

Christmas Offering Directed Toward Helping Families in Crisis

The Christmas season is a time of observing time-honored traditions. At Plymouth Church, one of our cherished Christmas traditions is sharing our material blessings with our neighbors in need by directing our entire Christmas Offering to helping agencies in Des Moines.

This year, the Board of Benevolences has chosen to direct the 2011 Christmas Offering toward helping families that are in crisis. Our goal is to help families that are in real need right now as the result of an unforeseen setback. To this end, the Board has selected the following agencies as the recipients of the Christmas Offering at Plymouth Church:

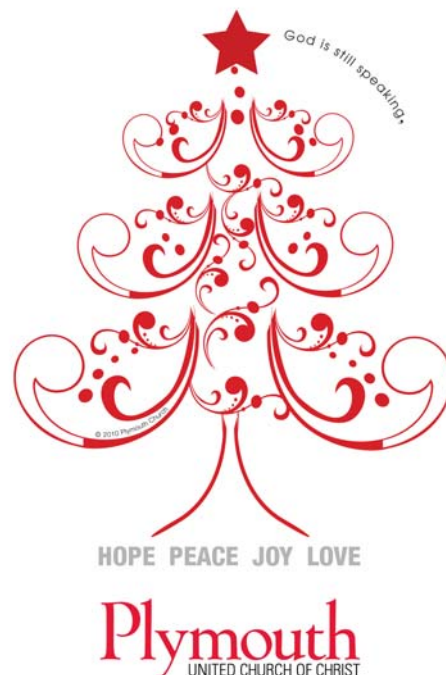
- **Hawthorne Hill's New Directions Shelter:** Hawthorne Hill is a private, non-profit local human service agency that has provided services in Polk County since 1978. The agency provides temporary emergency shelter and services to homeless mothers with children. The shelter provides eight private bedrooms, nutritious meals, laundry facilities and case management services. The mothers are assisted in locating permanent housing and finding employment. In 2010, New Directions helped 120 mothers

and 239 children get through a time of crisis.

- **Planned Parenthood of the Heartland's Sexual Abuse Response Team (SART):** In this program, victims of sexual assault can go to the agency's care center is south Des Moines and be assessed and treated in a safe and comfortable environment, with their family present, if desired. Rather than going to an emergency room, where victims must sometimes wait hours for assistance which can lead to further trauma and loss of

evidence, victims receive timely assistance from a team that is trained to address their specific needs. SART has served more than 1,300 crisis victims since the program started in 1997.

- **Des Moines Area Religious Council (DMARC) Compassion In Action Program:** This program provides financial assistance to families at risk of having their utilities shut off during the cold winter months. Donations to this DMARC program will help needy families in Des Moines stay warm this winter. Last year, DMARC contributed \$27,000 through the Compassion in Action program.



All monetary gifts given in worship on Christmas Eve, in special Christmas Offering envelopes or checks made out to Plymouth with *Christmas Offering* on the memo line will go to the above organizations. The Board of Benevolences asks you to prayerfully consider making a generous contribution to this year's Christmas Offering to serve those in our midst who are most in need.

“We agree to differ. We resolve to love. We unite to serve.”

Come to think of it....



David Ruhe, *Senior Minister*

As I sit down to write this (a day after my deadline!) we're still ten days before Christmas.

This issue of the CONTACT will carry a publication date of December 21. You probably won't get it until the 23rd or 24th. God knows when you'll get around to reading it. If you get the print version, you may just now be rummaging through a mid-January pile of stuff accumulated from whenever Christmas got away from you.

All of this has me thinking about time and how we perceive it. When I was a child, the last ten days before Christmas seemed to take FOREVER. Nowadays it feels to me as though I am living in a temporal accelerator. Everything going back to Labor Day is a blur. I expect my next deep breath to happen around Ground Hog Day.

