



Pilgrims' Progress



The Monthly News of the People of Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Warwick, Rhode Island
February 2015

From the Pastor

Fellow Pilgrims:

Recently I read a blog about a Seventh Day Adventist Minister who decided to live like an atheist for one year. At the end of that year it came as no surprise that he declared that he no longer believed in God. I say it came as no surprise because the truth is what we live is what we become.

I think it might be easy to become an atheist or an agnostic, but I think it would be incredibly hard to maintain that kind of life, especially when things become difficult or we are going through suffering or having to ask ourselves hard questions. I don't know what people with minimal or no relationship with God do at such times.

I have watched people grieve who have no connection to faith. It is a terrible thing. And to be perfectly honest, as a preacher at a time like that I struggle to find the words that would provide comfort or hope. What I don't know is what people hang their hope on.

I have also watched people of faith grieve. This is an entirely different process. Yes, they will tell you that death is unfair, that it makes them angry, that they sometimes feel cheated out of time with loved ones, but they also believe that there is more to this thing called life than the day to day processes of getting up and working and going to bed. They hope there is a purpose and reason for their loved one's life.

Martin Luther once spoke about the Gospel of Jesus and our hope in the promises of God as "a distant trumpet" when we are facing our own struggles or the loss of another person. That is a great image: a distant trumpet; something we can hear and know is there, but something that is not immediately available to us for direction or hope.

The world around us sees faith or the intuitions of faith as foolish myths. Some even point to religion as a problem, and it is when it is carried

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FROM THE PASTOR	P.	1 & 2
PASTORAL ACTS	P.	2
CHURCH NOTES	P.	3 & 4
SUNDAY WORSHIP IN LENT	P.	5
A NOTE FROM ELISABETH	P.	6
FEBRUARY SERVERS	P.	7
FEBRUARY CALENDAR		INSERT



ASH WEDNESDAY AND LENTEN EVENING PRAYER

Ash Wednesday falls on **February 18** 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 25 and March 4, 11, 18 and 25.

to an extreme of being pure and so strident that it forgets the reason why God has entered into our human story: to bring about a unity and respect in the human family, to help us to know that even if our faiths are different, we have more that connects us to one another than what separates us from one another. We see too much of a misreading of faith leading to the radical and terror oriented actions of people.

I do wonder what it gets people to have no faith or to have a faith shaped by hatred and anger more than by hope. Let's face it: life is difficult and some days we do wonder what in the world is happening to this world. But that is why the Holy Spirit has put the church in the world. The purpose of the church is to proclaim that God is still God and that God has a heart for us all (that's why God made you and me and others). If the newspaper, television, or internet news is all that is our input in the course of a week, we will come away with little hope, little joy, a great loneliness and despair.

So every Sunday we gather to hear the good news of hope: that we are not alone in this world, that others have walked in similar struggles to our own, that who we are is not who the world has taught us in the course of the week, that in spite of all the evil and turmoil and terror and wickedness that surrounds us, our lives are bigger than all that. We gather on Sundays to hear that distant trumpet which sometimes is very clear and sometimes sounds too far away for us. But that is why we come together as a community, because sometimes your faith and vision will be the blessing someone else needs.

Worship is not about what I get from it, but often is what I give through it to others in difficult places. Pilgrim Church is poorer when you are not here, Jesus' table always has a place for one more, someone seeking, someone in need, someone giving thanks, someone grateful for the blessings life has brought to them.

Here's the bottom line: we need to worship with others to have faith. Like that Seventh Day Adventist minister, it would be easier to take the road to not believing there is a God. But really, what does that get anybody or the world around us?

In hope,

Paster Kohl

Pastoral Acts

Funerals



Abe Conrad
Harry Peterson
Connie Radican

Thank You!

Please know how grateful I am for the cards, cookies, and gifts I received from you during the Christmas season. I am grateful to be your pastor and I thank you for the last 21 years we have had together. Your thoughts and gifts are an encouragement for me. They remind me of the good heart of this congregation of God's people. I hope and pray that in 2015 in our journey together that we will find many blessings and much opportunity to serve our Lord in new ways.

With gratitude and in hope,

Paster Kohl

WONDERING "WEATHER" OR NOT THERE'S CHURCH?



In case of emergency road conditions, the postponing of Sunday services will be announced on television WJAR Channel 10.

Information will also be available on our website at www.pilgrimlutheranri.org and the outgoing voice mail greeting when you call the church office, including a time that services will be rescheduled.

Happy and safe winter travels to all!



Thinking of dedicating
Altar Flowers
in honor or in memory of loved ones?

