out there. Hats, gloves, mittens and hand warmers are needed. Also large size hooded sweatshirts and winter jackets. Please contact Mike Henry if you would like to help. As always there is a need for water, food and gas cards!

## Blue Christmas

December 21 is the longest night of the year. On this night, we remember those for whom the holidays are not joyful; they are lonely, in mourning, feeling alienated and cast apart from family celebrations; they are experiencing depression and sadness and yet are often compelled to “put on a happy face” for others, denying their true feelings.

Our service of care will be held at 6:00 P.M. on December 21, and we welcome all who are in need of healing and hope in their time of loss.

## December Birthdays

4	Irma Shepler
5	Terri Gilbert
9	Aaron Adams Pastor David
14	Sarah Hestekin Thearin
22	Cathy Stygar

## 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 21.

## Be a sponsor!

Sponsor an issue of the newsletter, a weekly bulletin, or the illumination of the cross on the front of our building in memory or in honor of someone or in honor of a special event, or even just because! Bulletin and newsletter sponsors will be recognized in the issue they sponsor. Cross sponsors will be listed in all publications for the month of sponsorship. Support a bulletin for \$15, a newsletter for \$50, or illuminate the cross for \$50. Sign-up sheets are on the table outside the sanctuary.

## SCRIP card process changing for Kwik Trip

Right now, SCRIP cards are available for Mega, Mega Holiday, Gordy’s, and Kwik Trip. It is a painless, cost-free fundraiser for our church. Here is how it works: On Sunday, you buy Scrip cards for \$50, and/or \$100. You pay with cash or check made out to Plymouth. We are able to keep 5% of the money that is paid for Mega and Gordy’s cards, and 10% of what we get for Mega Holiday and Kwik Trip cards! So far in 2014, we have made a total profit of over \$1,879.00!

Beginning January 1, 2015, Kwik Trip will reduce the percentage of our rebate to 5% for gas. However, we will receive an additional 10% rebate for anything purchased in-store with the exception of cigarettes, gift cards, lottery/lotto, and stamps. That means merchandise purchased in-store will net us 15% discount!

## Hanging of the Greens



The Worship Commission invites you to help decorate for Advent and Christmas. This year we will decorate on Saturday, December 6, starting around 9 A.M. Please come and join us. It is a fun day. A delicious home made soup lunch will be served when we are done.

## PASTOR'S PEN

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Dear friends and family of Plymouth,

Good things are happening at Plymouth! We've focused a lot on being invitational, and it is showing fruit. We've had more visitors this year, many of whom have been connected the life of our congregation.

When we share and invest in others' lives, amazing things happen. That's what the church is about. Changing lives. Letting people know that there is a God who loves them unconditionally. That we can hope in the face of a world that seems hopeless and dangerous. That we can live with one another in a community of peace, love, and dignity, despite our differences.

We opened our doors to the high schools' Gender Sexuality Awareness groups so that they could hold a Halloween party. One boy shared his story that as he and his mom pulled into the parking lot they weren't sure if they were at the right place, but they saw the rainbow flag hanging in my office window and knew they were at least in a safe place. That's Christian hospitality.

I challenged you to invite someone to our Halloween party, and you met the challenge. We had over 40 people! All because you extended an invitation.

One of our members working the election bake sale was asked by some people about Plymouth, so she told them about us, gave them a tour, and—this is important!—she invited them to join us for worship. Two of them did! Simply because they had been invited.

I'm happy to see you welcoming people in, and inviting our visitors to share in our fellowship through our street ministry, the bazaar, bake sale, etc. There is great power in invitation and in sharing.

We have had some guest musicians, people I have met through networking then invited to share. On Dec. 7 we will have Steve Carlson who has written some moving songs about following Jesus, caring for the poor, and living simply.

In December, we will invite the community to a worship service called "Blue Christmas" on December 21 at 6 P.M. It is a service of healing and hope for those who are mourning the loss of loved ones during the holiday season, where such loss can be more keenly felt. Another opportunity to open our doors. If you know anyone for whom this service will be helpful, please invite them.

Invite someone to Christmas Eve worship.

As we think of gifts in this Christmas season, consider how you can offer the gift of an invitation into God's love, hope, peace, and joy.

Blessings,



# EXECUTIVE COUNCIL MINUTES

November 10, 2014

Members present: Pastor David, Barb Kleist, Larry Kleist, Rob Jaenke, Deb Zehms, Jim Welk, and Louise Partlow

Deb called the meeting to order at 7:00 P.M. The October Council minutes were reviewed and approved.

## Treasurer's Report:

Income for October was \$15,324.20. Total expenses for the month were \$15,286.53, leaving us with an October gain of \$37.67. Funds were transferred from other accounts and the Reserve Fund.

**Reserve Fund Balance:** \$506.82

**Memorial Fund Balance:** \$9,074.03

**Street Ministry Balance:** \$445.36

Financial reports were reviewed and accepted.

## Building and Grounds:

Snow plowing is being done. Jim, Larry, Keith and others are keeping the sidewalks cleaned. Larry will ask the snow plow driver to relocate the snow pile away from the side garage door so that we don't get water in the garage when the snow melts.

