

Plymouth Pulse



Volume 1, Issue 4

Winter 2010

A Sabbatical Summary

It's good to be back! Thanks to all of you who in one way or another made the sabbatical possible and supported us through it. We've come back refreshed, grateful, and eager to continue our journey with Plymouth Heights. Here's a brief report, beginning at the end.

October: October's highlight was a second trip to Albuquerque (this time, sadly, alone). I spent 9 days in what was called an "internship" at the Center for Action and Contemplation, an organization founded and headed by the Franciscan Priest, Richard Rohr. To say that I was stretched is to put it a bit too mildly! But I also grew there and it was a wonderful place to be as I thought and prayed about re-entering ministry here. Two 20-minute periods of contemplative prayer were part of our daily diet. In the middle of our nine days was a three-day trip to El Paso where we did one of our prayer times sitting along the fence that divides El Paso from Juarez. Our days were filled with talks on spiritual disciplines (the contemplative side) and immigration issues: drugs, violence, trade, and statistical studies on immigration's impact on our economy (the action side).

After completing the nine days at the CAC, Bob Bulten picked me up and I spent a couple more days with our friends at East Central Ministries and Casa Shalom.

September & August we spent here in town so that Lori could get ready for teaching and Charlie could take Drivers' Ed. For much of August I'd take Charlie to Drivers' Ed and then spend the morning in the park working through an introduction to Greek that I'd picked up at Eerdmans a few years ago. It dawned on me as I sat filling out new vo-

cabulary cards that it'd been 30 years since I last did Greek vocab cards -- it was no fun 30 years ago and even less fun now! I am pleased to say that it's a lot easier finding my way around a Greek New Testament than it was a few months ago. Phillip also helped me install Logos Bible Software on my computer, so I've got more help at my fingertips than ever before. September and August were also months in which I pulled together a collection of Congregational Prayers. I printed up close to 400, which I then narrowed down to 100 and a final cut of 60. These were printed up during the last week of October, and I hope to make them available on Thanksgiving Day.

July and June: You read in the last newsletter of our month in Albuquerque (Lori, Charlie and I) living at Casa Shalom and working at East Central Ministries. The second half of July we headed north to Grand Canyon and Zion National Parks and spent the last week with my extended family at a beautiful ranch on Clark's Fork River in northwest Wyoming.

I should also mention that I did a lot of reading over the long summer. I'm up to 7 or 8 books by Wendell Berry, an author whose work seemed especially appropriate for a sabbatical season and the time of life we're in. The whole experience was wonderful and, best of all, it's great to be back. I know it was very good for us, and I'm praying that the benefit will extend to all of you as we begin ministry together again. Once again, thanks.

-Pastor DeVries

Equipping disciples to become neighbors...
...inviting neighbors to become disciples.

Basketball on Tuesday Nights with Mark

WHAT

Neighborhood young people play basketball every Tuesday night in Plymouth's Community Room, from 7 to 9 p.m.



WHO

Mark Bardolph is in charge, structures each basketball night, and arrives by 6:40 to be ready for the young people who come to play. Tom Van Wingerden occasionally also helps run the program when he's not busy with Friendship.

Prayer Partners are Annelle Dekker, Sid and Cate Jansma, Chrysanthi Sinniah, Helene Bardolph, Jeni Stamas, John and Ats DeVries, Lisa Brouwer, Jane Brouwer, Ralph and Carol Honderd, Steve and Lori DeVries, and Tom VanWingerden. Mark sends them a list of prayer requests each week.

Church members prepare snacks for the players. Recently, several young women from the Oasis Bible Study group came and made cookies during basketball. A child of a player and a younger brother of another player helped them!

Players are 20 to 25 young men from the neighborhood, ranging in age from 15 to 25. Occasionally there are older players and young women. There are also a few friends of players who just come to watch. Many come regularly, but on most Tuesdays there are new faces. Gabe McAllister has been coming since the program began. Michael Baker also was one of the first participants, as an eighth grader, and still comes when he's in town. He's in his second year at Trine University and brings a couple of his college friends. Mark says it's very rewarding to see how some of these young men have matured over the years.

PLAN FOR GAMES

By 7 p.m., usually 10 or more players have arrived and Mark asks them to form two teams of 5. Those not chosen are placed on a list, and will play in the next game. The games last for 10 minutes and the winning team stays on the court to play against the next 5 players on Mark's list. Play continues until 9 o'clock – usually about 8 or 9 games per night. As games wind down, snacks are set out, players are sent home, and Mark closes down about 9:15.