A lot of this has to do with the illusion of being in control. When we're kids and Christmas is just something that comes; when presents magically appear beneath the tree; when somebody calls us to come to the dinner table; when gifts are just things we unwrap; when, essentially, it feels as though somebody else is in charge of our happiness... then the anticipation of Christmas can be almost overwhelming. We can't wait. Time goes so slowly that each moment takes forever, and each moment is fraught with the possibility of something beautiful. We are about to receive a gift!

But when we think we're in control of our lives, Christmas seems different. Then Christmas presents have to be thought of, bought or made and dutifully wrapped; meals have to be planned, food procured and cooking accomplished, tables set and decorated

within a specific narrow window of time; then gifts require a lot of thought and occupy in our imagination both delight and obligation and everywhere in between. Then there are never enough hours in the day. And the last ten days before Christmas are an endless checklist and a frantic countdown and a featureless blur. Time goes so quickly that the moments themselves are lost. We wake up weeks later and wonder if it all happened.

The Apostle Paul wrote that, "When I was a child I spoke like a child, I thought like a child, I reasoned like a child; when I became an adult, I put an end to childish ways." We all nod sagely when we hear this at weddings. Life is all about growing up and accepting responsibility and making commitments as an adult. But Jesus said, "Whoever does not receive the Realm of God like a child shall not enter it." I can't help but think that Christmas is the celebration of God becoming a child: inhabiting each moment in a way that makes it holy... not something to blow through on the way to something else, but fully infused with God's presence and the gift of life. We *are* about to receive a gift!

It's only when we realize that we're not in control that we're prepared to experience each moment of life as the gift that it is. To pervert the Home Depot slogan: Less doing... more being. I'm trying not merely to add that to my list, but to take it to heart. Merry Christmas... whenever you're reading this.

See you in church,

David Ruhe

DISCOVER PLYMOUTH CHURCH!

Are you new to Plymouth? Interested in membership? Or do you just want to learn more about Plymouth Church? Join us for Discover Plymouth on **Sundays January 22 and 29**, from **1-4 p.m.** in Waveland Hall. Come learn more about the congregation, meet some of the staff and get acquainted with other newcomers in a relaxed and casual atmosphere. Free childcare will be provided and all are welcome. To sign up, or if you have more questions, contact Matt Mardis-LeCroy 515.255.314 x28.

BOOK OF LIFE

As of 12/12/11

BAPTISMS:

Ella Julianna Gilbert, 12/11/11, daughter of Olena and Ryan Gilbert,

Sofia Marie Gilbert, 12/11/11, daughter of Olena and Ryan Gilbert

Julian Marlo Hermann, 12/11/11, son of Angela and Steven Hermann

DEATH:

Pat Doyle, 12/11/11, a Plymouth member since 1990. Our love and prayers to her family.

CONDOLENCES TO:

Marta Hawkins, Karen Doyle and Daniel Doyle and their families whose mother and grandmother died 12/11/11.

Glen Angelino whose father, John Angelino died recently.

Your church home

Babysitting Exchange Spring 2012 Session Enrollment

How it Works: You must be able to babysit on only ONE of the Saturday evenings listed below. The other three dates you may use the program to drop off your kids and go out. You do not have to use all the evenings or all of the time. Your children will be involved in age-appropriate groups while they play, make a craft, have a snack, and watch a short movie. There is a nominal \$5 participation fee.

Who Can Participate: ONE- and TWO-parent families with children ages newborn – 12 (6th grade). We welcome Plymouth members, regular visitors and friends, and Plymouth Nursery School families.

Dates/Time: Saturdays from 6 to 9 p.m.: Feb. 4, March 3, April 14, May 5

Open Enrollment Period: Dec. 18 to Jan. 14, or until slots are filled.

To Enroll/Questions? Contact Dani Christensen at zacdani@earthlink.net or 986.4090.



