



## PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

### FROM PASTOR BLAIR'S DESK

JANUARY 2026

*In those days a decree went out from Caesar Augustus that all the world should be registered.*

*This was the first registration and was taken while Quirinius was governor of Syria.*

*All went to their own towns to be registered. Joseph also went from the town of Nazareth in Galilee to Judea, to the city of David called Bethlehem, because he was descended from the house and family of David. He went to be registered with Mary, to whom he was engaged and who was expecting a child. While they were there, the time came for her to deliver her child. And she gave birth to her firstborn son and wrapped him in bands of cloth and laid him in a manger, because there was no place in the guest room. (Luke 2: 1-7 NRSV))*

There are pictures that most of us have of Christmas and they all tend to speak to similar emotions. The first picture is that of the first Christmas. It is the picture that portrays the nativity seen in many creches. It has presented the Holy Family of Mary, Joseph, and the baby Jesus surrounded by shepherds and the animals in the stable. Also included may be the Magi with their gifts. It is warm and inviting and evokes feelings of peace and warmth. A second picture is the picture of a modern family in front of a Christmas tree with presents and cookies and spiced apple cider or hot cocoa. Like the nativity scene, this picture also evokes feelings of warmth and peace. I, for one, am consistently drawn into that warmth and peace. These pictures never fail to move me.

Unfortunately, however, for many, these pictures are fiction and/or fantasy. Far from being orderly and peaceful, Christmas is stressful and disruptive. For many, Christmas is full of painful memories of those missing from that picture due to loss or estrangement. For many, Christmas is full of missed opportunities and falling short of promises made. For many, Christmas is far from warm or peaceful. It is disruptive and the cause of worry and fear.

But, isn't that the story of that first Christmas too? The simple truth was that that first Christmas was disruptive and unsettling. For Mary and Joseph, their lives were indeed disrupted and shaken to the core. Yes, they were called by God but what feelings came with that calling. Were there not also feelings of anxiety, self-doubt, unworthiness? So too with the shepherds and even the Magi.

In the end, faith is messy. It is not just warm apple cider or hot chocolate on a cold and dark night. It is not just feelings of love and peace with family and friends. We live lives that are continually disruptive even if it is for the best of reasons. And so, maybe the prayer that can best be said at this time of the year and at the beginning of a new year is the one that we find on many doormats or on cross-stitched wall hangings: "Bless this mess." This can be hopeful because it often from that mess; that disruption that we find the fullness of God's providence. Maybe life is meant to be messy because that mess is, itself, creative. When we deal with the mess of faith, we find the consistency of God and that is the true promise of Christmas. The stable is drafty and smells of animals. It is messy and, in that mess, we find the warmth and peace that we are seeking.

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Yours in Christ,  
Pastor Blair

## FOLLOW THE LECTIONARY

**January 1, 2026**  
**New Year's Day**  
 Ecclesiastes 3:1-13  
 Psalms 8  
 Revelations 21:1-6a  
 Matthew 25:31-46

**January 4, 2026**  
**Second Sunday after Christmas**  
*Another Road*  
 Jerimiah 31:7-14 or Sirach 234:1-12  
 Psalms 147:12-20  
 Ephesians 1:3-14  
**John 1:(1-9), 10-18**

**January 5, 2026**  
**Epiphany**  
 Isaiah 60:1-6  
 Psalms 72:1-7, 10-14  
 Ephesians 3:1-12  
**Matthew 2:1-12**

**January 11, 2026**  
**Baptism of Christ**  
*Possibilities Unfolding*  
 Isaiah 42:1-9  
 Psalms 29  
 Acts 10:34-43  
**Matthew 3:13-17**

**January 18, 2026**  
**Second Sunday after Epiphany**  
 Isaiah 49:1-7  
 Psalms 40:1-11  
 I Corinthians 1:1-9  
**John 1:29-42**