PLAN FOR LIVES

Before playing, players gather in a circle for a time of prayer. Mark collects prayer requests which usually come from 8 or 10 players. Mark says his goals are simple. "We try to provide a place where the guys feel welcome to come for some recreation with their friends. By doing that and getting them to come on a consistent basis, we have an opportunity to develop relationships and trust. That opens the door for discussions on what's going on in their lives, where they are spiritually, and what their concerns are. I'd love to have guys come and attend worship services at Plymouth, but for the most part those who do attend services regularly choose to attend elsewhere. In those cases, I'm thrilled that they are developing a relationship with Jesus and that they are willing to share that with me." Players have told Mark they like to come not only because they feel welcome, but also because it is a safe environment to play ball, and to bring younger siblings.

LOOKING BACK

Basketball games began in the summer of 2004. "There have been some rough patches. A few years ago, we would sometimes have 50 or more guys. That turned more into crowd control than anything else. On more than one occasion, Pastor Chris and I had to break up fights and send the guys home early. Since then, we've limited the number we allow and there really haven't been many problems." Mark also remembers the night one of the players stole Pastor Chris' minivan. More difficult were the times Mark and Chris attended funerals of players and/or siblings.

LOOKING FORWARD – Can You Help?

Mark stays involved because he enjoys basketball nights. But Mark would really like a few people to regularly help him run the games and interact with the players. He would like to spend less time monitoring the games and more time mingling. "This fall I've regularly had three Calvin students participate and it has made life a lot easier for me." Mark would also like to lengthen the list of prayer partners. Mark says that "most of the guys really appreciate that we have several members who pray for them and their concerns on a regular basis." If you feel you could help Mark, please email him.

Mark@Bardolph.net But also pray for Tom as he dedicates himself to neighborhood young men every Tuesday night, and pray that the Holy Spirit works in their lives through this program.

--Eileen Dykstra

Craft Nights

About four years ago this fun activity was initiated by Danelle Leugs and Pam Menkveld. The aim is to get people of all ages together in a social atmosphere to learn a new or fun craft or make something helpful for oneself or others.

The group meets when announced in the church bulletin, usually on a Wednesday night. In October they decorated fall wreaths. They hope to meet again in November to create decorative stationery or gift cards. You may make them to take home for yourself, or you may donate your creations to Betty Polman, who has a ministry of sending cards to church members and friends. All the paper, cutting shapes, and stamping tools are available on the third floor above the church offices. A spring event is still in the planning. A nominal fee may be charged.

The group has a good time chatting as their hands keep busy with the current project. Helpful leaders will give suggestions or instructions, or they will also leave you entirely alone to do your thing, if you wish. And tasty snacks are available to keep up your energy.



Contact Danelle (245-4072) or Pam (949-6433) for more information, or just come when you see it announced. You are very welcome – and we need enough people to attend to make it worthwhile to plan.

- Dawn Gebben

Enjoy the Value of Giving

“Appreciated Assets” can be a painless way of giving. Individuals may take a deduction on their federal income tax returns for donating appreciated assets, such as shares of stock. If the individual has owned the asset for one year or longer, the amount of the deduction is the asset's current fair market value.

Below is an example of how this works:

One hundred shares of stock purchased in 1990, for \$10 per share, equals \$1,000 cost. The current stock price is \$70 per share, or \$7,000 fair market value.

If the 100 shares are **sold**, a profit of \$6,000 results. Federal capital gains tax, state income tax, and local income tax will need to be paid on this profit.

If the 100 shares are **donated**, a charitable contribution of \$7,000 results. Instead of owing income taxes, a charitable contribution is allowed on an individual's federal income tax return.

If you have questions regarding this easy way to give appreciated property, Don Dykstra (949-8969) will be happy to help you with the paper work needed to make your contribution to Plymouth Heights.

--Richard Hoolsema

Holiday Service Schedule

Note the schedule of special services over the coming holidays:

- Nov 25 (Thursday) – Thanksgiving Day
- Dec 24 (Friday) – Christmas Eve
- Dec 26 (Sunday) – AM services only
- Dec 31 (Friday) – New Years Eve (communion)
- Jan 2, 2011 – Regular Sunday Services

The special evening services are at 7 p.m., and Thanksgiving is 10 a.m.



