

# First News



## A Note from Pastor Toni

Dear Friends,

With Christmas, we have concluded the season of Advent. The season of waiting and preparing is over, as we have celebrated the birth of Jesus. I think of the Advent Calendars we used to do with our kids. We'd open a "little window" every day and read a brief scripture or some other lesson about waiting, and sometimes they'd get a little treat along with it. As adults, some of us have taken advantage of daily readings or particular books and devotionals that we've read over the past month to help us get ready for Christ's coming. But now that all the little windows are all open, now that our daily readings have all been read...what's next? What now? What difference did any of it make?

This Advent has felt more like

the original experience of Advent. Historically, it was a time of fasting, penitence, reflection and preparation for Christ's coming. It was similar to our experience of Lent; even the liturgical color of the season, purple (and in recent years blue for Advent, as well) are the same. This is so far removed from our modern interpretation of the season, which is orchestrated by our secular world and is focused mostly it seems, on shopping, decorating, baking and partying.

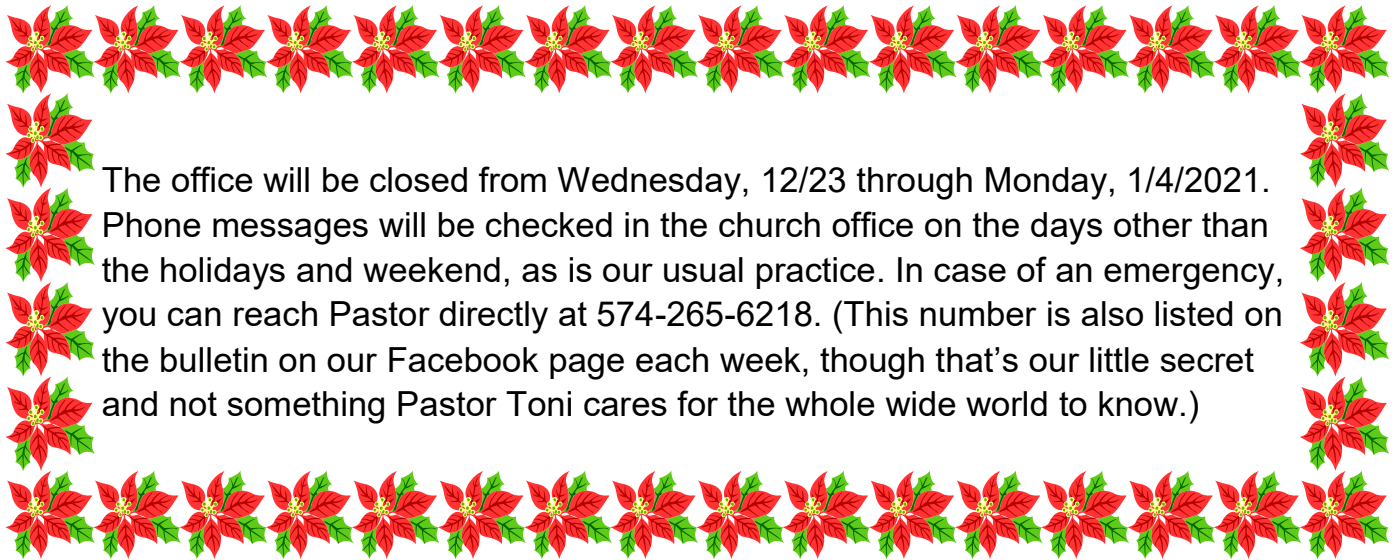
But this year was different for us. 2020 was so completely different for us! Our need to stay home, to limit our outings, to socially distance ourselves caused us to cancel so many of our usual activities. We've been doing these things for 9 and a half months now!! Per-

*(Continued on page 3)*

Inside this issue:

January Birthdays	2
Social Concerns Clothesline Report	4
Outreach Report	6
Missions Hacienda Fundraiser Report	7
January Calendar	9
Preaching Plan	10

• **Just a reminder: The office will be closed from 12/23 through 1/4/2021 as Kathy takes a few days off. See you all in 2021!**



The office will be closed from Wednesday, 12/23 through Monday, 1/4/2021. Phone messages will be checked in the church office on the days other than the holidays and weekend, as is our usual practice. In case of an emergency, you can reach Pastor directly at 574-265-6218. (This number is also listed on the bulletin on our Facebook page each week, though that's our little secret and not something Pastor Toni cares for the whole wide world to know.)

