



Pilgrims' Progress



The Monthly News of the People of Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Warwick, Rhode Island
February 2013

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**2013 Offering Envelopes are available
in the narthex—please take yours home!**

Spiritual Gifts Breakfast

Sunday, February 3!

immediately following the 8:00 service

If you missed the January 6 event, here is another chance to discover your spiritual gifts and enjoy a delicious meal. Join us!

March Pilgrim's Progress Deadline: Friday, February 15!

Please e-mail submissions to Elisabeth at both parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org and eremmingvergun@cox.net or place in her mailbox in the church office.

Many thanks!

From Pastor Kohl

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

I have come to believe that one of the big questions among Christian groups is the role that the Law (the demands of God) plays in our understanding of being right with God. I think I would be safe in saying that many of us grew up believing that unless we fulfilled the Law of God that we were hopelessly lost. Somehow we come to believe that our behavior changes God's attitude toward us.

But look at that verse from John that is loved so dearly by many: *God so loved the world that God gave the only-begotten Son, so that all who believe in him might not perish but have eternal life.* This is John 3:16. The problem with a verse like this is that we focus on "all who believe" rather than "God so loved that God gave". This is typical for us humans: hearing and focusing on what we can do, or could do, or should do, rather than on what God does. When our faith becomes about us, to be brutally honest, we replace God with ourselves.

We Lutheran Christians are different from many groups. God is always the center and the grace of God is always the central characteristic of who God is for us. We understand our God to be omnipotent, able to do whatever God wants to do, and always operating out of who God is rather than having actions determined as a response or reaction to our human activities.

Something else we hold true is that we do not have free will in our relationship with God. That means we cannot choose to love God and so cause God to love us. The bottom line for us is this: God loves us whether we think that is true or not. This is what we call grace.

Jesus' death on the cross is God's way of showing us that God does not think and act in our ways. In fact, God was so opposed to our sin-accounting ways that God did nothing to retaliate at those who crucified him. Instead, what are the words we hear from the cross?

Father, forgive them for they know not what they do. Those words still echo down through the centuries as a way of knowing who God is for us.

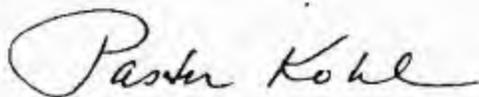
This eliminates terror before God. And this elimination of fear and shame and guilt comes to us because we see in Jesus who our God really is: one who ate with sinners and touched the unclean, who healed the sick and even gave life to the dead, one who broke the Sabbath laws and transgressed boundaries thought of as ways of being ritually and morally pure. Jesus shows us how wrong we are about God when we are led to believe that our salvation, our righteousness, our hope before God is in our own hands.

For us, all of this has been taken care of on the cross of Jesus. He is the one who did everything for our salvation, and Jesus is the one who shares this victory over the Law and sin and death with you and me. Jesus has done this when you were baptized. There Jesus took you on as a sister or a brother and from baptism Jesus will present us to God as one of Jesus' own people. This is a safe place to be in the day of judgment.

So, please don't misunderstand what I am writing here: we do not believe that "anything goes". But we do believe that in the Law of God we come to know what God calls us to do, not to be saved, but for the good of our neighbors.

He [Jesus] has done all this in order that I may belong to him, live under him in his kingdom, and serve him in eternal righteousness, innocence, and blessedness, just as he is risen from the dead and lives and rules eternally. This is most certainly true. (Small Catechism, explanation of the Second Article of the Creed).

In hope, with peace,



Pastoral Acts

Funerals



Anna Bridge
Matthew V. Check
Warren W. Gendron
Joan L. Grist
Marcia S. Sutcliff
Delmar Tipple, Sr.



WONDERING "WEATHER" OR NOT THERE'S CHURCH?

In case of emergency road conditions, the postponing of Sunday services will be announced on television Channel 10. Information will also be available on the voice mail when you call the church office.

What we have usually done is reschedule the service for the following Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. if we cannot meet on Sunday.



ASH WEDNESDAY & LENTEN EVENING PRAYER

Ash Wednesday falls on **February 13** this year. Be sure to mark your calendar, and plan to join the Pilgrim community for worship and to receive ashes at 12:00 noon or 7:00 p.m. that day. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent.

We will also be gathering for **Evening Prayer on the Wednesday evenings in Lent at 6:30.** Those dates are February 20 and 27 and March 6, 13, and 20.

