



Pilgrims' Progress



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



To you this night is born a child
Of Mary chosen virgin mild;
This newborn child of lowly birth
Shall be the joy of all the earth

May the joy of Christmas warm your hearts
and homes throughout the year.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church Staff
The Rev. Dennis Kohl
Laurie Connors
Denis Brunelle
Beth Fish
Bill Brinson
Adam Kohl

**January's Progress Deadline:
Tuesday, December 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 Fellow Pilgrims,

I know how busy life gets. It's that way for me also. Meetings, concerts, parties, shopping, travel, the list could go on. I find it ironic that during this time of Advent and Christmas, a time to slow down and think about what is happening around us and what God is up to in sending Jesus to be with us, that we seem to be swayed to believe that we have to pack so much of life into these few weeks. The temptation is to believe that we might miss out on something, that we might be cheated out of fun. But the truth is that our lives do have limits of time and space, of energy and emotional involvement.

This is the time of the year when as Christians we celebrate the grace of our God in choosing to accept our human limitations by coming to us in Jesus. Paul reminds the congregation at Philippi about this by recalling a hymn they most certainly knew:

Have this mind in you which was in Christ Jesus who, though he was in the form of God, did not count equality with God as something to be exploited, but emptied himself, taking the form of a slave, being born in human likeness. And being found in human form, he humbled himself and became obedient to the point of death—even death on a cross. (Philippians 2:5-8)

When we read passages like this we might think, "that's nice and interesting, but not for me." Well, the truth is that this is important for every one of us. Paul is reminding the church what the lifestyle of a Christian looks

like. We are called to humility, which means not only being aware of our limits, but also being aware of other people's limits and giving them the regard and thoughtfulness, the care and service, that shows we are those who are following Jesus.

That's not easy in a world that is used to being on the go and believing that keeping busy, cramming more activity (and maybe even "stuff") into our lives, means that our lives are more meaningful. This kind of idolatry of self leads to disappointment and disillusion. In the end, living as if we could do everything we want, or have everything we want, will let us down.

I have discovered an antidote to this disillusionment which I practice every day. In the morning when my day is beginning, I spend about a half hour in quiet, reading Scripture, asking for God's Holy Spirit to open my heart and ears to learn again how I can be more faithful to Jesus. This helps me enter the day with a calmer mind and more focus than rushing into the activities of the day. Of course, it means getting up earlier than I absolutely have to, but over the years I have found this is time well spent, and without it something is missing from my day.

Worship with a community of God's people is also edifying for me. It helps me to know that I am not alone, that others also struggle with their limitations and continue to have hope that someday all those things that trouble us, that irritate us, that make us less human, will be gone. That is the promise of heaven, of life with God made perfect. This is the hope we celebrate because of the God who has emptied self for our sake.

I hope Advent and the Christmas Season, which begins on the night of December 24 and runs through January 6, will be a time of reflection and catching your breath, but also a time of insight and growth for you, a great

blessing at the end of the year and a great hope for the beginning of a new year.

In hope,



Pastoral Acts

Marriage

Jennifer Medeiros & Ernest Masseur

Funerals

Karol Lynn (Hultenius) Pichette

David (Batman) Waldeck

Hazel Keller

Christmas Food Pantry – This Christmas we are considering giving Stop & Shop gift cards with our Christmas baskets so that our food pantry guests may choose some of their own food items for their Christmas dinners. Please think about buying a gift card through the Luther Loot Cash Cards program to donate to our Food Ministry. Thank you!

Maintaining Your Membership

The constitution of Pilgrim Lutheran Church defines active members (or voting members) of this congregation as those who have communed and made a "contribution of record during the current or preceding year." If you wish to continue on the role of voting members, please be aware of this obligation as we come to the end of the year.

The Property Committee will be creating a facilities strategic plan to outline a vision for how to use our building as well as addressing current and long-term needs. The committee plans to provide multiple opportunities for all members of the congregation to share their ideas during this process. If you are interested in joining the committee to work on this project, please contact Susan Simundson.

Why this trip to Germany?