## Christian Education Commission:

The Halloween party was a lot of fun. We had about 40 people attend. Some brought their friends. The Youth will help serve and clean up at the Holiday Bazaar.

## Stewardship Commission:

Time for new campaign for 2015. Busy with nut sales and bazaar.

## Worship Commission:

Thanksgiving Eve service at First Congregational this year. Hanging of the Greens/Christmas decorating will be Saturday, December 6 starting around 9:00 A.M. Lunch will be provided and everyone is invited.

## Service Commission:

Pastor David and others are making regular visits. Remember to fill out visitation cards—even for phone visits. Thank you!

## Women of Plymouth:

WOP had a meeting on October 15 to talk about the bazaar. We brought sack lunches and made greeting cards.

## Pastor's Report:

More visitors are coming in. Pastor David is happy new people are being invited to our work day for WOP. He and Mike Henry have been invited to the Lutheran Synod Youth Event at Metropolis and the local Kiwanis meeting to speak about Plymouth Street Ministry. Pastor David has also been invited to lead worship at the Wisconsin Farmers Union annual meeting in January.

## OLD BUSINESS:

- We discussed a larger ad for Christmas Eve. Will check on prices and probably do this.

Next meeting of the Council will be Monday, December 8. Meeting adjourned.

Respectfully Submitted  
Louise Partlow



## Street Ministry Journal November 14, 2014

*Excerpts from an entry written by George Stecher. The complete journal is available on the church Facebook page.*

I hadn't been out with the Street Ministry since late March because of my wife's illness and passing, so as I drove to the municipal parking lot across from the shelter I wondered what had changed in nearly eight months, and what was the same. To be honest, ... a day or to ago I had debated whether to go at all—perhaps, I thought, I should wait a few weeks longer. Everything fell into place in my schedule, however ... and I realized that I missed helping on Street Ministry nights and that it would do me good to go.

When I arrived a little after 5:30 P.M. Mike was already parked in the lot with the van, and Jens was also there ... Soon Cindy arrived and brought some very nice home-sewn mittens and other winter accessories. A bit later Katy from St. James Trinity Lutheran Church in Fall Creek pulled into the parking lot, bringing four bags of winter clothing...

We handed out the usual water bottles, small bags of food (this time containing a cereal bar, a juice pouch, some candy, and a bag of popcorn), and hand warmers, as well as gloves, hats, and scarves for those in need of them.

Alisa and Tom from Altoona United Methodist stopped by and dropped off more supplies. We distributed a few coats, hooded sweatshirts, and warm socks, although we were out of the larger sizes of coats and sweatshirts (2XL and 3XL) that many of the homeless prefer because they dress in many layers. Around seven the shelter was letting people inside, and our stream of visitors disappeared. We packed up the van and Mike, Jens, and I walked to the Acoustic Cafe. We each had a bowl of warm soup and discussed the day's events. Mike filled me in on the status of many of our regular visitors during my absence.

I'm glad I went out tonight. My months of absence from the ministry and our conversation in the cafe helped me to see that we were making a difference. I've long known that helping out with the street ministry has helped me to grow spiritually. I've also known that we make a lot of people's daily lives a little better with small things—a pair of gloves, a bottle of water, a ride, or by simply listening to their stories without judging them, criticizing them, or proselytizing them. Sometimes it's hard to see the long-term effects, but my long absence allowed me to see that we were helping people long-term...

It's been a rough summer for me. I lost my dear wife to cancer, but I learned the value of friends and support ... My wish is that everyone experiencing difficulties would have the support I had, and still have. Plymouth Street Ministry is trying, in a small way, to make that happen.

Please pray for, and care for, the poor.

George

PS If you would like to help out Plymouth Street Ministry, you can come out with us on Tuesdays or Fridays. Contact Mike for details. You can also help us with our material needs. Right now we especially need 2XL and larger winter coats and hooded sweatshirts, a pair of men's size 11 winter boots, a pair of men's size 9-1/2 winter boots, a pair of women's size 7 winter boots, bus tokens, gas cards for the van (we always need gas cards), ski-type gloves, and warm winter hats. Used items should be clean and in good condition.

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<h1>December 2014</h1> 						
	1	2 10:00 A.M. Quilters	3	4	5	6 9:00 A.M. Hanging of the Greens
<b>7 St Francis Food Pantry offering</b>  10:30 A.M. Communion Worship	8  7:00 P.M. Executive Council	9  10:00 A.M. Quilters	10	11	12	13
<b>14 Prayers for the People Stewardship Sunday</b>  10:30 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Pot luck	15	16  10:00 A.M. Quilters	17	18	19	20
<b>21 OCWM offering Christmas Fund offering</b>  10:30 A.M. Worship  6:00 P.M. Blue Christmas service	22	23  10:00 A.M. Quilters	24  5:00 P.M. Christmas Eve Worship	25  OFFICE	26  CLOSED	27
<b>28</b> 10:30 A.M. Worship 11:30 A.M. Worship Commission	29	30	31			