



The Herald

First-Plymouth Church

A Congregation of the United Church of Christ

www.firstplymouth.org | 402.476.7565 | Issue #3 | February 8 - February 14

A Word from Greg Stewart, Minister for Children, Youth & Families

Worship with Us!

Feb. 11 & 12

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

Feb. 12

11:59@F-P. Jim Keck teaching. Erin-Ann Scott, vocalist.

Feb. 18 & 19

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

Feb. 19

11:59@F-P. Jim Keck teaching. Music by Annette Murrell and Peter Bouffard.

Feb. 22

Ash Wednesday Service 7PM, Sanctuary.

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

Slow Down & Catch Up

Educational Ministry Today

Digging deeper into spiritual soil is a counter-cultural act. Oh, sure, I have read the statistics about the number of Americans who are in church on any given Sunday. But so many seem to have their feet firmly planted on thin air rather than holy ground. Religious growth and learning is a slow and hard work, increasingly difficult in a culture where rapid response is considered a virtue. There is no drive-through lane in most matters religious.

I have learned that slowing down in a speeded up world is one key to knowing the holy in everyday life. When I lessen the pace, I discover the lesson of life: the process of spiritual exploration is more important than the destinations, or answers, at which I arrive. Give me a quick and easy-to-read creed, and I'll instantly join the ranks of the Chosen. But ask me to determine a truly personal credo and I'll spend the rest of my life—and perhaps then some—putting pen to paper.

I could really save time by taking a test rather than developing a testimony. In the end, however, I am not looking for *the answer* or even for my answers. Instead I am pondering the questions, tossing them from hand to hand, dropping them to see if they break, nurturing them so they grow on me, and sitting with them without speaking. This way of being goes against everything I ever learned in kindergarten and beyond—it is counter-cultural to the core. So is the peace that accompanies me on this journey. Won't you slow down and join me?



One of America's Top Preachers Comes to First-Plymouth

Named by Newsweek Magazine

Dr. Thomas Long

Professor of Preaching at Emory University

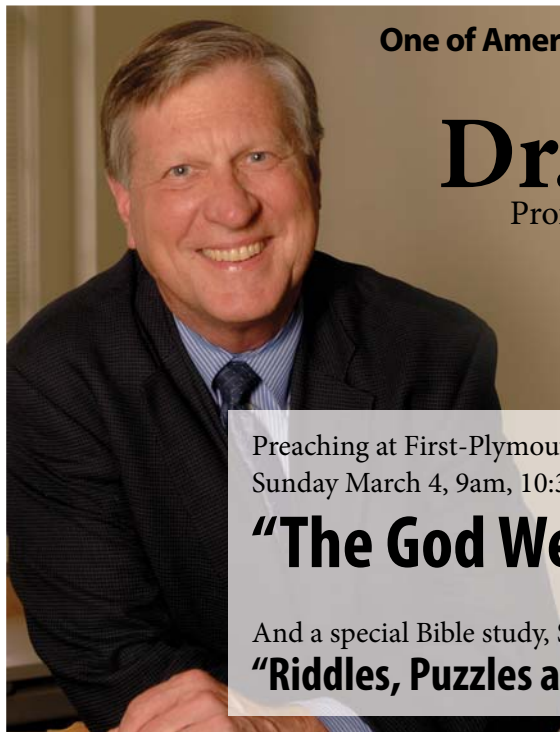
"The most powerful form of communication is still one human being standing up and speaking courageous truth"

Preaching at First-Plymouth Church Saturday, March 3, 5:30pm, Sunday March 4, 9am, 10:30am & 11:59am.

"The God We Get"

And a special Bible study, Saturday, March 3, 9:30-11:30am.

"Riddles, Puzzles and Paradoxes: The Parables of Jesus"



December 2012 GUATEMALA MISSION TRIP

Dec. 2-9

Schedule is Flexible for Self-formed Teams. Informational Meeting, Tue. Mar. 27 at 7PM, Calvert Parlor

Join a volunteer team from First-Plymouth to experience Guatemala, the cradle of the great Mayan legacy. Working under the guidance of Constru Casa, depart daily from the beautiful enclave of Antigua, a UNESCO World Heritage Site and enter into a nearby pueblo and meet the faces of poverty by serving as volunteer labor working under the direction of Guatemalan masons. This team will both sponsor and give service of labor toward a new home working directly with the recipient family in the context of their land and daily life. Your gift will transform the life of a family and most likely yours as well.