**January 25, 2026**  
**Third Sunday after Epiphany**  
 Isaiah 9:1-4  
 Psalms 27:1, 4-9  
 I Corinthians 1:10-18  
**Matthew 4:12-23**

## REMEMBER IN YOUR PRAYERS

Koos O'Kennedy, Dustan Burgard, Cooper Davis, Alan Eppen, Karen Filegar, Eric Gerber, Jaxon Kaiser, Bob Olson, Joyce Ochsner, Marjorie Ormand, JoAnn Sanborn, Eddy Schaeffer, Jeannette Sorge, Shirley Schaeffer, Janet Von Eschen, Alan & Corene Chapman, and Greg Wilson.

**Pray for our members and friends who reside in care facilities or are shut-ins, wherever they reside:**

Dale Mork, Ernest Schipke, Betty Betten, Colleen Carman, Dorothy Dockter, Erna Gross, Betty Gutjahr, Emma Heiser, Alice Hopfinger, Ruth Overby, Priscilla Pfeifle, Joan Sanders, Kelli Wells, Nancy Wells and June Whites.

*Please contact the church office (225-2557)  
 to be added to or removed from the Prayer List.*



**REMEMBER  
 OUR SERVICE PEOPLE  
 And All the Troops Stationed  
 Around the World**

### Songs to check out !

"Lord, You Are My Strength" by Juno Skye

"Victory In Jesus" by The Band Steele

"Billboard Jesus" by Whey Jennings

"What a Day That will be" by Drew Parker

"Oh Death" by Mercy Me

"Will the Lord Remember Me" by The Red Clay Stays

These are a few of the songs I found over the last year. I hope you enjoy them as much as I have.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR MODERATOR

We should all look forward to the New Year and opportunities it may provide to all. I hope Christmas was good for all of the members and your families. As we start the new year, be kind to and love one another. Pray that the members of the Congregation who are ill or alone do well during the coming months. Please support Mark as he begins the year as your new moderator.

God Bless you all,

Brad Olson

### Women's Fellowship Report

Women's Fellowship met Dec. 11 in the church library.

Treasurer report showed a balance of \$29,511.76.

Donna reported that the nuts have arrived and that she has been distributing them.

We thanked Ed and Joan Bosanko for the new Christmas tree in the sanctuary.

Linda reported that the Women's Fellowship will no longer have a chare account at Kessler's.

People using the kitchen are asked to clean up afterwards as soon as possible.

We can always use Kool whip containers.

Monetary Christmas gifts were given to church employees.

We will not meet in January. Our next meeting will be Feb. 12, 2026.



**Yes! We still have a few nuts for sale!**  
**Nuts Prices have increased. Limited amount left so check**  
**With Donna Masters (605)228-9307**  
**Or Call the Church and ask Laura. (605)225-2557**

# CELEBRATIONS

## HAPPY BIRTHDAY!

- 01-05 Jeffery Sederquist  
Jay Lier
- 01-14 Lain Leddy  
Kendalyn Kramp
- 01-16 Thomas Niederbaumer
- 01-17 Lynn Cunningham  
Russ Ochsner
- 01-18 Dennis Von Eschen
- 01-19 Payton Rasmussen
- 01-20 Doug Mundt  
Nicole Christiansen
- 01-22 Melissa Schaeffer
- 01-23 Tammi Regula
- 01-24 Dick Gohn
- 01-25 Karen Filegar
- 01-26 Lynette Mulder  
Betty Kost
- 01-27 Robin Bitz

## HAPPY ANNIVERSARY!

- 01/03 Jay & Kristin Tobin 29 Years
- 01/15 Gene & Karen Mastel 60 Years
- 01/18 Kevin & Molly Johnson 35 Years

*Note: If you know of a birthday or an anniversary that was missed, we are deeply sorry. Please advise the Plymouth Congregational Secretary and she will make sure the dates are calendared for the future.*