## January Birthdays

**Happy Birthday, One and All!**

- 1/1 Brian Bell
- 1/1 Ginger Bell
- 1/1 Crystal Cerrato
- 1/1 Amanda Dreibelbis
- 1/1 Adam Schell
- 1/1 David Smith
- 1/3 Angela Ganshorn
- 1/3 Leanne Senter
- 1/5 Michelle Faulstich
- 1/8 Lucas Corwin
- 1/9 Lyam Ganshorn
- 1/10 Quintella Chaney
  
- 1/11 Elaine Dick
- 1/11 Don Wilson
- 1/12 Dan Bates



- 1/13 Ryan Kaufman
- 1/15 Lily Macey
- 1/16 Bill Hemmig
- 1/17 Ashley Gray
- 1/17 Brent Kaufman
- 1/18 Jay Kendall
- 1/18 Ed Langfeldt
- 1/18 Jim Weldy
- 1/18 Mary Yates
- 1/20 Clarisse Byers
- 1/22 Ralph Booker
- 1/22 Jeanne Middleton
- 1/24 Ashley Corwin
- 1/26 Joe Morris
- 1/27 Libby Daren

# A Note from Pastor Toni continued

*(Continued from page 1)*

haps—even though we don't like it so much—we're growing more accustomed to reflection, contemplation and quiet. Yes, it's been forced upon us, but the consequence of all this has been to slow us down, to simplify our lives (kind of!), and to reconsider our priorities.

My chest tightens a bit when I hear the advertisements—even now—that family is what the season is all about. As much as I love my family, they are not what the season is about. It's Jesus. And as I adjust to not being able to spend either Thanksgiving or Christmas with my mom and sister and her family, and possibly not with our children, either (Scott and I spent Thanksgiving on our own, so if that's needed, we will be fine on our own for Christmas, too. We promise to stay out of trouble.), I will still give thanks and celebrate the love of God, who gave us the gift of Jesus. He is the reason we celebrate.

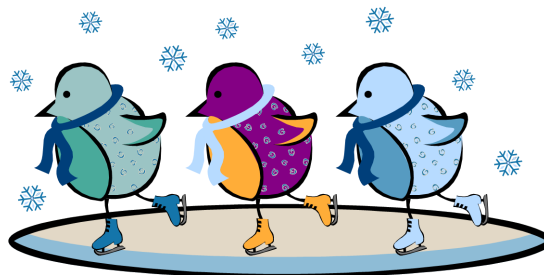
So, back to my original questions—what's next? What now? What difference did any of this make? You and I are still waiting.

Intentionally waiting. We've been given time to practice patience, to reflect on who we are and who God is. We've been offered time to pray and to keep reading if that's something we enjoy doing. Use your time well. The vaccine is coming and we will eventually be able to resume a new normal routine. We'll be able to see each other face-to-face. I'm guessing hand washing and masks will be around for a while, but hey, I've noticed I've forgotten to take mine off several times in the past couple of weeks when I've returned to my car, because it keeps my face warm! There are actually perks to masking besides keeping us well!

Jesus came to us once, and he'll come back to us again. So continue the practice of preparing your heart. There are more "little windows" yet to open, as you consider what resources are available to grow your faith. Maybe you'll even find a little treat to enjoy while you're reading. But, may you be blessed in this time you've been given.

In Christ,

*Toni*



# Social Concerns

by Mary Kaufman, Chairman

What a glorious response we had to our Christmas Clothesline Project! Even though things were a bit different than other years, your giving spirit helped us to make it a huge success! Pictured are some of the committee members who assembled the bags for delivery to the six schools where the 59 children and their siblings attend. We worked in groups of 2 or 3 people in 4 shifts for us all to stay safe. Think of the joy you made happen on Christmas!