Many 2015 dates are available.
Dedications from multiple families are
welcome each Sunday!

To dedicate flowers, simply make your
request by filling out an Altar Flower
envelope with your \$30 check enclosed
and placing it in the offering plate or in
the Altar Guild mailbox in the church
office. Thank you!

A Note to Our Pilgrim Family

We would like to thank our Pilgrim
Family for your prayers over the last 21
months that Connie Radican was on
hospice. It meant a lot to receive
flowers, cards, and visits from the
Eucharistic Ministers and Pastor Kohl.
They were a comfort to my mother and
to us.

Our lives will be renewed by the
embrace of friends as Carl and I will
again be regular participants at Sunday
service. We noticed a few new faces on
the occasions we were able to come to
service over these last months and look
forward to meeting you.

Our Sincere Thanks,
Joanne & Carl Lozy

An Invitation from the Altar Guild

The Altar Guild of Pilgrim Lutheran Church
warmly invites all communicant members,
both women and men, to join us in our
important ministry.

The Altar Guild is a branch of the Worship,
Music, and Arts Committee and is
comprised of fifteen members of all ages
who serve a few hours of their time every
six weeks or so. Working in teams, we
prepare and close the sanctuaries before
and after Sunday services, baptisms, and
funerals. Each Sunday, we deliver the altar
flowers to parishioners who are shut-in, ill,
or celebrating a special occasion.
Additionally, the Guild gathers in fellowship
for meetings, to decorate and dismantle
decorations during the Easter and
Christmas seasons, and to maintain altar
furnishings as needed.

Membership in the guild doesn't require
special talent, simply dedication. Won't you
please consider joining with a friend or
family member? If you would like to learn
more about the Altar Guild or would like to
shadow a member, please contact Pam
Himebaugh, directress at 401-935-3544 or
speak to any Altar Guild member. We look
forward to hearing from you!

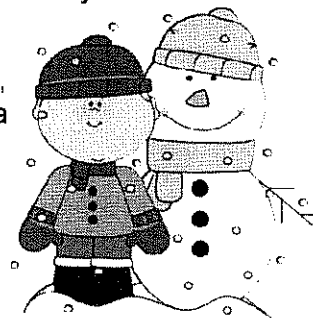
Dear Pastor Kohl & Congregation,

Thank you so much for your support for my
Eagle Scout Project. The Congregation
donated more articles of clothing than any
other donator. Thanks to you, the Winter
Clothing Drive was very successful. More
than 100 people will have gloves, hats, and
even coats for the winter thanks to your
generous donations.

I am glad to have met you all,
and I hope that you all have a
great new year.

Sincerely,

Christopher St. Laurent



A MOST UNUSUAL CHRISTMAS EVE

It was Christmas Eve at 4:00. The phone rang and I was ready to tell the caller that we had services at 5:00 and 11:00 P.M. Instead the caller told me that he was calling from Japan where it was 5:00 in the morning. And then he told me he was the U.S. Consul General for Japan. Naturally I was curious about what a government official from Japan was calling Pilgrim Church about on Christmas Eve. He told me why he called.

Many years ago (1961) Pilgrim Church sent a bell to a new congregation forming in Saijo (near Hiroshima). The bell came to our church by a letter sent by Ricky Lundin to President Kennedy. Ricky was and still is interested in naval things. He knew that many ships were being retired, some being used as scrap. His letter was answered when the Navy sent a bell to Pilgrim Church from a decommissioned ship: the USS Gila River.

At first the bell was sent on an indefinite loan basis, But in 1992 when the U.S. Navy learned the bell was no longer in our keeping but now resided in Japan, the Navy ceded ownership of the bell to Pilgrim Lutheran Church.

That is the bell that hangs in the Lutheran Church in Saijo.

The children of that congregation would like to invite the Ambassador to Japan, Caroline Kennedy, to come and ring their bell which has her father's name on it. In doing this the U.S. Consul General was looking to gather information and documentation. I was happy to be able to send him copies of the letters from the US Navy and two articles from the *Pilgrim's Progress* at the time the bell was requested and sent to the church.

I have to confess it was probably the most unusual call I ever answered on a Christmas Eve. If you remember anything about this bell and its story, please let me know. I will send it to our Consul General to pass on to the church in Saijo. I think it was a gift for Japan and for Pilgrim Church to be able to touch one another as fellow congregations in Christ.

Pastor Kohl

Communion Bread Bakers Welcome!