FROM PASTOR HARRIS

Dear Friends of Christ,

God has given us brains. That might sound like a "No duh!" statement. However to hear some Christians, one would think that we are not to use them. One hears some fairly incredible claims by Christians and some equally astounding claims by scientists. Of course what we do not often hear are the voices of people for whom both their Christian faith and science is important.

Some of you may not know that my background is science. For a portion of my college life, I was a physics major. My degree is a B.S. in Psychology concentrating in experimental and cognitive psychology. After college, I took over half of the courses I needed for a second undergraduate degree in Computer Science. Immediately before entering seminary, I was a research assistant for two cognitive neuropsychology professors using MRIs to map cognitive function to brain structure. And yes, I was the president of my High School Science Club.

Martin Luther himself seems to have some scary things to say about human reason being an enemy of faith. Then again, Luther has scary things to say about anything or anyone that might cloud the Gospel (Good News).

I believe our brains and our reason is a gift from God. However, like all gifts, they can be misused or ignored.

Over the centuries, many Christians have been scientists. One of my favorite scientists is Johannes Kepler, the astronomer. He was a Lutheran born in 1571 (95 Thesis posted 1517, Augsburg Confession 1535). He had some theological disagreements with just about every church. His work, the "Harmonices", begins and ends with an appropriate prayer. The conclusion states, "O Thou, who by the light of nature increases in us the desire for the light of Thy mercy in order to be led by this to Thy glory, to Thee I offer thanks, Creator, God, because Thou hast given me pleasure in what Thou hast created and I rejoice in Thy handiwork." His dying words were: "Only the merits of our saviour Jesus Christ. It is in Him, as I steadfastly testify, that there rest all my retreat, all my consolation, all my hope."

So, why all of this? Seven or so years ago, I became aware of the Clergy Letter Project. The Clergy Letter Project is an endeavor designed to demonstrate that religion and science can be compatible and to elevate the quality of the debate of this issue. (<http://www.theclergyletterproject.org>). I quickly signed up. This February is the seventh annual Evolution Weekend.

Yes, I do think that the theory of evolution explains the intricacies of life on Earth. Yes, I do think the age of the Earth is about 4.54 billion years old and the age of the universe is about 13.77 billion years old. I do think dinosaurs existed, becoming extinct about 65 million years ago, and that human beings did not interact with them. Homo Sapiens showed up between 100,000 to 200,000 years ago.

Yes, I do think that God created the Earth. Yes, I believe that God created me and you. I believe that the creation stories in Genesis tell us this. Most importantly, I believe that God loves us and is in fact "crazy for" us, and wants to be in relationship with us forever! Longer than the age of the universe, even!

Peace and blessings,

Pastor Harris

Some web resources. I will post these online for easy clicking.

Faith & Technology in the ELCA

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Faith-Science-and-Technology.aspx>

Lutheran judge writes about his landmark decision (Intelligent design is not Science)

http://www.thelutheran.org/article/article.cfm?article_id=6096

ELCA Social Statement on Genetics

<http://www.elca.org/What-We-Believe/Social-Issues/Social-Statements/Genetics.aspx>

If any of this is interesting, frustrating, maddening, confusing, scary, hopeful – feel free to talk with me. Or we can do forums or education opportunities if there is interest.

Thank You!

Dear Friends,

Many thanks for the kind Christmas gift you gave to my family and me. It was caring and thoughtful and I am grateful. I also thank you for cards and cookies and well wishes that came during the holiday. My prayer for all of you is that 2013 will be a year filled with blessings and peace.

Gratefully,

Pastor Kohl

My dear friends of Christ,

I want to thank you so much for the gifts and the many expressions of kindness you bestowed upon me at Christmas. Thank you for the cards, cookies, treats, libations, the gift from the congregation, and your verbal greetings to me. I hope you had a blessed Christmas and that the Incarnation of Jesus is a touchstone and a reminder of God's love for you throughout the year.

Pastor Rob Harris

PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH PRAYER MINISTRY

Pilgrim Lutheran Church has an active prayer chain that lifts up concerns as well as thanks to the Lord. All requests are confidential.

Please contact Joan Hamblin at 781-3752 or leave a written request in the prayer box in the narthex.

INSIGHT/Pilgrim Youth Group Gathering

Who: All Youth grades 7 -12

When: Saturday, February 2

When: 10:00 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

Where: Pilgrim Church

What: Fun, fellowship, service

Want more info?