As you may have read, Karin and I will be hosting a tour to sites of the Reformation in October, 2016. This will be a first for us, but not the first time we have visited these places.

In 2017 we will celebrate 500 years since Martin Luther posted his *Nine-Five Theses*, points for debate about the forgiveness of God. Instead of using forgiveness as a fund raiser, Luther knew from Scripture that Jesus' death was costly, but freely given because of the grace and love God has for the human family. That challenge to the church structures of his day led to a major split in western Christianity. This was not Luther's intent in posting this notice.

For many years, while it was not impossible to visit in the places where Luther lived, taught, preached, hid away and died, it was difficult. Most of these sites are located in what was the German Democratic Republic (East Germany). Now it is much easier to experience Luther's life up close and see those places from which his influence grew.

This tour will be both historical and theological in nature. But as it used to be difficult to travel in this part of Germany, this trip will be one which provides comfort and will take care of logistics from getting to airports and moving luggage, to most meals and comfortable hotels for our visit.

So if you would like to know more about this trip and about Luther's life and legacy, please join me on Wednesday, January 6, at 6 PM in the church parlor. I'll make coffee and share a discussion on the sites we'll see and the importance of them. I will also share some of our own experiences at these places when the East German government was in

control, and now that both parts of Germany have been reunited. Let me know if you plan to join us.

Many thanks,
Pastor Kohl

Pilgrim Welcomes New Members

Pilgrim Church is a vital part of the greater Warwick community. Through various ministries we serve many people throughout the state. Pilgrim Church is a community committed to healing and finding a relationship with God through Jesus, a relationship marked by grace and forgiveness, new life and hope.

We will welcome others who would like to join us on our journey toward this new life on **Sunday, December 13** at the 9:30 service. If you want to be part of our story, please let Pastor Kohl know. Send him an e mail at pastorkohl@icloud.com or call the church office at (401) 739-2937.

Pilgrim Lutheran Church is a community of the people of God, called to minister to all God's people.

We believe that the Gospel is God's gift to all people, to be shared unconditionally, without regard to sexual orientation, gender identity, cultural or ethnic background, abilities, socioeconomic or family status, gender, or age.

*We welcome all God's **children**.*

God's purpose for Pilgrim Lutheran Church is to build our relationships with Jesus and to share our gifts with the community.

*~ Praying Always ~ Serving with Joy ~
~ Teaching ~ Proclaiming the Good News ~
~ Building Community*

Adult Education

Lunch and Learn – This wonderful opportunity is open to the public and will focus on the Jewish Bible “Parshat Hashavua” (the weekly Torah Portion). The next *Lunch and Learn* will be on Thursday, December 3, at St. Mark’s Church, 111 West Shore Road, from noon – 1:00 p.m. If you plan to attend, you **MUST RSVP** either by sending payment in advance or by sending an email. No verbal RSVPs please. The cost is \$8.00 per person – the deli will be kosher – the study priceless!

PLEASE RSVP TO:

RABBIRICHARD@RABBIPERLMAN.COM IF YOU PLAN TO ATTEND AND SEND YOUR CHECK PAYABLE TO WBCJC NO LATER THAN MONDAY, November 30, to 2 Brenda Drive, Coventry, RI 02816.



Christmas Poinsettias

The Altar Guild is currently accepting contributions for Christmas Poinsettias. If you would like to make a donation in honor of or in memory of a loved one, please fill out an envelope (in clear print), enclose your freewill contribution, and place it in the collection plate. You may also send your envelope to the church office to the attention of the Altar Guild. Christmas Poinsettia envelopes can be found on the table in the narthex. The Christmas Poinsettias will decorate our main sanctuary, the chapel, and other areas of the church building throughout the Christmas season. All Christmas Poinsettia envelopes **MUST** be received no later than Sunday, December 13, 2015.



Caroline Kennedy (the US Ambassador to Japan) with the children from Pilgrim Church sent to the Lutheran Church in Saijo. The bell was a gift from the US Navy to the church under the direction of President Kennedy. She thanked the children of the church in Saijo for taking good care of this bell.

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.