### Pastoral Relations Committee Members 2026

- Dani Roeker (Chairperson) (605)377-3080
- Sheila Apland-Ottenbacher (605)380-8688
- Alan Chapman (605)377-3291
- Rhonda Masters (605)380-0436
- Donna Masters (605)228-9307
- Brad Olson (605)216-2450
- Rev. Blair Kirkpatrick (605)228-9307

### 2026 Visioning Team Members

- Moderator Mark Gutjahr-(605)228-5150
- Moderator Elect Gail Gutjahr-(605)216-6961
- Facility Manager Alan Chapman-(605)377-3291
- Communications Patricia Swanson-(605)730-0714
- WF Representative Donna Masters-(605)228-9307
- At Large Dani Roeker-(605)377-3080
- At Large Ron Beil-(605)228-1035
- At Large Chad Masters-(605)380-0498
- Financial Ed Bosanko-(605)228-2486
- Spiritual Sheila Apland-Ottenbacher-(605)380-8688
- Auditor Rod Fouberg-(605)229-1310



January Flower  
Carnation



January Birthstone  
Garnet

**2025 Annual Final Fiscal Meeting**  
will be held Sunday January 11th (Pledge Sunday)  
following service,  
with meal to follow meeting.  
Everyone encouraged to join.



Beyond the Balloon is providing balloon bouquets again  
this year for area care facilities in February.

Cost is \$10 per bouquet.

Let Pastor Sheila know

or mark your offering for the balloon bouquets.

Thank you.



**THIS MONTH AT PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL  
January 2026**

Thur, Jan 1 Happy New Year (Office Closed)

Sun, Jan 4 **Second Sunday After Christmas**  
10a-Worship; Holy Communion  
11a-Fellowship

Tue, Jan 6 Epiphany  
7p-DAV

Sun, Jan 11 **Baptism of Christ**  
10a-Worship  
11a-Annual Final Fiscal Meeting; meal to follow  
4:30p Confirmation

Tue, Jan 13 7p-DAV

Wed, Jan 14 3:30p-G2G

Sun, Jan 18 **Second Sunday after the Epiphany**  
10a-Worship  
11a-Fellowship

Tue, Jan 20 6:30p-Visioning Team Meeting  
**NEWSLETTER ITEMS DUE**

Wed, Jan 21 3:30p-G2G

Sun, Jan 25 **Third Sunday after Epiphany**  
10a-Worship  
11a-Fellowship  
4:30p- Confirmation

Wed, Jan 28 3:30p-G2G



## Plymouth Congregational Church

### January 2026

SUNDAY	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
				1 Happy New Year's Day	2	3
4 Second Sunday after Christmas 10a-Worship; Communion 11a-Fellowship	5	6 Epiphany	7 No G2G	8	9	10
11 Baptism of Christ 10a-Worship; Pledge Sunday 11a-2025 Annual Final Fiscal meeting Meal to follow 4:30 Confirmation	12	13 7p-DAV	14 3:30p-G2G	15	16	17
18 Second Sunday after the Epiphany 10a-Worship 11a-Fellowship	19	20 6:30p Visioning Team Meeting <u>NEWSLET- TER</u> <u>ITEMS DUE</u>	21 3:30p-G2G	22	23	24
25 Third Sunday after the Epiphany 10a-Worship 11a-Fellowship 4:30 Confirmation	26	27	28 3:30p-G2G	29	30	31



PLYMOUTH  
ROCKS  
*Church and Family Life*  
Rev. Sheila Apland-Ottenbacher



New church website:  
[plymouthaberdeen.com](http://plymouthaberdeen.com)

Don't forget to follow us on:



<https://www.facebook.com/plymouthaberdeen>



<https://www.youtube.com/@PlymouthUCCAberdeen>

[#PlymouthROCKS](#)  
[#PlymouthUCCAberdeen](#)

G2G will restart on January 14<sup>th</sup>.