Alpha Report

Alpha is a 10-week evangelism program being run by Plymouth Heights and Eastminster Presbyterian Churches and the Holy Spirit.

At this writing we have had eight Thursday nights of dinners, videos, and group discussions – plus a “Day Away” at the Dominican Center on October 23. Each week six round tables are set in the Community Room with gold-colored tablecloths and china appropriate for the evening’s menu.

We could not be doing this without Dave Diepstra, our chef. Dave plans the menu each week after checking the food ads. He shops, bakes, cooks, and has everything under control when the food assistants arrive around 4:30 p.m. to help set tables and dish up the food. Our meals have been delicious! And Dave is still there putting away dishes when most of us leave at 9 p.m. The number of “guests” attending each week varies. Many are

Bathe the
Alpha
Program in
your prayers
each day!

from our neighborhood, and new guests come nearly every week, but others have attended only once. Fortunately our group leaders are flexible and graciously lead whoever is at their table. There have been around 18 different guests attending one or more times. The topics build from “Who is Jesus?” to “Have you tried praying and telling others about Jesus?”

Brian Madison, one of the pastors at Eastminster Presbyterian and a teacher at Calvin College, is upfront at each meeting with an enthusiastic greeting, information for the day, and an introduction to the topic of the Alpha DVD to be shown. He also prints the name tags each week and assigns guests to their tables – and has been seen rinsing dishes in the kitchen!

We ask your continued prayers that our guests will be open to the Holy Spirit’s work in their hearts.

- Dawn Gebben

Crossroad Bible Institute (Crossroad Prison Ministry)

Crossroad Bible Institute, also known as Crossroad Prison Ministry
www.crossroadbible.org

“Nearly 5,000 individuals donated 221,843 hours of service as volunteer instructors for the prisoners enrolled in CBI’s Bible study and reentry education program this past year, correcting students’ completed studies and responding with personal letters of encouragement. Another 655 volunteers contributed a total of 28,742 hours in the ten CBI distribution centers located worldwide, including the headquarters in Grandville, Michigan.”

Each day the headquarters in Grandville, Michigan, is alive and humming with the activity of dedicated office volunteers who open mail, address envelopes, review lessons, copy materials and do much, much more.

Plymouth’s members who correct studies are Dave and Verna Evertsberg, Alyce Boender, Ralph and Carol Honderd, Derk Oostendorp, Dawn Gebben, Hudson Nyenhuis, Trudy Borst, Gladys Van Swol, Harv Brouwer, Merrie Brouwer, Bob Bulten, Melvina VanderLinde Pranger, Marian Joling,

Louise Leugs, Tom VanderLaan, James DeJong, and Hester Monsma. (If any names have been omitted, please contact this writer!)

This ministry, which began 25 years ago, equips the church to disciple people in prison with the Word of God, free of charge, wherever they are incarcerated. Bob Bulten has been involved for about 15 years and promotes it as a significant ministry that involves no meetings, no schedules, and can be done on your own time, in your own home. Millions of incarcerated persons are searching for hope. CBI provides them with the hope offered in Christianity. If you have a passion for spreading God’s word by way of this ministry, call 531-1300, check out the above website, or ask any of Plymouth’s volunteers for information!

--Eileen Dykstra

These Plymouth Heights members were recently noted for their years of service in the Grandville office:

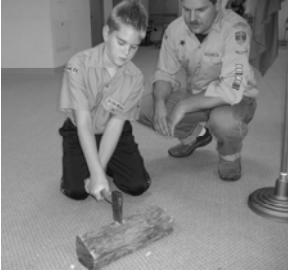
1 year: Hudson Nyenhuis

5 years: Bob Bulten, Jaltina Kehr, Johanna Duyst

12 years: Lillian DeBoer

13 years: Dave and Verna Evertsberg

Catch up on Our Cadets



The Cadet ministry at Plymouth Heights, a joint venture with Shawnee Park and Woodlawn Churches, is off to a good start with 22 boys in the program. Seven are from the community, six are from Plymouth, five are from Shawnee, and four come

from Woodlawn. Counselors are Mike Feys, Todd Menkveld, Jeff Peterson, Howard VanDenHeuvel, Everett Vanderhorst, James Vazquez and Jeff Velenga.

