

# The Herald

First-Plymouth Church

*A Congregation of the United Church of Christ*

www.firstplymouth.org | 402.476.7565 | Issue #22 | November 30 - December 13

## Worship with Us!

### Dec 3 & 4

Jim Keck preaching. Cantorei, Choristers at 9:00AM service. Plymouth Choir at 10:30AM service.

### Dec. 4

11:59@First-Plymouth  
Jim Keck teaching. Oisin (fiddler), Seamus Begley (accordionist), Grainne Hambly (Celtic harp and concertina).

### Dec. 4 Taizé Service- 7:00PM Sanctuary

A service of reflection and resting in God's care.

### Dec. 10 & 11

Jim Keck preaching. Chorale, Plymouth Ringers and Cantorei at 9:00AM service. Plymouth Choir & Plymouth Ringers at 10:30AM service.

### Dec. 11

11:59@First-Plymouth  
Jim Keck teaching. Annette Murrell, soloist.

Join us for worship Saturday at 5:30PM, Sunday at 9:00, 10:30 and 11:59AM. Child care is available at 9:00 and 10:30AM.

## Church Budget in a Squeeze

Worship attendance, church membership, baptisms and participation in mission and Bible Studies are at all-time highs for First-Plymouth. But it appears our budget is facing a serious squeeze. At the time this Herald is going out, it looks like we will have about an eighty thousand dollar shortfall on the proposed budget for 2012.

The budget for 2012 proposes increases in three primary areas: Music, Children and Youth and a cost of living increase for the staff. However, with almost two thirds of our expected pledge cards returned, indications are that giving is at the same level as last year while the budget proposes about a 4 percent increase.

Every gift, no matter what the size, is celebrated as a beautiful act of faith. But we will need to do more celebrating if we are to meet this budget!

## Christmas Eve Services at First-Plymouth

Join us Saturday, Dec. 24 for worship:

**1:00 & 2:00 p.m.** Begin Christmas Eve with a Chapel service of classic Lessons & Carols but in a more intimate setting.

**3:00 p.m.** Christmas Eve family worship (portrayal of the Christmas story with the Alleluia Choir and Choristers)

**5:00 p.m.** Christmas Eve service featuring the Youth Orchestra and the First-Plymouth Chorale

**7:00 & 9:00 p.m.** Festival of Lessons & Carols with the First-Plymouth Choir & the Plymouth Brass

**11:00 p.m.** Communion service and the Plymouth Ringers

*Child care will not be available for services on Christmas Eve or Christmas.*

**Tune into the television broadcast** of the "Festival of Lessons and Carols" service on Christmas Eve at midnight on FOX 42 in Lincoln (Cable Channel 9) & Omaha and on FOX NE KFXL in Lincoln (Cable Channel 18, Dish 17), Kearney & Central Nebraska. It will also be aired on KFOR 1240 AM radio at 11PM.

*Worship services on Christmas Day, Dec. 25, will be held at the regular times: 9:00, 10:30 and 11:59AM.*



# Congregation News

## Meet Some New Members of First-Plymouth:

*Hope DaCosta* is a 2<sup>nd</sup> grade teacher who enjoys people, especially little people, traveling, exercising and eating.

*Craig & Audra George* enjoy spending time gardening, fishing, attending sporting events, community activities and traveling.

*Sandra Weideman* came to F-P from Faith UCC. She has been a widow for 30 years and has a son and a granddaughter. She worked at the downtown post office and retired 4 years ago.

*Karen Becker* has enjoyed playing the cello at F-P for many years and looks forward to being part of the First-Plymouth family.

## Joys & Concerns

### Weddings

Gary Merritt and

Kate Gauger Colborn – Sept. 10<sup>th</sup>

Anthony Squires and

Margaret Stroup – Nov. 11<sup>th</sup>

David Creger and Jessica Yesilcimen

– Nov. 12<sup>th</sup>

### Baptisms

Layla Anne Ferris – Nov. 20

Abigail Miley Bills – Nov. 20

Norah Ann Farber – Nov. 20

Evelyn Gwen June Hermes – Nov 26

### In Memory

Connie Merry a member since 2004 died November 10. Services were held Nov. 14.

Gary Aksamit, a First-Plymouth member since 1965, died Nov. 17. Services were held Nov. 29.

# The WAY COOL Courier

*Creating Spiritual Experiences for Children and Youth*

## TEENS TRAVEL TO NEIGHBORING FAITHS

*Learners encounter the beliefs of others*

If you are in grades 6-12, then you are invited to Neighboring Faiths to experience how others worship and seek God, from Lutherans to Hindus, from Pentecostals to Muslims. No boring lectures here. Explore and experience the faiths of others both here at First-Plymouth and at Lincoln's houses of worship. Meets in the Youth Room every Sunday at 10:30AM. Bring a friend!