It is a special blessing to receive homemade communion bread once a month. Have you enjoyed the sweetness of honey and cinnamon and the wholesome goodness of whole wheat presented at the table the second Sunday of every month? The bakers of those lovely loaves hope so. It is our pleasure to prepare them for your enjoyment.

Lois Williams, Sharon Spencer, and Joanne Lozy would be happy to share the simple recipe and train anyone who is interested in joining us in preparing the loaves. Currently we each bake once every three months but we are happy to include anyone who would like to join us. Many hands make light the work.

If you are interested please call or text me at 401-497-2111. I will be setting up a new baking schedule for 2015.

We knead for God,
Joanne Lozy

P.S. I always bake extra because they're so yummy and easy to make, and in June they make a wonderful base for strawberry shortcake.

WORSHIP DURING LENT

Lenten Learning

This year during the five Sundays in Lent we will focus on the three Lenten disciplines:

Fasting

Prayer

Giving

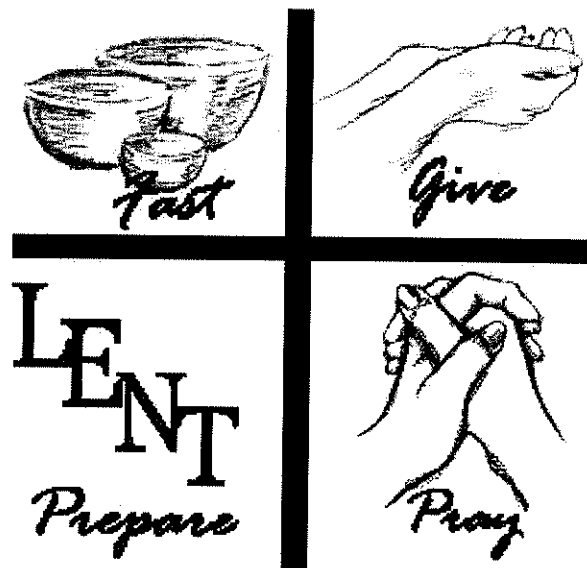
The service will be simplified and interactive. The liturgy will be spoken. The choir will sit together with the worshippers and familiar hymns will be sung.

Lenten Learning will follow Pastor Kohl's sermon. Worshippers are invited to ask questions and to share insights from the scriptures and the sermon. Sunday's scriptures will be noted in the previous Sunday bulletin to allow for reading of the scriptures before the service.

Small notebooks will be available for writing down thoughts, to remember something from the sermon or to jot down questions or an insight to share.

After worship you are invited to gather with others in the chapel to share further in Lenten Learning, to support each other in Lenten disciplines and to be encouraged in the Lenten journey of faith.

All are invited to worship during Lent and to grow through Lenten Learning.



*How can we thank God enough for you
in return for all the joy that we feel before our God because of you?*
1 Thessalonians 3:9

Dear Pilgrim Friends,

It was in January ten years ago that I was hired as your Parish Assistant, and began my journey in ministry with you at Pilgrim Lutheran Church. I had been away from the work force for 12 years while my children were small, and coming to Pilgrim was my reintroduction to working outside the home.

In this new year of 2015, Isabella will be graduating from St. Olaf College in May, and Matthew begins his senior year of high school in the fall...things have certainly changed since 2005! And due in large part to these changes, the time has come for me to move on from my work at Pilgrim.

I have been fortunate to have been offered an excellent opportunity at Hasbro Children's Hospital, and so will be leaving my position as Parish Assistant effective 30 January 2015.

I have been blessed and privileged to be a part of Pilgrim's ministry for the past decade, and am exceptionally grateful for those who have treated me with such care and kindness over the years. After breaking my ankle around this time in 2008, I heard from at least one person from Pilgrim almost daily--either by post, telephone, or e-mail, or sometimes an in-person visit--during the seven weeks of my recovery time away from the church office. That is something that continues to mean so much to me...I will never forget your outpouring of concern for me and my family. I have been honored to share in your sorrows and joys, as well.

I'd like to take this time to thank Pastor Kohl and you, people of Pilgrim, for taking a chance on me ten years ago. I am grateful for our time together, and know that God will continue to richly bless your ministry.

With love in Christ,

Elisabeth

Elisabeth Remming Vergun

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Dated Material February 2015



*This is my son, the Beloved
Listen to him!
Mark 9:8*

Congregation Council			
Susan Simundson – Interim President			
Mary Brinson	Cindy Cote	Bill Dugan	
Marie Grist	Linda Hughes	Maureen Johnson	
Laurie Linden	Tammy McLaughlin	Valerie Parmenter	Chris Spencer