

SUNDAY WORSHIP FOR JANUARY

January 3: Rev. Dr. Eric C. Smith [Jeremiah 31:7-14](#), [John 1:\(1-9\), 10-18](#)

January 10: Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas [Matthew 2:1-12](#), [Isaiah 60:1-6](#)

January 17: Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas [1 Samuel 3:1-10, \(11-20\)](#)

January 24: Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas [Jonah 3:1-5, 10](#)

January 31: Rev. Dr. Eric C. Smith [Deuteronomy 18:15-20](#), [Mark 1:21-28](#)



Worship with us remotely on Sundays at 10:00 AM at
<https://firstplymouthchurch.org/worship/>
or view previous services on the [FPUCC YouTube Station](#).

A Message From Pastoral Care

"The thief comes only to steal and kill and destroy. I came that they may have life, and have it abundantly."

-John 10:10

If one were to ask me if I were a practitioner or propagator of the prosperity gospel, I would reply with a resounding "NO." The prosperity gospel best known in the United States of America and other parts of the world is all about money and a capitalistic, carnal, common understanding of what it means to prosper. Not only does prosperity gospel, as it is routinely understood, celebrate God's intent for humanity in terms of financial excess, it teaches that persons favored by God will be free from illness and injury. This system of belief, in my view, is downright dangerous. I have, however, imagined a reframing of the prosperity gospel based in a more faithful Biblical Hermeneutic. This hermeneutic understands the success, yes, prosperity which God intends for humanity to be rooted in justice, righteousness, all having enough. I write these words to declare my immense feeling of prosperity in this moment. In this season of my life, I have been richly blessed with a partner, Marquisha, who is my true compliment; a magnificent child, Sadie, who is a daily joy; and a wonderful people with which to partner in ministry called First Plymouth. Marquisha and I are filled with gratitude for each card, text, email, meal, gift, and gem of encouragement we have received from you, First Plymouth. We are also grateful for the gift of parental leave that we might spend these initial moments with Sadie to give her attention and care in this fleeting newborn phase.

Beginning January 1, 2021, I will take six weeks of Parental leave. After which, I plan to return to the work of Pastoral Care at First Plymouth as usual. In my absence, Lois McCloskey, our immensely capable Parish Visitor, has kindly agreed to stand, sit, and function in a fuller pastoral care role. While I don't believe in a gospel of prosperity rooted in financial wealth, absence of sickness, and the incompatibility of suffering with God's favor, I am living an experience of prosperity as understood in the gospel. It is my prayer that all might experience this kind of abundance.

Together,
Anthony



Hedy Asenjo
Talise Asenjo-Ludwig
Rachel Bandy
Peter Bauer
Bill Blunden
Judith Clausen
Sandy Clough
Jean Clough
Nancy Cole
Charlie Dempster
Beth Eha
Peter Fogg
Ann Gifford
Diane Goodwin
Eva Heller
Mia Henderson
Faith Henderson
Mackenzie Hill
Ken Hoagland
Dianne Hornbrook
Ken Hovland
Amanda Irtz
Vicki Krieger
Marlene Leslie
Leann Luttkus
Devon Lynch
Judy Macomber
Ben McCoy
Alyssa McKenna
David Nestor
John Origer
Ed Parmee
Richard Read
Eileen Robinson
Jessica Roe
Clark Roe
Dick Seeley
Nancy Joe Shaw
Sandoval Stevens
Marion Taylor
James Thompson
William Tice
Jan Updike
Carol Weldon
Deanna Wilsam
Miles Wilson
George Young

From the Pastor's Desk

Dear First Plymouth Community and Friends,

Happy New Year! Most of us have longed for this day, to put 2020 behind us, and to look to a new day! Perhaps this is the year when we will no longer have to hoard toilet paper or hide our smiles behind layers of sewn cloth garnished with our favorite sports teams and memes. Maybe 2021 will bring an abandonment of arms and violence and a renewal to peace and cooperation, hospitality and generosity. Perhaps the community will reconvene in the commons taking back the center, as elders in the park discuss neighborhood business over baked beans and BBQ, as children flee their screens for the abundant and desperate Earth that calls to them from the green. Perhaps this will be the year life is lived not by the hurried hour or half-past its deadline, but by budding friendships, and by the sharing of story, and pain and joy; as priorities once sprayed with tans of gold, have melted into the dust of our humanity, and all that's left: the art of conversation, the gift of sharing silence, and the power of Earth's slow passing.

Maybe 2021 will give us access to all the dreams to which we've been clinging, and give way to our most anticipated hopes under a new political administration, a new social ethic, a new civic mandate, and a demand for racial equity for our black and brown siblings. Maybe reparations will move from being a 4th-grade spelling word to a campaign slogan plastered on billboards across the deep South. Maybe, just maybe, things will start to change...