## SING THE CAROLS OF THE SEASON

*Caroling to our Near-South friends*

If your winter holidays are incomplete without a little Fa-la-la-la-la and Jingle Bells, join members of the Chorale, youth group, and Grades K-5 and learners as we sing carols to our church neighbors Wed., Dec. 14. Dinner at 5:00PM (\$6 adults, \$3 kids, Pilgrim Hall) and then we'll hit the streets. On Sun., Dec. 18, learners in grades K-5 and the new Alleluia choir (K-2) invite you to join them as they carol at nearby Milder Manor. Meet in Mayflower Hall at 9:00 or 10:30AM. All ages welcome!

## HIT THE BOOKS! MINISTER IN THE SPOTLIGHT

*Pastor Greg speaks out for children, youth, and families*

Our Minister to Children, Youth, and Families, Greg Stewart, is featured in the new book from Skinner House by Michelle Bates Deakin, *Social Action Heroes*. A chapter tells the story of Greg and his partner Stillman's lifelong commitment to child advocacy and the "forever family" that has resulted from it. Great holiday reading!

## IT BEGINS WITH DINNER! WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE!

*A weeknight opportunity for religious growth and learning*

If you haven't been to church on Wednesday evening lately, the month of December is a great time to explore the opportunities to deepen your Christian faith, no matter your age. We offer engaging programs for infants through adults; even dinner is served beginning at 5:00PM (\$6 adults, \$3 up through college age). More information at [www.firstplymouth.org](http://www.firstplymouth.org). Invite your friends and neighbors!

## YOUNG ADULTS NOW MEET WEEKLY

*Ministry and community for ages 18-29*

You can still get in on the "ground floor" to help us design a vibrant young adult and campus ministry here at First-Plymouth Church. We meet every Wednesday, 5:00-6:15PM in Mayflower Hall. Your ideas and energy are essential to create viable and vibrant programming. Dinner is included for a mere \$3. For information, contact Elizabeth Hertzler, [elizabeth@firstplymouth.org](mailto:elizabeth@firstplymouth.org)

## WAY COOL SUNDAY SCHOOL

from 9:00-10:15AM and 10:30-11:45AM. Contact Kathie Johnson, Director of K-5<sup>th</sup> Grade Ministries at [kathie@firstplymouth.org](mailto:kathie@firstplymouth.org) **Early Childhood Ministry** for 3's and 4/5's Sunday School takes place in their classrooms at 9:00-10:00AM and 10:30-11:30AM. Infant and toddler care is provided during both services. Location: west entrance, lower level, Toddler A. Contact Deb Comstock, Director of Early Childhood Ministries at [deb@firstplymouth.org](mailto:deb@firstplymouth.org).

# 2012 Adult & Family Mission Trips

Contact: Pastor Barb Smisek, [barbara@firstplymouth.org](mailto:barbara@firstplymouth.org) or 402-476-7565 x 219



**Honduras (Mar. 10-17, June 9-16, & July 21-18)** A great first-time, out-of-the U.S. mission experience. Seven days immersed in the Honduran culture. Cabin-style lodging, ethnic food and varied opportunities to worship and work alongside the Honduran people. **Est. cost \$1,600.** Contact: Dawn Vest, [desea3@hotmail.com](mailto:desea3@hotmail.com)



**Pine Ridge Reservation (June 9-15 & Sept. 22-28)** Poverty on the Oglala Lakota Nation reservation in So. Dakota is overwhelming and generational. Participate in work projects across the reservation to help rebuild relationships, homes and lives. **Est. cost \$450. Space is limited, reserve a spot now.** Contact: Cindy Cox, [ccox47@hotmail.com](mailto:ccox47@hotmail.com)



**Kamp Kaleo (May 29- June 1 & July 10-13)** "Adventures in Community Camp" is designed for mentally challenged adults. Experience the beauty of nature and the joy of camp activities as a companion to an adult that otherwise may not have a camp experience. Cabin-style lodging located on the scenic North Loup just outside of Burwell, Nebraska. **Est. cost \$100.** Contact: Gordon or Maril Freese, [freese@windstream.net](mailto:freese@windstream.net)



**Guatemala (Dates TBD)** Build a new home under the guidance of Constru Casa. Over the course of one week, under the guidance of a Guatemalan mason, you will build a 3-room, concrete home. The work is hard and physical, but no special skills are required. Lodging is with host families. **Est. cost \$1,200.** Contact: Jim Hille, [jimhille@gmail.com](mailto:jimhille@gmail.com)