Talk to Linda Hughes or Pastor Rob



Thinking of dedicating
Altar Flowers

in honor or in memory of loved ones?
February dates are available, as well as
other Sundays in 2013.
Dedications from multiple families are
welcome each Sunday!

To dedicate flowers, simply make your
request by filling out an Altar Flower
envelope and placing it in the offering
plate or in the Altar Guild mailbox in
the church office.

Thank you!

A Note from your Financial Secretary

Blessings to you all and Happy New Year!

As I begin my first full year as your Financial Secretary, I want to let you know that offering envelopes are currently on the table in the narthex outside of the sanctuary. Unless you are using Simply Giving or automatic payments through your bank, please pick up and use your offering envelopes. If you need them mailed, please let me know.

You may not realize that if you do not use an offering envelope, then I am taking copies of your check and looking up your number so that you are properly credited with the contribution. If you use the envelopes, then less paper is used and you are more apt to be properly credited.

Thank you for your help!

Beth Fish

Sunday Readings – February 2013

February 3 - Fourth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 1:4–10

"A prophet to the nations" is Jeremiah's ministry. God promises to be with the prophet and to provide the prophet words to say in whatever situation Jeremiah finds himself.

1 Corinthians 13:1–13

These words from Paul are familiar to many of us. It is a great poem about love: God's love for the human family. With this picture of love, God sets a standard for us to know love when it comes and to seek to live it out with others.

Luke 4:21–30

Jesus is the guest preacher in his home town synagogue. But his words do not make people happy because Jesus refers to how God was at work through outsiders, foreigners. One of the offenses of Jesus is that he did not see God's grace only for a small group of people, but to the whole of the human family.

February 10 – Transfiguration of Our Lord

Exodus 34:29–35

Because Moses has spent time in the presence of God, his face is shining, aglow with the glory of God. Whenever Moses speaks with the people he covers his face to make his appearance less different, but when he goes to speak with God, Moses unveils his face. Thus he sees God directly and has the truth that comes from God alone.

2 Corinthians 3:12–4:2

In this second letter to the Christian community in Corinth, Paul teaches that in Christ the veil which covered Moses' face is removed. This is his way of saying that to know Jesus is to know God's very self.

Luke 9:28–43a

In a special vision, three of Jesus' disciples are granted a glimpse of the future, a new understanding of reality: they see Jesus in glory with those who represented the Law and prophets consulting with Jesus. In the church, the future shapes reality more than the present or the past. We know this in baptism, communion, and forgiveness.

February 17 – First Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1–11

Moses knows that the Israelites will be tempted to forget about the gifts of God when they come to the prosperity of the Promised Land. In this sermon to the Israelites, Moses warns the people not to forget God, and to remember that God is the one who has provided all they needed.

Romans 10:8b–13

God is not far removed from us. In fact God is closer than we usually think, and God comes with blessings for us. The great blessing is this: "Everyone who calls on the name of the Lord shall be saved."

Luke 4:1–13

A part of the human experience is to know temptation. As we begin Lent, we once again hear that Jesus also was tempted. The foundational truth of all temptation is to forget about God. This Jesus never does.

February 24 – Second Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1–12, 17–18

Abram does nothing to earn the promises God gives to him. This is a sign that God is gracious, generous, and seeks to bless. In this strange scene of sacrifice, God is binding God's very self to fulfill these promises. This is an ancient covenant-making ceremony in which the one who passes between the animals (God is the fiery torch) promises to be like those animals if the promises are not fulfilled.

Philippians 3:17–4:1

Out of love for the church at Philippi, Paul reminds the congregation of those who live as enemies of the cross of Jesus, those who seek their own ways rather than God's ways. His words are meant for encouragement to faithful living. It is all based on what God will be doing when the savior from heaven returns.

Luke 13:31–35

Jesus has his eyes focused on the ministry he is sent to do. Political pressures and deadly threats do not sway Jesus from his path of revealing God's ways in the world. He knows that living out God's purposes will bring him into conflict and even bring him death.