I have come to believe that 2021 like 2020, and every other year in our history, will be exactly as we make it. We will create the today we most believe in, and we will keep hoping for the tomorrow we aren't brave enough to choose today.

So, let's break the mold; let's stop making half-hearted New Year's resolutions and commit to creating a lived-revolution. A social revolution involves "sudden changes in the structure and nature of society. These revolutions are usually recognized as having transformed in society, culture, philosophy, and technology much more than political systems."

Along with much grief and trauma and the enormity of loss that we have experienced over these last ten months have also come the red-hot seeds of revolutionary change. Early harbingers include millions of Brazilians banging pots and pans from their windows to protest against their government, or Lebanese prisoners rioting in their overcrowded jails, or the thousands of Americans who camped out in the streets proclaiming Black Lives Matter after the murders of George Floyd, Breonna Taylor and Elijah McClain.

What does living a revolutionary life look like for you? It's important to remember that each of us has a unique role to play in creating the change our world needs "to survive" and "thrive."

The great German mystic and prophetess, Saint Hildegard of Bingen said, "We cannot live in a world that is not our own, in a world that is interpreted for us by others . . . Part of the terror is to take back our own listening, to use our own voice."

Church, there will always be competing voices speaking half-truths and alternative facts into our lives alongside the voice of God, the voice of LOVE. May this be the year we listen closely to the voice within, to the gentle and yet fiercely persistent whisper of Spirit who never abandons, never forgets, and never ceases to call us to more. May 2021 be the year that we demand "more" from ourselves and, as the revolutionary leader Mahatma Gandhi said, commit to "being the change we wish to see in the world."

Happy New Year! May we turn our New Year's resolutions into a living revolution!

Spirit is leading the way,

Rev. Jenny Shultz-Thomas

#2021Resolution2Revolution



2020-2021 FIRST PLYMOUTH CHURCH COUNCIL

Moderator	Members at Large:
Phil Thompson	June 2021: Allison Pasternak and Sandy Clough
Vice Moderator	June 2022: Laura Eley and David Stevenson
Liz Mascitelli	June 2023: Deborah Arca and Robert Henderson
Treasurer	
Carole Westphal	
Church Clerk	
Pat Olson	

Stay in Touch!

First Plymouth uses MailChimp to send semi-weekly and monthly updates to those who "opt-in" via a subscription form, whether members or not at <https://tinyurl.com/y5md9ytp>.

Members & Friends can maintain their own information in [ShelbyNext](#) with their own credentials. Need credentials? Contact the editor at editor@firstplymouthchurch.org.

Join virtual meetings and classes from the church calendar at <https://tinyurl.com/y2jvogby>.

FIRST PLYMOUTH OFFICE CONTACTS

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Director of Children's Ministry Alix Wright fpchildren@firstplymouthchurch.org	Office Coordinator Lisa Medina office@firstplymouthchurch.org
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MINISTRY NEWS

The **Racial Equity Team** announces a virtual book event with award-winning authors Michael W. Waters and Beto O'Rourke, January 12 at 6:00 PM. Hear readings from their new book "Something in the Water: A 21st Century Civil Right Odyssey," and join in a stirring discussion on racism in America and our role in it. Moderated by Leah Gunning Francis, Vice President of Christian Theological Seminary and author of "Ferguson and Faith: Sparking Leadership and Awakening Community." Registration is free at <https://bit.ly/3pi5PZC>.

COMMUNITY NEWS

Men's Fellowship meets via [ZOOM](#) on Saturday, January 9 at 10:00 AM for a presentation, "Living Younger Longer through Tai Chi." Joe Brady, owner of The Living Younger Longer Institute, and the Tai Chi instructor who provided classes at First Plymouth prior to the building closure, will offer an introduction to Tai Chi. Tune in wearing comfortable clothing, and enjoy the benefits of basic Tai Chi moves. Lower your stress, plus improve your balance and breathing. This might not seem like your father's typical Men's Fellowship event; but give it a try! This might be just what you need to cope with the confinements of the COVID-19 pandemic. Women are especially invited to participate, dragging their partners along if needed!

Looking for renewal when the new year begins? Join us for a new class, "**Living With Hope in These Troubled Times.**" This 4-week online ZOOM course, led by Anne Kleinkopf and Phyllis Updike, will offer contemplative, spiritual, meditative practices to interested seekers. Participants are not required to have a background in biblical, theological scholarship, nor spiritual/faith affiliation to participate. Each one hour class will provide suggested scripture, brief background material, and a meditative, contemplative practice intended to help create more easily accessed experience of presence of spiritually-informed hope and resilience in daily life. Though essentially grounded in the Christian tradition, other insights/practices from world religions with commonly shared beliefs will be presented. Online ZOOM classes begin at 4:00 PM, Wednesday, January 6, and continue for four sessions. Questions? To pre-register, please contact the church office: office@firstplymouthchurch.org.