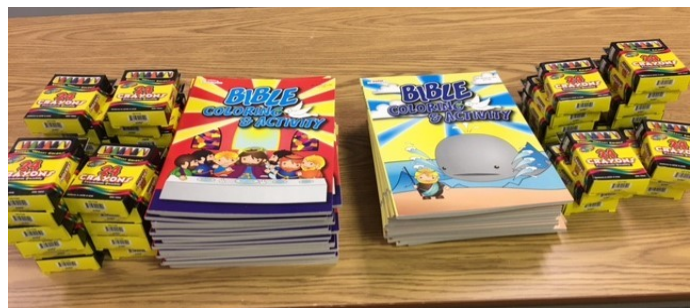


Kreighbaum, Deb Wise and Lynette Espich (and her granddaughter Emma!) and myself.



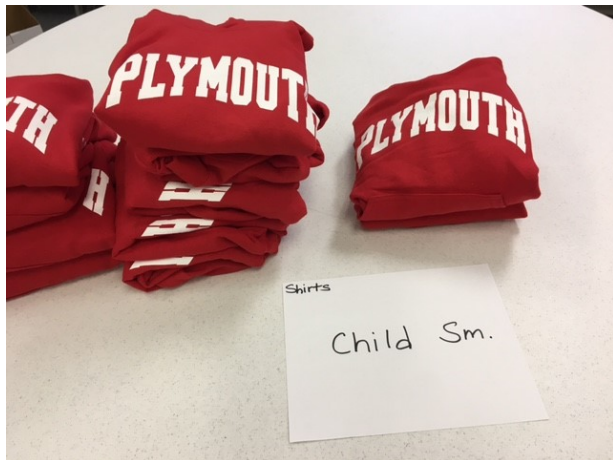
Our project was such a success that we raised \$2800; after expenses, we still have \$1,500 in the Clothesline Project fund—now that's a good problem! What we propose is that you allow us to transfer the extra \$1,500 to the fund that we use to give to agencies who help the needy during this difficult time. We think this is the best use of the funds. If you would prefer that the money that you donated to the Clothesline Project remain in that fund, please let Kathy know and we will honor your wishes.

We would like to thank the following people who created hats for the children: Carol Beiter, Lynn Gee, Grace Blanding, Joan Troup. Jeanne Middleton, Pam Michel, Deb Dixon and Yolanda Roush (Kathy Smitha's mother). Candy was donated by Pam Michel and Jeanne Middleton. Our committee members are Jane Woolfington, Barb Dreibelbis, Linda Hagan, Laura Blackford, Sherry Schinbeckler, Tom Douglass, Susie



*(Continued on page 5)*

## Social Concerns continued



*(Continued from page 4)*

We also had a very generous year of giving in 2020. These are amounts that you gave to agencies who help the needy of Plymouth: Link to Hope \$5,250; Bread of Life \$2,501; Neighborhood Center \$2,201; David's Courage \$600; FUMC Community Meal \$700, for a total \$11,252! In addition, the food drive in June contributed 3 pick-up trucks full of food to Neighborhood Center and Bread of Life! What a wonder-

ful congregation we have!

However, now is not the time for us to stop giving. The economic effects of COVID have greatly impacted the needy of Plymouth. These agencies have had more people than ever who have called upon their help, some for the first time. Needs don't end with Christmas. Let us continue to support others much less fortunate than we are in this new year. That way we show God's love and continue to live out the purpose and mission of our church.



## Use Our Mobile Giving App Over the Holidays

First United Methodist Church uses a free mobile app that makes it simple to make your gift, connect with other members and check virtual and in-person events.

Download the free "Vanco Mobile" app and search for "First United Methodist Church, Plymouth, Indiana".



# Happy New Year from the Outreach Committee

It seems like this is a message we send out month after month. Once again, support and outreach seem like insurmountable goals as we head into the winter of 2021. Although we are not able to participate in many of our small group gatherings, in person worship, choir practice, face to face meetings, the FUMC family is encouraged to support and reach out to our church members and others in the community. A kind word, a phone call, a plate of cookies left on the porch...all of these small acts of kindness can spread the goodness of our God. So, although Cookie Sunday, First Sunday Brunch, The Lunch Bunch, Game Day and other small groups are "on hiatus", our church family still requires your love, support, and outreach.

The two book groups will be meeting in January, via the marvel of Zoom. It seems like books have been an escape, an adventure, a treasure, a source of comfort for many during these past months, so the following book discussion participants want to extend an invitation to those who like to read and are anxious to share their thoughts. Contact Susan for further information. (swautelet@aol.com)

**BAD GIRLS:** This group continues to dis-



cuss the book "Fierce" which certainly is pertinent to this time of pandemic, when ferocity is a plus!!