Tristan Orozco Resigns TiM Position

The Reverend Tristan Orozco has resigned his position as an Associate Minister in Plymouth's Transition into Ministry program funded through a grant from the Lilly Endowment. He has been called to serve as an Associate

Minister at Wakonda Christian Church (Disciples of Christ) in Des Moines, a congregation of the denomination in which he is ordained. Tristan's term of service at Plymouth formally concludes on December 31, but he will be using his remaining vacation and personal days so that his final responsibilities will be fulfilled prior to Christmas. In announcing his planned departure to the Plymouth Staff, Tristan said that he was drawn to this opportunity at another church and that he had come to believe that the Transition into Ministry program was not a good fit for him. We wish him well.

Fellowship Treat Sponsors Wanted for 2012

Tired of eating the same old mini muffins, Danish and donuts during Sunday morning fellowship?

Would you like an opportunity to celebrate a special event with your church family?

Please consider providing refreshments for a particular Sunday during the 10 a.m. fellowship time in Waveland Hall. We need approximately 12 - 15 dozen treats after the 9 a.m. service each week. We've traditionally served continental breakfast items such as mini muffins, Danish and donut holes, but would welcome some variety to our fellowship time! Some treats that have been big hits in the past are fruit, cheese, banana bread and bagels with cream cheese. You may wish to join with some friends to sponsor a Sunday. We'll honor each sponsor with a sign recognizing your family or special event and an announcement will be printed in the bulletin.

For more information, please contact Jennifer Hines, Director of Administration, at jhines@plymouthchurch.com or 255.3149.

Coffee Mugs Still Available

Whether you're looking for a last-minute Christmas gift or simply want to start the new year off, we have the perfect solution. Plymouth's new coffee mugs featuring our signature swirl are still available for purchase at \$5 each in the church office. Proceeds benefit the general operating fund.



Calendar

Saturday, December 24, 2011

5:00 PM Christmas Eve Service
5:30 PM AA
7:00 PM Childcare
7:00 PM Christmas Eve Service
8:00 PM Chancel Choir Warm Up
9:00 PM Christmas Eve Service
10:00 PM Matins Warm Up
11:00 PM Christmas Eve Service

Sunday, December 25, 2011

11:00 AM Infant thru 5 years old Childcare
11:00 AM Worship
12:00 PM After Worship Fellowship

Monday, December 26, 2011

8:00 AM Whole Church Closed

Tuesday, December 27, 2011

6:45 AM AMENS
12:00 PM Al-Anon
5:00 PM Shawl Knitting Ministry

Wednesday, December 28, 2011

7:00 AM ROC
12:30 PM Tai Chi Class
6:00 PM AA
7:00 PM Plymouth Bells Rehearsal

Thursday, December 29, 2011

7:00 AM WISE
7:30 PM AA - WOD

Friday, December 30, 2011

9:00 AM Bulletin Collators

Saturday, December 31, 2011

9:00 AM Yoga
5:30 PM AA
5:30 PM Worship (Casual)

Sunday, January 01, 2012

11:00 AM Infant thru 5 years old Childcare
11:00 AM Worship
12:00 PM After Worship Fellowship

Monday, January 02, 2012

8:00 AM Closed Whole Church

Tuesday, January 03, 2012

6:45 AM AMENS
12:00 PM Al-Anon
5:00 PM Shawl Knitting Ministry
5:30 PM Board of Christian Stewardship
7:00 PM Board of Christian Education
7:00 PM Stephen Ministers

Wednesday, January 04, 2012

7:00 AM ROC
9:15 AM Yoga
9:30 AM Adult Bible Study
12:30 PM Tai Chi Class
5:00 PM Cherub Choir Rehearsal
5:00 PM Descant Choir Rehearsal
5:00 PM Glory Choir Rehearsal
5:00 PM Hallelujah! Choir Rehearsal
5:00 PM KinderChoir Rehearsal
5:00 PM Treble Choir Rehearsal
5:45 PM 5th Grade Fellowship
6:00 PM AA
6:00 PM Flute Ensemble Rehearsal
6:00 PM Hand Chime Choir Rehearsal
6:00 PM High School Youth Dinner
6:00 PM Soul Singers Rehearsal
7:00 PM Confirmation Class Theme Night
7:00 PM Matins Rehearsal
7:00 PM Plymouth Bells Rehearsal