Tax Year 2020 ended December 31! First Plymouth urges you NOT to file your taxes until you receive your 2020 Contribution Statement if you plan to itemize. Statements will be mailed before January 31. An announcement of the mailing date will be included in the semi-weekly updates in January.

Support the **Youth Group** Programs with FREE money from King Soopers! Attach First Plymouth (JR228) as your charity of choice to your shopping card from the King Sooper's website at <https://www.kingsoopers.com/>.

"GREENING-UP" DURING PANDEMIC



First Plymouth Church is finishing up converting all of the interior church lights to LED bulbs. This conversion will not only significantly reduce the church's carbon footprint and help reduce global warming, but will also pay for itself in two years. The project is being undertaken jointly by volunteers from the Facilities Team and FP staff. The project was funded through the Green Energy Fund of the Creation Justice Ministry. Technical assistance and financial support has been provided by Urban Lights of Denver (@urbanlightsdenver).

JANUARY SHARE-THE-PLATE

Founded in 2002, the Second Wind Fund (SWF) has built an innovative program that matches children and teens, ages 19 and younger, who are at risk for suicide and do not have the means or adequate insurance to pay for necessary mental health treatment, with licensed therapists in their local communities. So far over 6,500 Colorado kids have been referred to SWF. SWF's unique program provides an avenue for families to obtain actual treatment services for youth at risk for suicide by breaking down financial and transportation barriers.

Please contribute to Share-the-Plate via [Text-to-Give](#), [ACH](#) or [Credit Card](#) or by check **made out to First Plymouth Church with "STP"** noted on the memo line and mailed to the church.

Meet Jim Stahler!

Say "Hello" to Jim Stahler, a long-time Colorado resident who was born in Detroit, Michigan in 1929, "the year the stock market crashed," as he often points out with a chuckle. Jim graduated from Redford High School, and soon met Marilyn Osborne during a church function at Mayflower Congregational Church, in Detroit. Jim and Marilyn married in 1957.



In 1969, Jim and Marilyn and their two children, Tom and Pam, moved to Denver due to a job transfer by Jim's employer, Honeywell Photographic Division. In 1984, the couple moved back to Detroit when Marilyn became ill. A few months later, she passed away, at age 50. Jim remained in Michigan up until his retirement 10 years later, when he returned to Colorado to stay for good.

Jim's greatest joy is interacting with people. He always has a friendly smile for friends and strangers alike, and takes a keen interest in everyone he meets. Over the course of his career in sales and marketing, his outgoing nature helped him easily connect with others, beginning with his sales position at Silhouette Camera up through his position as national accounts manager with MCI.

Always an avid photographer, Jim used his skills during the Korean War to shoot pictures of plane crash sites for the United States Air Force. Throughout his life, he always had a camera at his side or over his shoulder, ready to capture images of beautiful Colorado, interesting sights and images, and his friends and family, including his four grandchildren: Andrew, Sydney, Alison and Julien.

After his retirement, Jim became active in First Plymouth Congregational Church, where he used his computer to make large posters for various church functions, served on the Whole Earth Committee, and photographed members for the annual Church Directory. One of his most memorable projects was taking part in the search for a new minister, resulting in the hiring of Reverend George Anastos.

Jim lived in Centennial up until five years ago, when he moved to assisted living. He currently lives at Willowbrook Place, in Littleton. He is in good health, enjoys conversation during mealtimes, and loves visits from his family. Since the start of the COVID-19 health crisis, the visits have been virtual, outdoors or through the window, but he is always thrilled to see his family whenever they call or stop by.

ADULT FORUM: SUNDAYS AT 11:15 AM

January 3: Second Wind Fund

The January Share-the-Plate recipient, SWF, will share their mission and commitment to children who are at-risk of suicide.

January 10: Coronavirus Vaccines -

What are the Differences? Does it Matter?

How do vaccines work? Why do some vaccines have to be stored at very cold temperatures, but other vaccines do not? [Factoid: storage of vaccines has never required this low temperature before.] What are the pros and cons of the first vaccines that are coming available?

January 24: Anti-Racism 4REALS (plan for 1.5hrs workshop)

Have you ever been to the "meeting after the meeting" - where all that happens is more talk without the change that's talked about? In this workshop, we will do Anti-Racism 4REALS: Real Talk with Real Strategies in Real Time for Real Change. If Anti-Racism requires racism to be interrupted and dismantled - we need concrete ways to do so. Before you hit "leave meeting," every participant will have available at least 2 ways to DO the work that Anti-Racism requires.

[Join us for these virtual programs with the links from the church calendar.](#)

December's Joys and Concerns



For our members' privacy, a list of the prior month's Joys and Concerns is available on the church website under the [FP Members](#) section. Email your Joys and Concerns to Rev. Dr. Anthony Scott at pastoralcare@firstplymouthchurch.org for inclusion on our webpage.



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THE MONTHLY NEWSLETTER