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12:  
11:00 (Herodius)

TUESDAY, JANUARY 26:  
11:00 (Priscilla & Phoebe)

**BLESSED BOOKIES:** Once again, books offer a means to escape, dream, sympathize, laugh, and come together via Zoom!

MONDAY, JANUARY 25: 5:30 (Book of Longing)

MONDAY, FEBRUARY 22: 5:30  
(Rainwater)

MONDAY, MARCH 22: 5:30 (To Kill a Mockingbird)

Uplifting inspiration for the month of January is hard to find, but the committee of Outreach & Support would like to share the following thoughts as we head into the months of winter:

*"The shortest day has passed, and whatever nastiness of weather we may look forward to in January and February, at least we notice that the days are getting longer. Minute by minute they lengthen out. It takes some weeks before we be-*

*(Continued on page 7)*

# Outreach...continued

(Continued from page 6)

*come aware of the change. It is imperceptible even as the growth of a child, as you watch it day by day, until the moment comes when, with a start of delighted surprise, we realize that we can stay out of doors in a twilight lasting for another quarter of a precious hour."*

– Vita Sackville-West

*"Bare branches of each tree on this chilly January morn look so cold so forlorn. Gray skies dip ever so low left from yesterday's dusting of snow. Yet in the heart of each tree waiting for each who wait to see new life as warm sun and breeze will blow, like magic, unlock springs sap to flow, buds, new leaves, then blooms will grow."*

– Nelda Hartmann, January Morn

Again, we want to extend heartfelt thanks to Pastor Toni, Kathy, Jeff, Tom, Cindy, Brian, Kay, Sarah, Ralph, Katie, Donna, our trio of singers and all those who make it possible for us to worship on Sunday mornings. Our online presence continues to grow, so we are reaching many who would be unable or unwilling to attend in person service. We are reminded that the technology that we used to complain about now enables us to maintain contact with those we hold dear.

Once again, thank you for spreading love, and remember....

God is good....all the time!

God bless you all.

The Outreach and Support Committee

Susan Wautelet, Carol Beiter, Norma Booker, Betty Kay Eley, Cindy Flagg, Ed Kelso, Bert Rans, Irma Slack, Sarah Smith, Genie Tobias, Beth Pinkerton, and Anthony Witt

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## Missions Hacienda Fundraiser Report by Donna Hemmig

Thank you to all who supported the Missions Commission by eating at or ordering carry-out from Hacienda in November. We received a check for \$190.47 that will go directly to funding our mission work trips. Your support for Missions is always appreciated!



## Preaching Plan for Christmas and Season after Epiphany continued

*(Continued from page 10)*

Text: Psalm 72

Title: These Lives are Precious

Theme: We do not live in a land ruled by kings, as the hearers of our first Psalm of this series did. Still, the petitions of the psalmist for justice, deliverance, defense of the poor and oppressed, and peace for all peoples is foundational in our faith. We are reminded that a just society is one that proclaims “these lives are precious” and worthy of protection. God, indeed is holding our lives. Let this be our “epiphany” in this new year.

### January 17

*Human Relations Sunday*

Series: God is Holding Your Life

Text: Psalm 29

Title: Awe and Wonder

Theme: Strength and peace is the prayer of the Psalm this week. The Psalmist says “let me count the ways” that we can know the strength of the Holy One. With awe and wonder we behold the presence of God in all the elements of creation—water, fire, air, earth. And it is this glory that assures us that God, indeed, is holding our lives.

### January 24

*Third Sunday after the Epiphany*

Series: God is Holding Your Life

Text: Psalm 139

Title: Where Can I Go?

Theme: This week’s Psalm text brings home this message: we are in an intimate relationship with God. There is nowhere we go that God is not present—no state of our being that results in our being abandoned. God has knit us together, has woven us, knowing us from our beginning. God, indeed, is holding our lives.

### January 31

*Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany*

Rev. Mike Dixon preaching

Text: John 11: 18-27, 39-45.

Title: Will I Really Live Forever?