Thursday, January 05, 2012

7:00 AM House and Space Committee
7:00 AM WISE
1:00 PM Spiritual Direction Support Group
7:00 PM Chancel Choir Rehearsal
7:00 PM Common Thread
7:30 PM AA - WOD
7:30 PM Young Mom's Group

Friday, January 06, 2012

9:00 AM Bulletin Collators
11:45 AM Men's Lunch Group
7:00 PM Movie Night

Plymouth Youth News

Youth Ski Trip January 28, 2012

Who: 7th-12th grade Plymouth youth, friends and parents
What: Downhill skiing, snowboarding, and tubing
Where: Mt. Kato, Mankato, MN
When: Leave church at 6 a.m., return to church 11 p.m.

Turn in your \$50 NON-REFUNDABLE deposit (Plymouth Church, Attn: Marta Hawkins, 4126 Ingersoll Avenue, Des Moines, IA 50312) by Wednesday, January 4. We will not be able to go unless we have 50 people to fill the bus, so invite your friends and family!

First-time skier? No problem. Lessons are FREE!

Questions? Contact Shana Johnson at 274.6693 or sjohnson@plymouthchurch.com

Christmas and New Year's Day Worship Services



24 Christmas Eve Services – Saturday

5 p.m. – Family Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary.

7 p.m. – Candlelight Service, Waveland Hall with an original story by David Ruhe. Music by the Saturday Night Band.

9 p.m. – Candlelight Service, Sanctuary, with an original story by David Ruhe. Music by Chancel Choir.

11 p.m. – Candlelight Service, Sanctuary, with an original story by David Ruhe. Music by the Matins Choir.

25 Christmas Day – Sunday

11 a.m., Sanctuary – **ONE SERVICE ONLY!**

JANUARY

1 First Sunday after Christmas/New Year's Day

11 a.m., Sanctuary – **ONE SERVICE ONLY!**

Community Outreach

AMOS in 2012

Because of the caucuses on January 3, 2012, AMOS (A Mid-Iowa Organizing Strategy) will conduct its monthly core meeting on Tuesday, January 10 in the Peace Conference Room from 6 - 7 p.m. instead of the first Tuesday of the month. All are welcome to attend this meeting to find out more about AMOS' work for the new year.

Another way to make your voice heard is through lobbying, and AMOS will conduct its annual Lobby Day on Wednesday, February 1, starting with a training session at 9 a.m. at Calvary Baptist Church. Calvary Baptist is located at 606 East 9th Street near the capital. During Lobby Day, we'll ask state legislators to support both mental health care reform and Project Iowa, AMOS' workforce initiative that trains Iowans in jobs that pay a living wage. The Governor has allocated \$100,000 in his budget toward the Project and AMOS Lobby Day efforts are critical for it to stay in the budget! All are welcome to attend both events. For more information about the core meeting or Lobby Day, contact Sue Hoss at suechef_2@yahoo.com, or phone her at 633.0098.

Plymouth Peace Committee Sponsors Prayer Service

The Feast of Holy Innocents prayer service for peace will be held at 7 p.m. on Wednesday, December 28 at Capitol Hill Lutheran Church, 511 Des Moines St. This event is a time to lament the terrible losses of war and pray for peace worldwide.

Plymouth Women

Faithful Readers are ready for 2012!

Here's a list of books we've chosen to keep us warm in the coldest winter days:

- January 26 *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand
- February 23 *Major Pettigrew's Last Stand*
by Helen Simonson
- March 22 *Without Buddha I Could Not Be a*
Christian by Paul Knitter

Faithful Readers meet the fourth Thursday of the month at 7 p.m. in the Inspiration Lounge, and new voices are always welcome. For more information, contact Jean Nelson at 255.5019.