Cadets meet most Wednesdays from 6:45 to 8:30; they also attend two annual campouts and several area-wide events. The theme this year is “Knotted Together”, which encourages the boys to see how each person of the Trinity needs to be an important part of their daily lives. Some of the boys are working on becoming certified campers so they can attend the International Camp-o-ree next summer near Reed City.

--Mike Feys



Nursery

It's an exciting year in the Plymouth Heights nursery. We were happy to see some little ones "graduate" to Children's Worship in September, and we anticipate the arrival of new babies in the coming year. We're still sensitive to the safety of our little ones, and we appreciate your support of our efforts. We continue to need you to support the nursery: they love hav-



ing someone new to interact with on Sunday mornings. How many volunteers does it take to make a nursery run smoothly? Try over 120! Thank you to all who spend time with our littlest members. The parents appreciate your time—and the children love your energy.

-Jeni Stamas

Family Promise



Are you looking for an opportunity to serve others in our community but have limited time available? Check out Family Promise! In July 2010 Plymouth Heights began working with Fifth Reformed Church at the Greenhouse, hosting homeless families

through Family Promise.

Family Promise is based in Grand Rapids and works to “support children and their families to end their housing crises and make a sustainable change for our community in its fight to end homelessness.” Plymouth assists in this by providing evening meals, children’s activities, and overnight hosts for one or two nights every twelve weeks.

There are 14 host churches and 6 support congregations in our community. Families spend one week at each host church facility and work very closely with the Family Promise staff to obtain housing and employment that is sustainable. Family Promise’s success rate is 85% for placing families in permanent and independent housing, about double the rate of any other comparable program in our area. Why such a difference? Family Promise states that it is because of the volunteers, like us, that they are able to boast such an impressive success.

Our church will be helping Fifth Reformed Church again December 12-19. Consider stopping by to see what it is all about! Questions at any time can be directed to Missy Poortenga: 295-0192 or missy-poortenga@gmail.com

-Missy Poortenga

Yesterday's Kids

Our Plymouth Heights seniors have planned a wonderful year of events (usually on Wednesday). An organ and piano concert at a Green Lake home started the season, and on November 10 Tom Rademacher spoke for a large audience, including guests from neighboring churches, followed by lunch.

You are still in time for these upcoming events:

December 8 – Christmas Luncheon – featuring a choir from Mulick Park School along with gifts we will wrap for the kids.

December 18 – “The Glory and Majesty of Christmas” by motorcoach to Shipshewana, Indiana. Seats still available (a bargain at \$63), includes family style chicken dinner. Forms on back table.

January 12 – Dr. Ken Piers from Calvin College on “Energy Resources,” following lunch.

February 9 – Sid Lenger’s new 50-minute travelogue on India – educational and humorous.

March 9 – Andy De Vries – “The Back Side of Tragedy” on his life following a tragic motorcycle accident.

April 13 – Fanny Crosby impersonator and group singing of her familiar songs.

May 4 – Tulip Time trip to Holland, MI, to Evergreen Commons for their popular dance and song performance and lunch.

Note: each event includes a meal, usually between \$7-10, catered by “Carol.” The committee has planned a most interesting season. Please encourage them (and treat yourselves) by attending as often as you can. Your friends are always welcome, too. You are a senior if you have a desire to attend these!

Contact Tom and Marilynn Draisma for information on any of these events – 949-9468.



Kids' Night Out with Sharla



Kids' Night Out is Plymouth's main summer outreach. Sharla Seath chaired the committee for the past two years, and knows it well: she's worked on the event for five

years. This year required the help of about 100 volunteers who provided an evening of fun and relaxation for the 250-300 families that registered. The petting zoo, jump tent, face painting, fire truck (with ladder and hose spraying!), hot dogs, and ambulance were some of the highlights of the evening. This year Kids' Night Out was blessed with beautiful weather and with fun that put smiles on everybody's faces. It's so rewarding to see new people from the neighborhood enjoying a fun-filled evening with members of Plymouth. Sharla thanks all the volunteers who made the evening a suc-



cess. She gives special thanks to Kelly Buist, Jeni Stamas, and Mark Miller—the crew who “helped keep me sane” in the hours before the event. Sharla's “day job” is at Kendall Col-



lege of Art and Design, where she is Director of Administration and Finance. Credit for the pictures you see goes to a local gentleman: Sharla always forgets her camera! That's understandable—the chairman of Kids' Night Out has too many other things to remember! Thanks, Sharla, for all your work!