**Cedar Rapids, IA (Dates TBD)** The flood of 2008 destroyed over 5000 homes. First-Plymouth and Westminster Presbyterian will partner for a third time to help with the rebuilding. Skilled and unskilled help is needed. Spend the week or a couple of days. Work includes home demolition, repair and rebuilding. **Est. cost \$5 a day plus meals and travel.** Contact: [jimbobmoore@aol.com](mailto:jimbobmoore@aol.com)

**Ghana** Since 1995 First-Plymouth has participated in the NE Conference Ghana Partnership with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church in Peki. Trips to Ghana have been varied in focus: construction, relationship building, theological study and education. The next trip will most likely be in 2013 or 2014. **Est. cost \$3,500.** Contact: Judy Greenwald, [jlbgreenwald@gmail.com](mailto:jlbgreenwald@gmail.com)

## Gratitude~ Akpe ka ka ka

What a REMARKABLE congregation this is! Ghana Sunday, Oct. 2<sup>nd</sup>, celebrated our 20 year partnership with the Evangelical Presbyterian Church and the seminary at Peki. YOU responded with SUCH GENEROSITY! \$6300 was danced down the aisle and into the offering baskets! We will retain a portion to assist in underwriting future travelers and the remainder will be sent to renovate housing for the music students, maintain and repair the clinic at Dzemini, and assist with the Shepherd Centers that now number 86 and are located throughout the region. Your open hearts allow us to sustain such worthy causes. With deeply felt Thanksgiving wishes to each and all. ~The Ghana Committee



# Adult Fellowship Groups

For info, email [addie@firstplymouth.org](mailto:addie@firstplymouth.org)

## First-Plymouth Singles News

*Single Adults (30's-60's). For more info. check out the Singles newsletter, "The Individualist."*

## First-Plymouth Singles and Singles Plus+ Annual Christmas Dinner Party

Sun., Dec. 4, 5:30PM, Pilgrim Hall

Enjoy an elegant candlelight dinner, dessert, and music provided by Erin-Ann Scott and Jack Rinke. \$10 adults, \$3 children. Unwrapped gift donations will be accepted for Lancaster Manor Residents. Register by Thurs., Dec. 1 to [addie@firstplymouth.org](mailto:addie@firstplymouth.org) or 402-476-7550. Friends and family welcome.

## Singles Upcoming Events:

Sunday Brunches  
Monday Night Volleyball  
First Friday Holiday Art Walk

## Singles Plus+ News

*Single Adults (60 and older).*

Upcoming Events:  
Breakfasts & Brunches  
Not Just Bridge Anymore 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Wed.

## Tower Club 2

*Monthly social for young couples with/without children.*

**NEW DATE:** Kathleen and Terry Maynard will host the December Tower Club 2 event on Dec. 10th, at 6:30PM at their home. Bring a wrapped white elephant gift and an appetizer and beverage to share with the group. RSVP to Kathleen for directions: [kmaynard@neb.rr.com](mailto:kmaynard@neb.rr.com)

## Cribbage Club

Mondays, 6:30PM, in Courtyard Lounge. Beginners welcome!

## Plymouth Pride Christmas Party

This Year's Party Has Some Special Guests: The Sisters of Hoboken (otherwise known as the cast from) *Nun-crackers*, The Nunsense Christmas Musical. We proudly welcome the cast of TADA Productions' recent hit musical as they perform some songs from their smash holiday hit musical now on stage at The TADA Theatre! Join the Sisters for some comical and musical fun that is sure to get you in a heavenly mood this holiday season.

Dec. 11, 5:30, Pilgrim Hall. \$10.00/person. scholarships available. RSVP to [elizabeth@firstplymouth.org](mailto:elizabeth@firstplymouth.org) by Thurs., Dec. 8.



## Church Social

*Monthly social gatherings in hosts' homes to meet other First-Plymouth folks.*

## Christmas at the Ferguson House

Doug and Marilyn Larson will host Fri., Dec. 9<sup>th</sup>, 7:00-9:00PM at the historic Ferguson House (700 S. 16th



St.) Bring your favorite beverage (most bring wine) and an appetizer to share. Tours will be available. Note that the Ferguson House is not wheelchair accessible. RSVP to Marilyn at 402.786-2314 or [marilyn.s.larson@gmail.com](mailto:marilyn.s.larson@gmail.com).

## Flower Chart

There are a few Sundays left to sponsor altar flowers for the Nave. Cost is \$50. The chart is located in the hallway near Pilgrim Hall.