Moms' Monday Evening Book Club

We meet on the fourth Monday of each month at 7:30 p.m. either in the host's home or at a local restaurant. Next selection:

- January *Running Away to Home* by Jennifer Wilson
The author is a Des Moines native and will attend the discussion
- February *Unbroken* by Laura Hillenbrand

For more information, contact Judy Diedrichs at 271.9184.

The Center for Spiritual Growth

W.I.S.E.

(Women In Spiritual Exploration)

Thursdays, 7 a.m. in the Burling Room

Begin your Thursday morning with prayerful meditation creating a peaceful space within, listen and learn from diverse topics presented by the participants and conclude within a smaller intimate group discussion. All in an hour—SIMPLE. We adjourn at 8 a.m. and those that are available meet at La Mie for coffee/tea and continued conversation. Come once a month or come weekly to enjoy the comradery. No commitment, no homework, just deep connection with fun, interesting women engaged in conversations you most likely will not experience anywhere else.

Upcoming topics and presenters are:

Dec. 29 Newgrange, Ireland
Suzan Brooks

Please feel free to contact Marsha Hines at 770.4418 or Donna Paulsen at thedonna.paulsen@gmail.com if you have any questions about WISE.

Plymouth Book Discussion Group Meetings

The Plymouth Book Discussion Group has scheduled discussion of the below-listed books in the Harmony Conference Room of the Center for Spiritual Growth on Sunday at 10:10 a.m.:

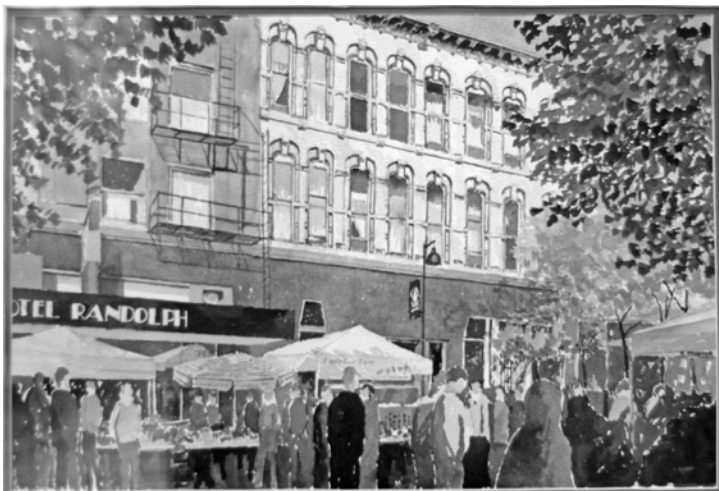
- Jan 8, 2012 *The Immortal Life of Henrietta Lacks*
by Rebecca Skloot.
- Feb 5, 2012 *My Antonia* by Willa Cather.

Please join us for discussion of these books.

Plymouth Has Left the Building: The Gospel of Mark at Smoky Row

Join Matt Mardis-LeCroy on Wednesdays January 11-February 15 from noon to 1 p.m. at Smoky Row Coffee Company, 1910 Cottage Grove, Des Moines, for a fast-paced, interactive study of the oldest record we have of the life of Jesus—the Gospel According to Mark. The class is designed for busy people, and no prior knowledge of the Bible or theology will be expected. Feel free to come late, leave early and grab some lunch while you're there. All are welcome!

Your church home



In the Gallery

November 19, 2011—January 6, 2012

“The Saturday Sketch Club”

A group of “plein air” painters

For more information, please contact Nancy Slotterback at 255.3149 or nslotterback@plymouthchurch.com.



