



Pilgrims' Progress



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

OUR STAFF

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The Rev. Dennis Kohl

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August Pilgrims' Progress Deadline: Wednesday, July 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.

From the Pastor

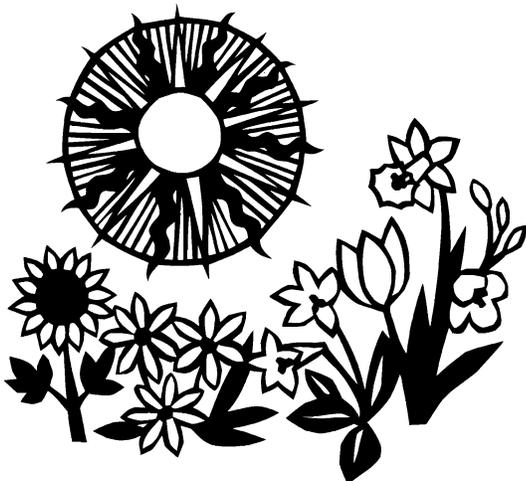
Dear Friends of Christ,

In theology the word *apologetics* means making a defense for Christianity against other belief systems. In our language the word sounds more like saying we are sorry for something. Over time the word has shifted its implications.

Apology comes from two Greek words. The "apo" part is from a preposition that can be translated "from, of, by, or because of." The "ology" part is from the word that means "word, statement, or speech." So apology can be understood to be a word from someone, a statement made because of something.

Sometimes people think of an apology as a weakness. "Love means never having to say you're sorry" is a phrase we hear from time to time. A major part of loving someone is owning up to our share of the problem which arose between people. Love means being willing to say "I'm sorry" on the part of someone who has helped create the problem.

It doesn't take living very long to learn that apology is one of the strongest tools we have in our toolkit for repairing relationships. Apologies come from a self-understanding that any of us can be guilty of rushing to judgment or blaming others or any number of other things we will regret. When we face our own shortcomings, while it may not be comfortable for us to do this, it is one of the steps toward fuller self-awareness.



Sometimes people ask me why we have a time for confession and forgiveness at the beginning of the service. We do this for a couple of reasons. First of all, it puts us all on the same level. It is our way of saying we *all* messed up and we *all* need forgiveness. We take our place among those who know sin in their lives, the good things we should have done and did not do as well as the hurtful things we did that we should not have done. So, we admit to our failures and brokenness as a group. We're in this sinful reality together.

But we keep this part of the liturgy, not to beat ourselves up or to make ourselves more guilty. We keep confession and forgiveness to be able to hear the gift of God's forgiveness in Jesus. In his *Small Catechism* Luther writes this in the section called "How People are to be Taught to Confess." *What is confession? Confession consists of two parts. One is that we confess our sins. The other is that we receive the absolution, that is, forgiveness, from the pastor as from God himself and by no means doubt but firmly believe that our sins are thereby forgiven before God in heaven.*

We make apologies to receive forgiveness and to share forgiveness, a new relationship with another. This healing of a relationship changes it: it reestablishes a balance in power between two humans. In confession we own up to who we are and believe that God is ready to bring us back to the reality of who we really are, God's beloved children. This means the rest of the liturgy is done in the context of love, God's love for us and our gratefulness for Jesus' death and resurrection.

The Holy Spirit has placed Pilgrim Church in the world to be a place of healing. This is the ministry of Jesus: to announce peace and hope to a weary and hectic world. This is good news to start a new week, and it is here

every Sunday because God is faithful and merciful, gracious and compassionate. And who doesn't need a God like that?

In hope,

Pastoral Acts

Funerals:

- Walter Carr
- Joyce (Miller) Abram
- Janet Whitehouse
- Elizabeth Theisler
- Dorothy Bishop*
- Edith Bennett*
- Beatrice Paul

*Member of Pilgrim Church

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.

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.

Martin Luther Pilgrimage
October 12-22, 2016

Plans for the Journey to sites important in the life of Martin Luther are coming along. In 2017 Christians will celebrate the 500th anniversary of Luther's posting the 95 Theses (points for a debate) about forgiveness. We will go to these places in 2016 to avoid the crowds of the following year. (Although with Oktoberfest that month there will be plenty of excitement in Germany).

The cost for the pilgrimage is \$3,669 (double occupancy) or \$4,169 (single room). This price includes airfare, hotels, entrance to all places of interest, 14 meals (9 breakfasts and 5 dinners), transportation to and from airports, and all transportation in Germany. All the hotels are at least 4-star rated.

A brochure will be available soon. If you want more information now, please check with Pastor or Karin or contact Val Mellow at East Side Travel (401) 724-3111. An evening of information and questions and answers will be held at Pilgrim Church on Sunday, October 18, 2015 at 5 PM.



(Leipzig, Thomaskirche.
Bach was Cantor at St. Thomas Church)

Get out the yellow tee-shirts: **God's Work, Our Hands Sunday** is September 13. If you have ideas of how we might serve the community, please let Mary Brinson know.



Graduates!!

Tyler Phillips has graduated from Bishop Hendricken High School. Tyler will be attending the University of Rhode Island, studying Geology, in the fall. Congratulations, Tyler!

Meagan Rose Kullberg, granddaughter of Marion Kullberg, just graduated cum laude from Assumption College in Worcester. She is now an elementary school teacher. Congratulations!

Congratulations to Katie O'Hara who graduated from St. Mary Academy - Bay View!

Madison Almonte graduated from Pilgrim High School. Congratulations, Madison!

The Rev. Robert N. Harris, Jr.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church lost a brother in Christ and a faithful friend with the death of Pastor Harris. His ministry here blessed many of us, and his faithful witness in spite of the multiple sclerosis which he struggled with for over ten years, will continue to be remembered with love and thanks. His life and story have been woven by God into our life and story.

Pastor Harris was buried with his family in Texas. His love and cheerful witness to the victory of Jesus will live on.

Please keep his family and friends in your prayers.