## Volunteer for the Animal Ministry

Volunteers are needed to serve on committees and to help at events in February and March. Contact Karen Clarke 402-465-8796 or [fpanimalmin@gmail.com](mailto:fpanimalmin@gmail.com)



## Great Job!

... to the First-Plymouth Singles Plus+ Ministry for their 'Be Thankful' gift drive in which they collected several gift items for Lancaster Manor residents!

## Calling All Instrumentalists

(Grades 6-12) to participate in the First-Plymouth Christmas Eve Youth Orchestra. Rehearsals are Dec. 11, 18 and 23. Orchestra will help lead the 5PM Christmas Eve service. To sign up, email [jeremy@firstplymouth.org](mailto:jeremy@firstplymouth.org) or call 476-7565, ext. 223.

# Adult Classes, Discussion Groups and Bible Studies

Additional information available in First-Plymouth's Activities Booklet and online under Programs or on the online building calendar.

Pre-registration is required for some classes indicated below. To register, email [addie@firstplymouth.org](mailto:addie@firstplymouth.org) or call 476-7550.

**W** - Walk-In    **R** - Registration Required

## SUNDAY

**'Something Else' Discussion:** 9-10AM, Calvert Parlor. Led by Jim Hewitt, retired lawyer and college professor. **W**

**St. Paul in Context, Biblical and Archaeological Evidence:** Sundays, 9AM, Resource Room. Will not meet Dec. 25 & Jan. 1. Led by David Peabody, author & Prof. of Religion, NWU. Weekly topics drawn from the content of Paul's letters and the Acts of the Apostles. **W**

**Sunday Discussion Group:** 9:15AM, Tower Room. Discuss *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians* by documentarian William Cran. This film traces the evolution of Christianity from its early days to its final break into an entirely new faith. Will not meet Dec. 25 & Jan. 1. **W**

**A Course in Miracles (Two Opportunities):** 9:40-11AM, in Jim Keck's office and 11-11:59AM, in the Staff Room. Meets year round. Study and personal spiritual growth following the book, *A Course in Miracles*. **W**

**Friends and Faith Book Discussion:** 9:45-10:30AM, Staff Room. Discuss *The Other Jesus*, by Greg Garrett, Nov. 27-Dec. 8. Will not meet Dec. 25 & Jan. 1. **W**

## TUESDAY

**Bible Stories Through New Eyes:** 9:30-11:00AM, Calvert Parlor. Led by Carolyn Zeisset. Dec. 6, 13 & 20<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Hymns--Where did those words come from? Explore scriptural allusions used by writers of Christmas hymns. Dec. 6, We Three Kings, Dec. 13, Once in Royal David's City, Dec. 20, In the Bleak Mid-Winter. **W**

**Out in Scripture:** Tuesdays, 7:00PM, Courtyard Lounge. Facilitated by Soni Fabry. Bible Study using the Bible alongside the real life experiences and concerns of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender people of faith and allies. **W**

## WEDNESDAY

Wednesday Night Live activities and dinner will not meet Dec. 21, Dec. 28<sup>th</sup> or Jan. 4<sup>th</sup>.

**5 Pastors and the Bible:** Every Wed. through Dec 7, 6:15 PM. Led by Revs. Jim Keck, Barb Smisek, Nancy Erickson, Kim Hinrichs and Greg Stewart. Explore the Gospel of Matthew. Come early for dinner – served from 5-6:15PM **W**

**Church Mural Tour:** Dec. 7, 6:15PM, meet in the back of the Sanctuary. Get a quick chronological review of Old Testament stories depicted on a mural located on the top floor of the west wing. Led by Judi Cook. **W**

**Feel Good Yoga:** Every Wed. 6:45-7:45PM, Chapel. Led by Nan Graf. Cost: \$5 per class. Pay at the door. **W**

**Dave Ramsey's Financial Peace University:** Jan. 11-Apr. 11, 6:15-8:15PM. Facilitated by Shane Rhian. Cost: \$100 for membership kit (one per person/or family). Learn how to make the right money decisions to achieve your financial goals. FPU is for everyone from the financially secure to the financially distressed. During the workshop, the average family pays off \$5,300 in debt and saves \$2,700. **R**

**The Heartbeat of Life:** Jan. 11-Feb 1, 6:15PM. Led by Pastor Karen Clarke, a former Benedictine Sister. Discuss the ancient Rule of Benedict that stands as a model upon which to build a satisfy-

ing life. Purchase Joan Chittester's book, *Monasteries of the Heart: An Invitation to a Meaningful Life* prior to the first class.