Our Children's Christmas Program was titled, "Jesus' First Family" and featured the animals from the manger. The children shared the song, "Friendly Beasts."



Many thanks to all those that donated to our families in need this Christmas. You have been a blessing to those who have been struggling at this time of year. Thank you for sharing God's love.

**A LOOK AHEAD**  
**\*\*\* FEBRUARY 2026 \*\*\***  
**PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL UCC**

SUNDAY	MON	TUE	WED	THUR	FRI	SAT
1 Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany 10a-Worship; Communion 11a-Fellowship	2	3	4 3:30p-G2G	5	6	7
8 Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany 10a-Worship 11a-Fellowship 4:30p-Confirmation	9	10 7p-DAV	11 3:30p-G2G	12 7p-WF meeting	13	14 Happy Valentines Day  
15 Transfiguration 10a-Worship 11a-Fellowship	16	17 6:30p Visioning Team Meeting <u>NEWSLETTER</u> <u>ITEMS DUE</u>	18 Ash Wednesday 6p	19	20	21
22 First Sunday in Lent 10a-Worship 11a-Fellowship 4:30 Confirmation	23	24	25 3:30pG2G	26	27	28





Dennis Elwood Gelling, 77, of Aberdeen, SD, passed away on December 25, 2025, after a courageous 19-month battle with ALS. He was a devoted husband to Wanda (Schaunaman) Gelling and a loving father to Curt Gelling and Kelly (Gelling) Burgard.

A Memorial Service will be at 10:30 a.m. on Saturday, January 10, 2026, at Schriver's Memorial Chapel, with Pastor Brad Felix officiating. Military Honors will follow the service.

A time for fellowship and lunch will follow at Schriver's Memorial Fellowship Center.

Visitation will be from 5-7 p.m. on Friday, January 9, at Schriver's Memorial Chapel. Visitation continues one hour before the service.

In lieu of flowers, donations can be made to ALS Organization or Midwest Honor Flight.

Dennis Elwood Gelling was born to Clifford "Bud" and Dorthy (Coffman) Gelling on July 6, 1948, in Webster, SD. He attended Barnard School and also drove the school buses at 16. This is where he discovered his lifelong passion for auto mechanics, and repairing buses and his own vehicles. After High School graduation, he attended North Dakota State College of Science in Wahpeton, ND, for auto mechanics. Immediately after graduating, he was drafted into the US Army, starting basic training on his 21st birthday in 1969, and served until July 1, 1971.

After basic training before his deployment in the Vietnam War, he married his high school sweetheart, Wanda Schaunaman on November 22, 1969. He served his country in Vietnam for one year, then finished his deployment in Anchorage, Alaska, for seven months. Continuing his love for vehicles, he earned extra money flipping vehicles and was known as "the Army car salesman." Wanda and Curt joined him, driving their El Camino 2,945 miles back to Aberdeen, a marriage bonding event.

Upon returning home, he took his first full-time job on July 6, 1971, with Aberdeen Motors, working for Julius Kirschenmann, a lifelong mentor and friend. In 1990, he started his own auto repair shop, Gelling's Auto Service, on 3rd Avenue, then moved to its current location on Roosevelt in 1993. He grew this business from four employees to eight, three bays to 10, ensuring every customer received a repaired vehicle! Working for over 56 years, he was committed to going into the shop up until two weeks before his passing.

In his spare time, he could be found at the race track, fishing, or on his snowmobile. These hobbies and interests helped define who he was. His love for car racing, fishing, and snowmobiling was something he shared with his children, leaving a mark on them that will never fade.

His vacations included trips to the Black Hills, Yellowstone, the Big Horns, Togwotee, and Michigan for snowmobiling; fishing at the River, in Canada, and in Minnesota; and racing all over the Midwest, and attending NASCAR races in Bristol, Las Vegas, Charlotte, and Michigan. These were often enjoyed with his family, friends, and anyone who would go!