No special skills are required, though the work is physical. There will be opportunities to see and learn about the rich traditions of textiles and coffee farms that help define the Guatemalan experience. Contact: Tina Hille, tinahille@gmail.com, Jim Hille, jimhille@gmail.com or Barb Smisek, barbara@firstplymouth.org. For information regarding Constru Casa, go to: www.construcasa.org



Congregation News

Welcome the following new members to First-Plymouth: *Karen Buchfinch, Brian and Shelly Wachman, Darrell Cech and Meghan Hartwig.*

Joys and Concerns

Meet Some New Members of First-Plymouth:

Erick and Jamie Russell were married at First-Plymouth. They have a daughter Teagan Rae. Jamie works for the City of Lincoln as a 911 dispatcher. Erick is in the concrete and snow removal business.

Paul Muff has attended First-Plymouth since 1976. Paul and his wife, Laurel, were married here in 1978. Paul has been in the construction business for over 40 years. They live on an acreage and enjoy gardening and bird watching. Paul serves as a volunteer for the Abendmusik concerts.

Don Macke and Jenny Carver have two sons and Jenny transferred to F-P from St. Paul United Methodist Church. Don works as a researcher and Jenny is an Early Childhood Special Ed teacher for Lincoln Public Schools.

Baptisms

Benjamin Nicholas Hunke – Jan. 28
Lucia Scully Mues – Feb. 5
Waylon Robert Vehe – Feb. 5

Weddings

Darin Anderson and Rebecca Tvrdik – Jan. 2
Scott Nelson and Amy Asbjornson – Jan. 21

In Memory

Clifford Kepler a member since 2003, died Jan. 17. Services were held Jan. 20
Dave Gustin, a member since 2000, died Jan. 16. Services were held Jan. 19.
Howard Mastalir, a F-P member since 1951, died Jan. 28th in Plano, TX.

Piano Goal Met!

We are grateful to tell you that the goal of raising \$88,000.00 for a new piano for the First-Plymouth Church sanctuary has been met. Thanks to the generosity of many of our members, our church's music ministry will enhance its tradition of excellence in worship and in outreach to the Lincoln community, accompanied by a beautiful new piano in our sanctuary.

In just fifteen months, the First-Plymouth Piano Fund grew steadily with generous gifts and memorial offerings honoring family members and friends. The committee is already working towards the next steps of finding the instrument that will serve our needs. Sincere thanks to everyone who helped make this possible. First-Plymouth Piano Committee: Betsy Bobenhouse, chair; Jim Bobenhouse, MD; Catherine Herbenner; Jack Rinke; Jeremy Bankson; Tom Trenney.

Stephen Ministry at First-Plymouth

Each person in this congregation shares Christ's love in many acts of compassion. A Stephen Minister makes a formal commitment and receives specialized training as someone who will listen, offer prayer, caring support and encouragement. If you or someone you know could benefit from the care of a Stephen Minister, contact Pastor Barb Smisek, barbara@firstplymouth.org or 476-7565 x 219.

The WAY COOL Courier

Creating Spiritual Experiences for Children and Youth

KICKS FOR CHRIST COMES TO FIRST-PLYMOUTH!

We're gonna dance before the Lord - from ballet to hip hop
The dancers from Club Kicks Dance Academy, Lincoln, will join Way Cool Sunday School during all **9:00AM Sunday school sessions** in February. ALL AGES (5-105) Club Kicks dancers, ages 7-17, will join us with their director, Kari Swanson Neth. **DON'T MISS** this SPECIAL opportunity for hands-on learning and fantastic faith-building in a program we call KICKS FOR CHRIST!



**Club Kicks
Dance Academy**

EARLY CHILDHOOD MINISTRY NEWS

Infants - Pre-Kindergarten

OUR YOUNGEST LEARNERS NEED YOU!

Our Early Childhood Ministry is attracting young learners like never before. As our numbers grow, so does our need for mentors and role models who know that religious growth and learning begins at birth. We need volunteers at: 9:00-10:00AM and 10:30-11:30AM. Background checks are required. We'll train you and then you'll experience the difference you can make in the life of a child (and vice versa). Info: Deb Comstock, Dir., Early Childhood Ministry, deb@firstplymouth.org

GRADES K-5 MINISTRY NEWS

Info: Kathie Johnson, Director, Grades K-5 Ministry, kathie@firstplymouth.org

JOIN ALLELUIA! CHOIR AND SING PALM SUNDAY

From Tom Trenney, Minister of Music

Join in the fun of Alleluia!--a new choir for our K-2nd graders. The children will sing for worship on Palm Sunday, Apr. 1. Rehearsals: Saturdays, Mar. 3, 10, and 24, 10:00-11:00AM in the chapel. To register, contact rebecca@firstplymouth.org

AURORA FAMILY RETREAT: THEOLOGY UNDER CONSTRUCTION

Pastor Greg explores Building Faith for Families

At our annual retreat for K-5 children and their families, Pastor Greg will lead us as we build our own theologies. Expect hands-on learning that seeks to equip parents be the spiritual leaders of their households. Scholarships are available to families facing financial hardships. Feb. 18-19, at the Leadership Center, Aurora, NE.