## THURSDAY

**Not Your Ordinary Bible Study:** Noon-1PM. Led by Rev. Jim Keck. **W**

## FRIDAY

**Early Birds Discussion Group for Women:** 1<sup>st</sup> & 3rd Fridays, 7:00-8:00AM, Calvert Parlor. Contact [kim@firstplymouth.org](mailto:kim@firstplymouth.org) for more information. **W**

## SATURDAY

**Introduction to Energy Healing:** Jan. 21, 9:30AM-12:30PM. Led by Margaret Rickers, licensed massage therapist, certified healing touch practitioner, Reiki Master. Cost: \$25. Learn about Healing Touch, Therapeutic Touch, Reiki and other ways of using energy to facilitate the healing process. **R**

## Love Came Down at Christmas

There are so many ways we make ourselves unavailable to love. Sadly, we imagine love is something that just happens to a person or it doesn't, rather than realizing we can learn to actively participate in a life of love. Dr. Keck will explore the concrete ways we can bring more love into our life.

Based upon Rossetti's wonderful poem, this sermon series will culminate in our celebration of Love Incarnate, Love Divine on Christmas Eve.

## Annual Advent Workshop

*A First-Plymouth tradition returns*

Bring the whole family to Mayflower Hall to make crafts. All ages (5-105) are invited to join us Dec. 4, 2:00-4:00PM.

Invite your friends and neighbors. Purchase a tasty sundae at the Christmas Café to support youth mission trips.



# Christmas Poinsettias

To honor a loved one with a poinsettia this Christmas, complete the form and mail or bring to First-Plymouth Church, ATTN: Rebecca, 2000 D St., Lincoln, NE 68502. Make checks payable to First-Plymouth Church, designate them "Poinsettias." Each plant is \$16.00. No phone orders, please. Orders must be received by: **Mon, Dec. 12.**

**Honoree:** \_\_\_\_\_

PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY

**Given by:** \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ **Check if you would like your poinsettia donated to a nursing home or hospital.**

\_\_\_\_\_ **Poinsettias at \$16.00 each**    **Total enclosed:** \_\_\_\_\_



## Future Herald Articles

Dec. 14 issue deadline is noon, Dec. 6.

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## MISSION POSSIBLE...AND BEYOND!

The First-Plymouth community took on a huge challenge to collect \$11,111 for Neighbors in Need, 111 barrels of food and 1,111 letters encouraging legislators to make hunger relief a priority. **We not only succeeded, but went BEYOND the challenge: over \$12,000 for Neighbors in Need, 112 barrels of food, and 1,120 letters to legislators!** Thank you and congratulations!

Our children were outstanding leaders in our efforts. They decorated 400 bags, distributed them to our Near South neighbors and then, collected bags the next Sunday. They filled an amazing 21 barrels with food! Pastor Greg and some of the children let all of Lincoln know about our work through their TV presence.

The junior and senior high students of First-Plymouth set their own lofty goal of collecting 711 cans of food and designed their own unique approach. Students took their instruments and played outside several grocery stores asking for food and monetary contributions to their goal. They surpassed their target by filling 3 barrels with canned goods alone.

Did you know that First-Plymouth's Mission: 1 goals were 10% of the national UCC goal? We are leaders locally and nationally.

Initially when we spoke with representatives of the Lincoln Food Bank, they were skeptical about our goals. No organization in Lincoln had ever reached a goal this high. Recently, Alex, who works in public relations for the Lincoln Food Bank, told us, "The efforts of First-Plymouth to provide 112 barrels of food taught all of us at Lincoln Food Bank the power of hard work. Folks receiving contributions from First-Plymouth's donations are beyond grateful. The gifts not only add to their happiness at this time of year, but allow them to have a little extra money to keep the lights on or put socks on their children's feet. Thank you to everyone on the staff and in the congregation."

The Mission: 1 success resulted from the efforts of so many dedicated people: the committee, those who built and staffed the Mission: 1 Command Center, our children and youth who exceeded their own goals, and each of you! Thank you for helping First-Plymouth take a significant stand against hunger in our community and our country. You truly made it Mission Possible...and Beyond!

*Mission: 1 Committee: Mike Growcock, Renna Schoepf, Carole Burt, Nancy Howard, Gloria Aron, Jeremy Spale, Roy Mehmken, Erin Glenn-Hash, Sheila Mehlhaff, Fred Rickers, Roberta Sandhorst, Lorrie Beadell, Kaywin Sohl, Rhonda Carden, Sandi Fabry, Elizabeth Hertzler, Karen Clarke, Mike Keating, and Sue Guild.*