SERVING in FEBRUARY 2013

GREETERS

February 3 Phyllis Blanchette
February 10 Lou Cardillo
February 17 John & Tina Carlson
February 24 Cindy Cote

READERS

February 3 Laurie Linden
February 10 Joan Hamblin
February 17 Lois Williams
February 24 Mark Cheney

ALTAR GUILD

February 3 Joanne Lozy
Susan Simundson
February 10 Nancy Derby
Ginny Smith
February 17 Lisa Harrington
Debbie Perri
February 24 Priscilla Angelo
Mary Brinson
Pam Himebaugh

ASSISTING MINISTERS

February 3 John Carlson
February 10 *Needed...please sign up!*
February 17 Tina Carlson
February 24 Carl Lozy

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

*Communion Assistants are needed for the month of February. Sign up on the sheet posted on the office bulletin board if you are able to help.
Many thanks!*

ACOLYTES

February 3 Nichole Morales
February 10 Jon O'Hara
February 17 Sarah Lowell
February 24 Audrey Cryan

CONFIRMATION DINNERS

Tuesday Evenings

February 5 No meal - Staff Meeting/no kids
February 12 Kim Olson
February 19 No class - School Vacation
February 26 Joan Theroux

USHERS

February 3 Scott Chappelle
Pam Himebaugh
Susan Horsch
Andrew Hughes
February 10 Scott Chappelle
Linda Hughes
Laurie Linden
Ruth Lundin
February 17 Scott Chappelle
Pete Mahoney
Merrill McElroy
John Merrill
February 24 Scott Chappelle
John & Tina Carlson
Rick Nelson

COUNTERS

February 3 Beth Fish and Kathy Gremel
Counters for the remainder of February will be updated in the Sunday bulletin and on the list of servers posted on the office bulletin board.

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

*Eucharistic Ministers are needed for the month of February. Sign up on the sheet posted on the office Bulletin board if you are able to help.
Many thanks!*

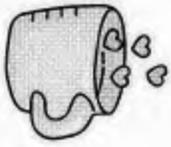
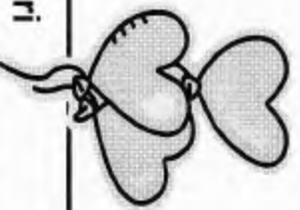
ALTAR FLOWERS

February 3 Available
February 10 Available
February 17 The Belvin Family
February 24 Millie Johnson & Family

February 2013

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
 1817 Warwick Avenue Warwick, Rhode Island 02889 (401) 739-2937
www.pilgrimlutheranri.org

Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>3 Epiphany 4 8:00 Holy Communion 8:30 Spiritual Gifts Breakfast 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Holy Communion Installation of Council</p>	<p>4 7:00 Adult Education — Baptism 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>5 10:00 Pastors' Pericope 6:30 Confirmation — Staff Meeting/No Kids</p>	<p>6 7:00 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>7 7:00 Warwick Symphony Orchestra</p>	<p>1 PASTOR'S DAY OFF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>2 <i>The Presentation of Our Lord</i> 10:00 - 2:00 p.m. PLC & INSIGHT Youth</p>
<p>10 Transfiguration of Our Lord 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Holy Communion</p>	<p>11 7:00 Adult Education — The Church 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>12 10:00 Pastors' Pericope 1:00 Shawl Ministry 6:30 Confirmation — The Lord's Prayer</p>	<p>13 ASH WEDNESDAY 12:00 Holy Communion 7:00 Holy Communion</p>	<p>14 VALENTINES DAY  7:00 Worship, Music & Arts 7:00 Warwick Symphony Orchestra</p>	<p>15 PASTOR'S DAY OFF Pilgrims' Progress Deadline 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>16</p>
<p>17 Lent 1 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Holy Communion</p>	<p>18 PRESIDENTS' DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>19 10:00 Pastors' Pericope <i>No Confirmation School Vacation</i></p>	<p>20 6:30 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:00 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>21 10:00 Tealery Pantry 7:00 Congregation Council 7:00 Altar Guild Executive Mtg. 7:00 Warwick Symphony Orchestra</p>	<p>22 PASTOR'S DAY OFF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>23</p>
<p>24 Lent 2 8:00 Holy Communion 9:30 Sunday School 9:30 Holy Communion 10:30 Altar Guild General Meeting</p>	<p>25 7:00 Adult Education — Baptism 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous</p>	<p>26 10:00 Pastors' Pericope 1:00 Shawl Ministry 6:30 Confirmation — The Means of Grace</p>	<p>27 6:30 Lenten Evening Prayer 7:00 Choir Rehearsal</p>	<p>28</p>	<p>29</p>	<p>30</p>