WEDNESDAY NIGHT LIVE! STARTS WHERE SUNDAY SCHOOL LEAVES OFF

5:00-7:30PM, dinner followed by programs for all ages

If you still haven't attended Wednesday Night Live, First-Plymouth's midweek opportunity for religious growth and learning, you don't know what you're missing! Start with a delicious catered meal, then it's off to classes, rehearsals, and programs that will lift your spirits and inform your mind. **EXTRA SPECIAL IN FEBRUARY:** Creation Station presents "Poets & Prophets: Creative Writing for Grades 3-5". Plenty of adult classes too!

ASH WEDNESDAY DINNER FOR GRADE 5 AND THEIR FAMILIES

Feb. 22, 5:30PM in the Chapel

Join Pastor Greg for dinner as he explores with us the rituals and reasons for the sacrament of Holy Communion. Then stay for our Ash Wednesday worship service in the sanctuary, during which we will experience the Lord's Supper. Begin the season of Lent with intention as we prepare for Holy Week and Easter. **Summer is coming! Are you planning your family schedule?** **Kamp Kaleo-June 22 -24, Burwell, NE - All ages.** Sleep in cabins, tie-dye shirts, eat delicious food, join in fun and fellowship with our church families.

Vacation Bible School July 16-19 - 9:00AM-noon

YOUTH MINISTRY Grades 6-12 **WHAT IN THE WORLD ARE YOUTH DOING?**

Youth Group Open House, Feb. 29, 6:30PM

First-Plymouth's Youth Group (grades 6-12) invites you to their first open house of the year. It features a talent show that showcases the many gifts youth bring to our faith community. Meet Rev. Greg Stewart, Mitch Connelly and the young adults that guide our youth on their spiritual journeys. We're saving a seat for you!



First-Plymouth Recycles

The Sustainable Living Committee has done an "audit" of our church-wide recycling practices, and found that many of our recycling bins are not being used. Please remember to recycle paper, glass, plastic and aluminum and place garbage only in garbage bins. Thank you for helping us be an earth-friendly community!

LENT

Beatitude Attitude . . . Taking on the Mind of Christ



Consider journeying more deeply into your Christian faith at First-Plymouth this Lent. Here is a snapshot of our Lenten program:

Wednesday, Feb 22 – Ash Wednesday

Dinner: 5:00-6:15PM, Pilgrim Hall. \$6 adults, \$3 children

5 Pastors & The Bible: What is Ash Wednesday? What is Lent? 6:15-6:50PM, Pilgrim Hall.

Ash Wednesday Worship at 7:00PM. A service with Communion, prayers and the Imposition of Ashes.

Six Sundays, Feb 26- April 1, 7:00PM

Weekly Lenten Taizé Worship – Experience a contemplative music-based and meditative service, based on the Beatitudes. Poetry and special instrumentalists.

Saturday, Feb. 25, 7:00PM

Church Social with a Small Dose of Spiritual, at Judy and Lowell Berg's home. Join the monthly Church Social fellowship to meet other members of the church. Rev. Jim Keck will share a small dose of spirituality and reflection. Bring an appetizer and beverage (most bring wine) to share. RSVP for directions to: lberg@neb.rr.com

Wednesday, Feb 29

Dinner 5:00-6:15PM, Pilgrim Hall. \$6 adults, \$3 children.

Beatitudes-Meet the Composer Anne Wilson – 5:30-6:30PM, Choir Room. Cleveland-based composer Anne Wilson comes to Lincoln for the Midwest premiere of her multi-movement choral/orchestral composition **Song of Hope**. Based on beloved images of the **Beatitudes** skillfully interwoven with powerful contemporary scenes, **Song of Hope** reminds us of God's faithfulness even in history's most challenging times. Hear the composer's own thoughts to prepare you to experience this dramatic and moving concert here at First-Plymouth on Sun. March 4, at 4:00PM.