Many Thanks to the Chancel Arts

Committee for the beautiful Advent worship art: Mechile Adams, Ann Conover, Jan Campbell, Bonnie Green, Marlene Ehrhart, Dixie Hoekman, Carole Martin, Barbara Miller (Chair), Jan Parkinson, Jean Stuit, and Jan Wollenhaupt.

Project Memories 2011

A huge thank you to all the members of the congregation who participated in Project Memories 2011. More than 90 Plymouth families helped 253 individuals in 71 families from the Des Moines community. Gifts of clothing, coats, boots and mittens, toys, diapers and other baby supplies, a bed, a washer and dryer and gift cards for food were so generously given. We helped families from Youth Homes, Smouse School, The Welcome Center of Capital View School, and from Polk County Victim Services. We made Christmas much happier for a lot of people.

This project also makes a difference in the lives of you, the people who reach out and help a family with Christmas. Many people look forward to this project, and it has become a part of our Christmas tradition, a way to look beyond our own needs and wants, and reach out to others.

We often get so caught up in the many activities and things that we think we need to do at this time of year that we forget to think about and enjoy the special moments that we are a part of, the times that help us to really feel what Christmas is all about. Take a moment and feel this—it's a good thing, a very good thing.

A Christmas Blessing to you all!!!

Important Tax Reminder

Contributions must be received in the church office or postmarked by December 31 in order to receive contribution credit for the 2011 tax year.

The church financial office will be open until 5 p.m. on Friday, December 30.

If you've already fulfilled your pledge for 2011, pre-paying all or part of your pledge for 2012 is a great way to receive an extra tax deduction.

Flowers for Worship

A sign-up chart for 2012 is in the hallway near Waveland Hall. Please stop by and sign up to provide flowers for Sunday morning worship. If you have questions, notify Nancy Slotterback at 255.3149 or nslotterback@plymouthchurch.com. Thank you for helping with this ministry.

Plymouth

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

4126 Ingersoll Avenue
Des Moines, IA 50312-2713

Phone: 255.3149 --- FAX: 255.8667
Voice Mail: 255.7950
Website:
www.plymouthchurch.com
General E-mail goes to:
plymouth@plymouthchurch.com

Periodical
Postage
Paid
Des Moines, IA

Plymouth

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Program Staff

David Ruhe Senior Minister
Cindy Eaton Eklund Director of Communications
Barbara Godwin Director of Child and Family Ministries
Carl Gravander Organist
Jennifer Hines Director of Administration
Anthony Livolsi Associate Minister
Matt Mardis-LeCroy Executive Associate Minister
Valerie Miller-Coleman Minister of Community Engagement
Tristan Orozco Associate Minister
Sharon Parker-Lenihan Director of Music and Fine Arts
Frank Thomas Coordinator of TiM
Jan Van Wyk Director of Plymouth Nursery School
Susan Waller Director of Youth & Children's Music
Angie Witmer Minister of Small Groups

Support Groups

AA: Monday nights, 7:30 p.m. at Plymouth Place, Dave Creighton, 240.6667
AL-ANON: Church Office, 255.3149
GLBT: (Gay Lesbian Bisexual Transgendered) Ron Sallade, 249.5627 or www.plymouthglbt.com
LADOS: (Life After Death of Spouse) DMARC, 277.6969

Plymouth offers the Stephen Ministry Program for one-to-one Christian care. Contact any Plymouth Pastor at 255.3149 or Bev Burns, Referral Coordinator for Stephen Ministry, at 224.9571.

Worship

Saturday Worship
5:30 p.m.
Waveland Hall

12/24/11
Christmas Eve Services
See schedule of services on
page 5

12/31/11
Luke 2:22-40

Sunday Worship
9 & 11 a.m.
Sanctuary

12/25/11
One Service at 11 a.m.
Angie Witmer
John 1:1-14

1/1/12
One Service at 11 a.m.
David Ruhe
Luke 2:22-40

The Contact

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Radio Worship
KRNT-1350 AM
9 a.m.
Sundays