Dennis was an active member of the Aberdeen Drift Busters Snowmobile Club and Jobee Acre's Association, serving on the boards, leading rides, projects, and keeping the subdivision cleared of snow.

His work ethic, perseverance through adversity, business acumen, innovative solutions, love for animals, and storytelling are a few things that Dennis will be remembered for. Throughout his ALS battle, he continued to live life, participating in Midwest Honor Flight Mission 21, attending car races, traveling to his grandson Justen's wedding, working, and mentoring others up until the end.

Dennis loved watching, supporting, and coaching Curt's car racing for over 30 years, and then even more so when his grandson, Chase, began racing in 2020. He was their biggest fan and will continue to watch over them.

Dennis is survived by his wife of 56 years, Wanda Gelling; his mother Dorothy Dockter; his son Curt Gelling; his daughter, Kelly (Shawn) Burgard; his grandchildren: Justen (Kelsey) Gelling, Sydney Gelling, Chase Gelling, Nathan (Cara) Burgard and Lauren Burgard; his great-granddaughter Maeve Gelling; his brother, Doug Gelling; his sister Nancy Vining; and many friends and extended family who will miss him dearly. We find comfort in knowing that his legacy lives on through the lessons he taught us, the love he shared, and the memories we will cherish forever.

Dennis was preceded in death by his father, Bud Gelling, and all of his grandparents.

Dennis especially loved and had a special bond with Wanda's family: Charles & Arlene Schaunaman (deceased), Diane & Bud Dunkel, Larry & Cyndy Schaunaman, Neil & Lora Schaunaman, and Karla & Dale Strege, all of whom treated him as their own son and brother.

**2025 MEMBERSHIP AND SACRAMENTS & CEREMONIES**

Membership as of January 1, 2025	192 Members
Incoming Membership for 2024	3 New Members
Outgoing Membership for 2024	8 Deaths
<b>Membership as of December 31, 2025</b>	<b>187 Members</b>

**Baptism—0**

**New Members—3**

3/30

Lauren Tobin, Eric Lipp & Kordel Chmela

**Marriage—3**

Hailey Buckmeier & Reese Tobin-6/28

Elaina Schmidt & Dillon Hier-7/12

Sydney Loken & Michael Kraft-10/10

**Deaths—8 members + 2 non-member funerals**

Mary Cross— Funeral 5/3/2025 passed in MN 12/27/2024

Joan Williams	5/6/25	Lu Van Beek	Funeral 5/17/2025
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Linda Mork	6/11/25	William Haigh	6/11/2025
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Lovila Hanson	Funeral 8/2/2025	Sharyn Elliot	9/13/2025
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Erna Gross	9/26/2025	Lois Wales	11/27/2025
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Dennis Gelling	12/25/2025
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**100 Birthday Celebration**

Shirley Fetherhuff 6/9/2025 Celebrated 6/15/2025

**PLYMOUTH CONGREGATIONAL  
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST**

431 West Melgaard Road  
Aberdeen, SD 57401

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Aberdeen, S.D.

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REACHING OUT,  
RENEWING LIVES



Church Staff:

Pastor	Rev. Blair Kirkpatrick
Minister of Church and Family Life	Rev. Sheila Apland-Ottenbacher
Secretary	Laura Bunke
Director of Music Ministry	Missy Nguyen
Child Care Attendant	Eloise Appletoft
Custodian	Lois Korf
Facilities Manager	Alan Chapman

OFFICE HOURS: 9:00—2:00, Mon, Wed-Fri.

Phone: (605) 225-2557

Email: [sec.plymouth@midconetwork.com](mailto:sec.plymouth@midconetwork.com)

[www.plymouthaberdeen.com](http://www.plymouthaberdeen.com)

**WORSHIP SERVICES**

**SUNDAY 10:00 AM**

[www.plymouthaberdeen.com](http://www.plymouthaberdeen.com)