Saturday & Sunday, March 3 & 4th

Guest Minister Weekend: Thomas Long, one of the top preachers in America will lead a Bible Study Sat. Mar. 3rd, 9:30-11:30AM, in the choir room on: Riddles, Puzzles, and Paradoxes: The Parables of Jesus. Free. Call 402-476-7550 or email addie@firstplymouth.org to register.

He will be leading a Clergy Advanced Class on Preaching, Sat. Mar. 3, 3-5:00PM. Cost: \$35. Open to ordained and licensed ministers of all faiths. Call 402-476-7550 or email addie@firstplymouth.org to register.

Thomas Long will also be **preaching** at all services this weekend on: **"The God We Get,"** based on Matthew 25: 24-30. Saturday 5:30PM, Sunday 9, 10:30, and 11:59AM.

Sunday, March 4, 4:00PM

Nebraska premiere of Anne Wilson's **Song of Hope** based on the **Beatitudes**, sung by the ABENDCHOR, presented by Abendmusik concert series. Call 402-476-9933 for tickets.

EASTER LILY

If you would like to donate lilies for the Easter Sunday Service on Apr. 8, complete the form below and mail or bring it to:

First-Plymouth Church
ATTN: Rebecca Shane
2000 D St.
Lincoln, NE 68502

Make your check (\$15.00) payable to First-Plymouth Church and designate it "Easter Lily." No phone orders.

Orders must be received by Mar. 23

Please print clearly

NAME OF HONOREE:

GIVEN BY:

PHONE:

_____ Lilies at \$15.00 each:

Total enclosed: \$ _____

_____ Check if you would like your lily donated to a nursing home or hospital instead of taking it home with you.

Annual Women's Soup Supper: Love Stories

Sun., Feb. 26, 5:30PM. Pastors Barb, Kim and Nancy will each share a love story from their life. A serenade of love songs by members of the First-Plymouth Choir will follow. Bring a friend. Free will donation. To reserve a spot for the supper, email elizabeth@firstplymouth.org or 476-7565x245 by Wed., Feb. 22. For child care contact Elizabeth by Feb. 17. Please bring new toys, diapers, blankets or onesies for the children at St. Monica's. After supper plan to attend the Lenten Taizé service at 7:00PM.

Adult Classes, Discussion Groups and Bible Studies

Pre-registration is required for some classes indicated below. To register, email 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. Led by David Peabody, author & Prof. of Religion, NWU. **W**

Sunday Discussion Group: 9:15AM, Tower Room. Discuss *From Jesus to Christ: The First Christians* by William Cran. This film traces the evolution of Christianity from its early days to its final break into an entirely new faith. **W**

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

Friends and Faith: Discuss *In Defense of Civility* by James Calvin Davis, Feb. 26-May 13. Staff room, 9:45-10:30AM. Contact Penny Larsen: 423-8960. **W**

TUESDAY

Bible Stories Through New Eyes: 9:30-11:00AM, Calvert Parlor. Led by Carolyn Zeisset. *Favorite Bible Stories*. Feb. 14, The Good Samaritan, Part 1; and Feb. 21, The Good Samaritan, Part 2. **W**

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

WEDNESDAY

Dinner: Served anytime from 5-6:15; \$6 adults, \$3 children-college

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

Animated Faith: How TV Portrays Religion: Wed. Feb 8, 15, & 29, 6:15PM. Led by Dr. Dan Clanton, Prof. of Religious Studies, Doane. Examine how religion is alive and well in animated series like The Simpsons, Family Guy and South Park. For all ages! **W**

New Member Dinner & Orientation: Wed., Feb. 15-Dinner served 5-6:15, Orientation 6:15PM, Calvert Parlor. RSVP to Connie 476-7565 x201 or connie@firstplymouth.org

5 Pastors & the Bible

Wednesdays, 6:15-7:15PM in Pilgrim Hall. Through Bible Passages, Revs. Keck, Smisek, Stewart, Erickson, and Hinrichs will illuminate the meaning of Holy Week from Palm Sunday to Easter.

Feb. 22: What is Ash Wednesday? What is Lent? **Class will meet 6:15-6:50PM this night only** Ash Wednesday Worship Service follows at 7:00PM, Sanctuary.

March 7: What is Palm Sunday?

March 14: What is Maundy Thursday?

March 21: What is Good Friday?

March 28: What is Holy Saturday and Easter?

