

FIRST PLYMOUTH YOUTH NEWS

esmith@firstplymouthchurch.org

JANUARY 2009

One of the things I like to do is split firewood. It's really, really hard work, and it can be kind of a mess, but it can also be incredibly satisfying.

One of the tricks about splitting firewood is that it doesn't really matter how strong you are. You might think that the best technique would be to just swing the axe as hard as you can, but that rarely works.

No, the best way to split firewood is to work slowly. All you really need is a small crack in the wood, or a weak place in it. If you get your axe into that small space, you can use a hammer or sledgehammer (or other axe) to slowly drive the blade into the wood. One you've started down that path, 9 out of 10 times you can split the wood with almost no effort.

Our lives with God are a lot like that. It's not the huge axe swings that cause us to break apart. It's the small but persistent hammering away at our weakest places that can drive a wedge between us and God. Maybe it's arguing with our family. Maybe it's a friend or a boyfriend or girlfriend that convinces us to do something we otherwise wouldn't do. Maybe it's our own insecurity, anger, or resentment that builds up inside. Whatever it is—whatever the weakness is in you—pay attention to that, because that's the place you have to watch most closely.

The good news is that, as the Bible tells us, "nothing can separate us from the love of God." No matter how large we let that split get, God will still be there. And that's good news!

See you on Sunday,

Eric.



SENIOR HIGH MISSION TRIP

The voters have spoken! We took a poll, and a majority of senior high schoolers wanted to return to New Orleans for our 2009 mission trip! The Senior High Mission Trip will be held at the Westside Christian Church in New Orleans July 5-16, 2009.

The trip is open to rising 9th graders through rising college freshmen. The cost will be \$300 plus participation in fundraising activities. We'll spend most of our time in New Orleans with a couple of day trips outside the city.

Parents and youth should have received an e-mail with all the details on December 15. If you have any questions or need that e-mail re-sent, please let me know!

LOCK-IN!

We'll have a lock-in on the night of January 16. We'll meet at the church at 7:00 p.m., take a field trip to a (currently) undisclosed location, and spend the night at the church playing games, telling stories, acting crazy, and eating food.

Any youth (grades 6-12) are welcome to attend. Invite your friends! The more the merrier!

Cost and exact itinerary TBA in early January. Mark it on your calendars now!



UPCOMING EVENTS

Here are a few events that are coming up on the horizon:

- Attention eighth graders (and anyone older who is interested): our OWL retreat will be February 27 to March 2. Location TBA!
- Please keep your eyes peeled for more information about Conference Retreats!
- Youth Sunday is February 8th! Mark it on your calendars!

REMINDERS

- Parents! If you have not filled out a blanket permission slip for your child to participate in youth activities, you should do that ASAP to be sure that your child can continue to participate in off-campus trips!
- Parents and youth! If I don't have your e-mail address, please give it to me as soon as possible! If you gave it to me, but aren't receiving my weekly e-newsletters, then I probably have it wrong, and your e-news is stranded somewhere in cyberspace. Please check with me to make sure I have it right!

THANK YOU!

The First Plymouth youth program takes hard work from many different people! Here is a list (incomplete, of course!) of those who have lent a hand recently:

- Thanks to all the parents who have prepared dinner for the youth groups in October!
- Thanks to the youth mentors who have helped with youth group so far this year: Dave Kroll, Amy Smith, Brian Eley, Ben Westlund, Greg Verzosa, and Julie Bennett!
- Thanks to the parents who are helping with our fundraising efforts, *especially* those who have taken on a leadership role! Your help is invaluable!

CALENDAR

Stuff coming up you won't want to miss.

January 4	Youth Group
January 11	Youth Group
January 16-17	Lock-In!
January 18	Youth Group
January 23-25	Conference High School Winter Retreat at La Foret
January 25	Youth Group
January 31	Youth Group Fundraiser: <i>An Evening in Versailles</i>

Other special events on the horizon...

February 7	Saturday Youth Sunday Rehearsal (<i>afternoon/evening</i>)
February 8	Youth Sunday
February 20-22	Conference Confirmation Retreat at La Foret
February 27 - March 1	OWL

