



Pilgrims' Progress



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

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From the Pastor

Dear Friends of Christ:

It is pretty obvious that our country is going through a struggle as religion and politics are being knitted together in the thinking of some people. Recently I read this quotation from a member of the House of Representatives: *"I question if the Pope understands Scripture. He's obviously read it, but it's just as obvious that he doesn't understand it. Nothing in the Bible obligates us to help the poor."* The irony in such a statement is that this representative, in referencing the Bible, shows how ignorant he is of the Bible.

One of the myths widely circulated in our country is that the United States is a Christian county. The founders of our country may have been affiliated with different church traditions but, in fact, based their thinking on Deist principles in forming our foundational documents. We who live in Rhode Island know that from the first days of the European immigration to this continent, religion and social order or politics do not mix well. Roger Williams saw what was happening in the Massachusetts Bay Colony and moved south to form a place where religion was not an issue for participation in the common good. Pennsylvania was also founded on this principle of religious freedom.

People often speak about the separation of church and state and yet many believe that certain principles of some religious traditions should be woven into our governmental structures. Our Lutheran tradition in the family of Christians has never insisted on

July Pilgrims' Progress Deadline: Monday, June 15th!

Please e-mail submissions to
parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org
or place in her mailbox in the church
office. Many thanks.

The Progress deadline is the 15th of every month.



having a religious or even a Christian government. Countries and states and cities are run, not by faith, but by wisdom and good order. Obviously such gifts can be found among all kinds of people. Christians do not have a corner on wisdom for governing.

Martin Luther reminds us of what it means to serve God with this quotation: *"The Christian shoemaker does his duty not by putting little crosses on the shoes, but by making good shoes, because God is interested in good craftsmanship."* What we are called to do as the followers of Jesus is to use the gifts we have been given to the best of our ability and to find ways to share them with others.

That does not mean that our gifts must be spiritual or religious in nature, which is another way of teaching that God is not limited to the church or to what we might think of as the sacred. God has blessed us all with gifts, and if God's world is blessed by our gifts we are using them correctly and in God-pleasing ways.

So, let the church be Christian and the government secular because even in the secular God is at work. The church will preach the good news of grace in Jesus Christ. The government will govern in ways that bring peace and order and protection for all. As we hear (already!) political speeches and posturing for the next round of elections, to be responsible citizens we must ask whether a candidate is wise enough, honest enough, and open enough to the vulnerable to be a decision-maker for the people. And because God is at work in the governmental/social realm of life, prayer for discernment is also essential.

With hope,

Pastoral Acts

Members Received:

- Christine Abbott
- Christine & Scott Baum
with Caden and Anika
- Stephany & Bob Laurent
- Wilma Palmaccio

Funerals:

- Walter Iverson
- Eleanor Gelacek

Hospitalized or Needing a Pastoral Visit?

Please have a family member call us at 401-739-2937 to speak to Pastor Kohl, or to leave information with the office or on the church's voicemail. Be sure to leave your name, the name of the person who needs a visit, which hospital and room number if possible, and a contact telephone number.

Sunday mornings are busy times here at Pilgrim, and it's possible that verbal requests may not be remembered. If you think of a need, please fill out one of the pew cards and place it in the offering plate, or leave a note for Pastor Kohl in his mailbox in the office.



Someone Graduating?

If someone in your family is graduating this spring, please let us know in the church

office. You may call 739-2937 or e mail the information to dpk820@juno.com. Let us know where they are graduating from, and if they are continuing their study, let us know where that will be.

Adult Bible “Camp”

In June Pastor Kohl will be offering a four-week series of conversations about the Bible. God did not give us the Bible to allow others to use it to frighten us or to make us think we are not smart enough to read it. There is some background information that can make all of us feel more comfortable in our encounters with the Bible. Here’s what is planned for each session:

- Monday, June 8 (7PM) or Wednesday, June 10 (1PM): What is the Bible? How did it come to be? What’s in the Bible?
- Monday, June 15 or Wednesday, June 17: Bible history: what else is happening in the world?
- Monday, June 22 or Wednesday, June 24: How do we interpret/understand the Bible?
- Monday, June 29 or Wednesday, July 1: What should we expect when we read the Bible?

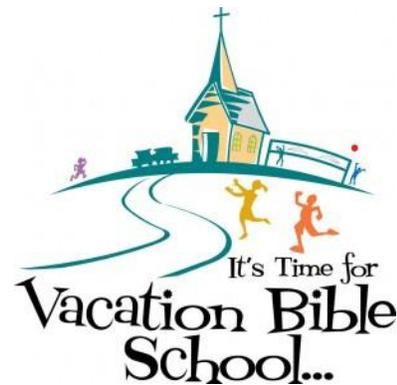
Bring your questions or your experiences with the Bible.

“My point, once again, is not that those ancient people told literal stories and we are now smart enough to take them symbolically, but that they told them symbolically and we are now dumb enough to take them literally.”

- John Dominic Crossan,
Bible scholar and author

New England Synod Assembly

On Friday, June 5, and Saturday, June 6, Susan Simundson and Pete Mahoney will be representing Pilgrim Church at the Synod Assembly in Springfield, Massachusetts. Besides hearing reports about ministries done here and by our organizations throughout the world, the assembly will put a budget in place, deal with compensation guidelines for pastors and other rostered leaders, and discuss new ways of being the church in New England. Bishop Hazelwood challenges us to be a synod and congregations of innovation. We’ll learn more about how that is happening and how each congregation can be part of it.



Vacation Bible School will take place on **August 10-14!** Children entering Kindergarten through 6th grade are welcome! Please save the date! If you can share your time, talent or teaching, contact Pam Himebaugh at 935-3544 or pssh99@msn.com.