Beatitudes-Meet Composer Anne Wilson: Feb. 29, 5:30-6:30PM, Choir Room

THURSDAY

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

FRIDAY

Early Birds Discussion Group for Women: 1st & 3rd Fridays, 7-8:00AM, Calvert Parlor. Contact kim@firstplymouth.org for information. **W**

Adult Fellowship Groups

email addie@firstplymouth.org for information.

First-Plymouth Singles News

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

Singles Upcoming Events:

Sunday Brunches

Monday Night Volleyball

New Singles Member Welcome

Singles Plus+ News

Single Adults (60 and older).

Upcoming Events:

Breakfasts & Brunches

Bridge

Church Social with a Small Dose of Spiritual

(monthly social gatherings in hosts' homes)

Sat., Feb. 25, 7:00PM, at Judy and Lowell Berg's home. Join the monthly Church Social fellowship to meet other members of the church. Rev. Jim Keck will share a small dose of spirituality and reflection. Bring an appetizer and beverage (most bring wine) to share. RSVP for directions to: lberg@neb.rr.com

Cribbage Club

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

The Future of Medicare

Wed., Feb. 15th, 6:30-8:30PM, Bell Room.

Listen to a panel of experts discuss one of the most pressing topics of our time. Panel: Dr. Leslie Spry, M.D., Nebraska Sr. Delegate to the American Medical Assn., Carol McShane, R.N., Clinical Director of NE Nursing Consultants, and Mark Intermill, Assoc. State Dir. for Advocacy with AARP of NE. *Sponsored by the Peace & Justice Committee.* Contact kim@firstplymouth.org

Women's Spring Retreat

Sat., Mar. 17th 8:00AM-3:30PM, Pilgrim Hall. This retreat offers us an opportunity to stop the hurry in our lives, to pause for leisure and be-ing time. It is an invitation to open ourselves to the feminine aspect of the Divine with many offerings to go deeper and find our special truths. Brochures are available in the literature racks. To register, contact Elizabeth at elizabeth@firstplymouth.org 476-7565 x245, or go to www.firstplymouth.org to download the registration.

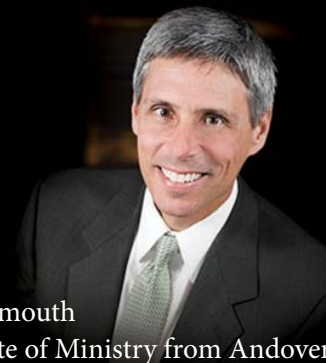
The BIBLE In AMERICA

Rev. Dr. Jim Keck, Senior Minister

Thursday, February 9, 7:00 PM, Pilgrim Hall at First-Plymouth.

There are a host of interesting contradictions. American Christians have a deep love of scripture, yet most surveys show us to be biblically illiterate. American Christians tend to claim to "follow the Bible," but then take many positions counter to scripture. This lecture will explore both a cultural history of the Bible in America and offer a theological proposal for its role in the Christian life. Rev. Dr. Jim Keck, is

the Senior Minister at First-Plymouth Church. He received his Doctorate of Ministry from Andover Newton Seminary and was ordained in the United Church of Christ in 1990. He has also served as a guest lecturer at Tufts University, Andover Newton Theological School, American Baptist School and Pacific School of Religion, as well as a keynote speaker for numerous denominational events.



Future Herald Articles

Feb. 22 deadline is noon Feb. 14

Mar. 7 deadline is noon Feb. 28

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abendmusik lincoln

FEB

19



**CHORAL
EVENSONG
in memory of
Gerre Hancock**

Sunday, February 19 at 4 PM
First-Plymouth Congregational Church - 20th & D

Don't miss this event celebrating the life and music of organist and choirmaster Gerre Hancock which will be in the form of a traditional Anglican Evensong - a program of music & scripture featuring the Lied Organ and Abendmusik Chorus singing the music of Herbert Howells, Gerre Hancock & Charles Wood .

7-Day Offering from Creighton Retreat Center

Co-led by F-P Licensed Minister,
Jeanne Johnson

Feeling a bit overwhelmed? Wanting to spend time with God and finding very little left over at the end of the day? Maybe a silent retreat is what you need. Be part of a small group and enjoy the emerging spring beauty at the Creighton Retreat Center near Griswold, IA. Jeanne Johnson will be co-leading this directed silent retreat Mar. 16-24. See fliers in the literature racks or online at www.creighton.edu/ministry/retreatcenter Registration is through Creighton for the \$410 experience which includes, lodging, food and daily spiritual direction. Contact Jeanne at peacefulspirit@yahoo.com or 402-488-8348 with questions.