--Eileen Dykstra...who thanks Tom Brassler and Phillip Westra for joining her in picking up innumerable deflated water balloon pieces off the church parking lot!



Meet Missy!

Missy Harkema is the new chairperson of the Youth and Education Committee. She and her husband Todd have two children, Rachel and Garrit. Rachel is a ninth grader at Grand Rapids Christian High; Garrit is in the fifth grade at Grand Rapids Christian Middle. Both Rachel and Garrit were baptized at Plymouth. Missy grew up in Grand Rapids, was a member of Calvin CRC, graduated from Oakdale and Grand Rapids Christian High, and went on to Calvin. She is a part-time administrative assistant at High-point Real Estate & Development, where she does everything from accounting to writing leases, managing properties, listings, coordinating and reviewing closing documents. Todd was raised in Baltimore, MD, came to Grand Rapids and graduated from Calvin. He went to mortuary school in Houston, TX, and has worked at VanderLaan Funeral Home in Hudsonville for 22 years.

Missy's dream for Plymouth's youth programs is that they continue to grow, particularly the programs for younger children. She desires that "Youth/Ed be an integral part of our church and worship, and that it not only sustains and satisfies our current families but

may someday even attract new families to our church." Missy appreciates the time, energy and work of Gretchen and all the volunteers who help in Plymouth's youth programs. "I look forward to my kids becoming even more involved in the youth activities as Rachel starts Lifeline and next year Garrit will start Breakaway."



Thanks to both Missy and Gretchen for all they do for our kids. And to Plymouth's members who faithfully pray for our youth, THANK YOU!

--Eileen Dykstra

From the Library



On the inside of one CRC pulpit someone has fastened a small brass sign that says, "Sir, we would see Jesus." You may recognize that as a quote from John 12:21. Any pastor seeing this request is challenged to vividly remind listeners that Jesus IS present - sitting in the choir loft, standing on the pulpit, seated with the organist, and singing with worshippers.

Brother Lawrence, born in 1611, was determined to remind himself as often as possible that Jesus was RIGHT THERE next to him - eating lunch, working with him. Willing to share with others that his goal was to think of the presence of Christ as often as he could, he wrote down some of his thoughts in letters to many people who wrote him asking for advice.

His writings, collected in *The Practice of the Presence of God*, are still available today--in our church library, from booksellers online, and in local bookstores. This little paperback will thrill your soul and awaken your determination to put what your head knows into what your heart wants to practice. You, too, may become convinced that, like John DeVries's *Why Pray*, this little "treasurebook" merits annual re-reading. It's that good!

-Alyce Boender

Note: Karen Lundell oversees our church library and welcomes book purchase suggestions for adults and children. Call her at 831-0038.

"The Pulse" welcomes children to read and review books from our library! Call 949-8969.

Plymouth Heights Christian Reformed Church

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Minister of Worship, Leadership.....	Rev. Steve De Vries
Minister of Congregational Care	Rev. Carolyn Wharton
Minister of Youth	Gretchen Driesenga
Minister of Music	Doug De Vries
Seminarian Intern	Phillip Westra
Head Organist.....	Annelle Dekker
Secretary	Janeen Van Swol
Custodian.....	Marv Huizenga

From the Council



As summer has given way to fall, the Council is pleased that the Church Year has begun well. Many thanks to the congregation members who have volunteered their time and talents to accomplish the work of our church. The Council is aware of many of the hurts that exist in the congregation.

There are members who struggle with health, employment, and relationship issues. These concerns continue to be a

matter of prayer, and Elder/Deacon teams are working with individuals and families to bring "a cup of cold water." The Council is pleased to have Pastor Steve De Vries return to the office and pulpit in November. During his sabbatical, we know that the staff has put in many additional hours of work to meet the needs of the congregation. Thank you to Carolyn, Philip, Doug, Gretchen, Marv, Janeen, and Annelle for all their work these past months.

- Doug VanderLaan, Clerk

Dégagé

Dégagé is a downtown ministry to those needing a meal, job-seeking advice, and personal sanitary items (among many other services). Plymouth Heights serves a meal once a month. On August 13, nine mem-

bers of our Dégagé Team took 13 residents of the Heart-side area to Millennium Park for lunch and a day at the

--Pat Vanderlaan



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