Theme: Would you like to live forever? At the crossroads of faith we come today to discuss the question of immortality. Yet to explain the unexplainable and to describe the indescribable and to peek through the shadows of earth and catch a glimpse of eternity is often more than our grieving minds can grasp and our questioning can assimilate. While immortality is ultimately an act of faith, there are good reasons to hold on to this belief in life after death.





# First United Methodist Church

Love God ~ Love Others ~ Serve Others

400 N. Michigan St.  
Plymouth, IN 46563

Phone: 574 936-2943  
Email: office@plymouthfirstumc.org

## January 2021

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>ALL MEETINGS HELD VIA ZOOM UNTIL FURTHER NOTICE!</li> </ul>					1  OFFICE CLOSED	2
3	4	5	6	7	8 OFFICE CLOSED	9
10	11	12 11 am Bad Girls	13	14	15	16
17	18 Martin Luther King Day 6 pm Outreach OFFICE CLOSED	19 6 pm Finance	20	21	22	23
24	25 5:30 pm Blessed Bookies 7pm Youth & Ed	26 11 am Bad Girls 5:30 pm Trustees	27	28	29	30
31						

## Kathy's Corner

Not finding emails from the church including newsletters and bulletins? Several people have told me this so I thought I'd offer some "tech" help. Look in your Junk Mail or Spam folder on your email program. Mark the email from FUMC as "not Spam/Junk" and next time, it should come through.

Do emails from the office



come through with Christine's name? It could be because that account was entered when Chris was still Office Admin. To reflect the current occupant of this desk, go to Contacts in your email program and change the name to Kathy. That should solve the problem!

Call the office for further help or information.

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Methodist Church**

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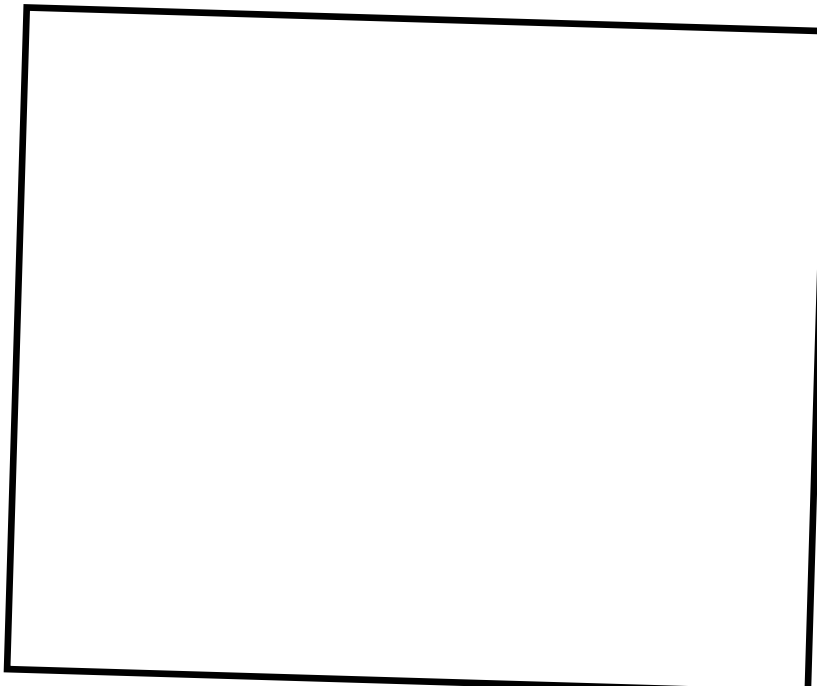
Email:

office@plymouthfirstumc.org



Sunday Service on  
Facebook at 10:30 am

Love God ~ Love Others ~ Serve Others



## Preaching Plan for Christmas and Season after Epiphany

### **December 27**

#### *First Sunday after Christmas*

Bishop Trimble and the Extended Cabinet are providing worship for our Indiana churches. The service will be posted on our Facebook page at 10:30 a.m.

Theme: After the birth of Jesus, the magi come from the east, seeking to honor the newborn king. King Herod hears of their intention and is not pleased. How does this familiar story speak to us today? How far are we willing to go to worship Jesus? What light do we follow?

### **January 3**

#### *Epiphany Sunday*

Holy Communion

Covenant Renewal

Text: Matthew 2:1-12

### **January 10**

#### *Baptism of the Lord*

Series: God is Holding Your Life

*(Continued on page 8)*