



# Pilgrims' Progress



The Monthly News of the People of Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
Warwick, Rhode Island  
May 2018

**June's Progress Deadline is  
Tuesday, May 15th**

Please e-mail submissions to  
[parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org](mailto:parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org)  
or place in her mailbox in the  
church office. Many thanks.

*The Progress deadline is the 15<sup>th</sup> of every month.*

**OUR STAFF**

**Pastor**

The Rev. Dennis Kohl

**Minister of Music**

Denis Brunelle

**Treasurer**

Laurie Linden

**Financial Secretary**

Cindy Cote

**Sexton**

Adam Kohl

**Parish Assistant**

Laurie Connors

politics, recreational drug use, privacy issues. These "hot topics" have brought division to our country and to the Church of Jesus Christ. Behind all of these is a broader question: how do we interpret Scripture?

Here we have to be completely honest. Even groups that say they read the Bible literally do not do so. By claiming a literal interpretation of the Bible, they are laying claim to a falsehood. The reality is that even those who find some kind of comfort in saying they are literalist about the Bible pick and choose which passages they want to read literally. The other problem with this is that placing Old Testament Law on equal footing with the Gospel of Jesus' death and resurrection minimizes the gift of Jesus and his cross. Not everything in the Bible is of equal importance or truth for our time. If someone thinks that by "following the rules" we earn God's love, then they have placed themselves in the position of saving themselves. Jesus did not have to die for that. I have heard people worry about folks whose sexual orientation is not like their own, but I rarely hear anyone fret about eating clams or lobsters or wearing clothing that are fabric blends.

Our society holds many prejudices. Race, economics, first language, ethnicity, and as many other categories as people can come up with to make themselves feel that they are special are dividing lines in our society. The author of this book adds a new one that we must take seriously in our culture: "party-ism."

Party-ism is the notion that progressives should not interact with conservatives and vice versa. This lack of communication, this lack of listening and sharing, has brought a

**From Our Pastor**

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

I've read a book recently titled *A House United: How the Church Can Save the World* by Allen Hilton. I think the book raises an important point for consideration. The author is completely honest about the church in our society. There's a lot of division and separation among Christians and he faces that fact directly.

Much of the division comes over what has come to be called "culture wars." This phrase contains realities about issues people are divided over. Here are things like abortion, LGBTQIA+ issues, role of government in establishing morality, gun

bigger divide into our lives. We tend to listen only to the news stations we like, for example Fox News or MSNBC. Doing this only reinforces the separation in our society by isolating us into our own camps. This is not healthy.

As the followers of Jesus one of the marks of our faith is humility, the understanding that no one of us has the full truth and we have things to learn from others. Humility means that we are open in our minds as well in our hearts to those who are different from us, to those whose world view is different. Humility would go a long way in giving new birth to our political world.

Humility calls us to focus, not on ourselves, but on the other person. And as Christians humility calls us to be servants of others. Read the Bible, passages like Matthew 25:31-46. Listen to what Jesus teaches throughout his ministry. Consider what his death and resurrection means for you and for the rest of the human family. Jesus excludes no one from his concern, except those who think they know it all or have all the right answers already.

To be honest, humility is risky stuff. People will try to take advantage of another's humility or thoughtfulness. People will make the mistake of thinking that humility or kindness or thoughtfulness or consideration of others is a weakness. Vulnerability is the best way to make a community. We need others to be more fully human (think about 12 step groups), even those whose ideas or attitudes are totally unlike the ones we hold and cherish.

For government to be effective, politicians must reach across the aisle to work together. For a society to be healthy, people must also reach across to those who are different from them, listen to others, talk openly about those things that are seen as problems by both sides, and seek a common goal almost always beyond the issues that separate people.

It's a big demand. But if the followers of Jesus cannot practice humility and welcome for strangers, if people of goodwill cannot work together, we will be a hopelessly divided people. I'm certain that no one wants that, and future generations deserve better models for being a society than they are presently seeing.

In hope,



### Pastoral Acts

**Baptism:**

Ephraim David Dancause\*

**Wedding:**

Tracey Mitchell\* & Stephen Lynch

**Funerals:**

Kayla Marie Gilbert

Edward H. Johnson\*

Robert Oatley

Evelyn Schurman

\*Member of Pilgrim Lutheran Church

**Confirmation classes** are for students seventh grade or older. If you have questions about the program, please speak with Pastor Kohl or Tammy McLaughlin. Following is the schedule for May.

May 1	- Class (Meal)
May 8	- Class (Meal)
May 15	- Bowling

**Confirmation Feed the Kids Schedule:**

May 1	- Available
May 8	- Available



**The Choir is holding a Bake Sale on Sunday, May 13,** after the 9:30 service. We're raising funds to purchase the remaining handbells needed to complete the set. Please stop by to see

the delicious treats that are available – maybe pick up something for Mom (after all, it's Mother's Day!). If you can help with baking, please sign the sheet located on the bulletin board outside the office. Thank you!

\*\*\*\*\*

Did you know...

- That in a recent week between worship, meetings and other services (food pantry, memorials, etc.) there were between 700 and 800 people using Pilgrim Lutheran Church?
- That the Monday night NA meeting is the largest in Rhode Island with more than 100 people at the meeting on many Mondays?
- Pilgrim Church needs your financial support to continue to be a vibrant and important center in the life of this community?
- When you are not at worship people miss you?

\*\*\*\*\*

**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.

**We need your help!** We're looking for volunteers to serve as Assisting Ministers, Communion Assistants, Ushers, and Greeters. If you are able to help with these important ministries, please sign up on the sheets posted on the bulletin board outside the office or contact the office at 739-2937.

Sunday, May 6<sup>th</sup>, will be the final discussion of Bishop Hazelwood's paper: **"A Church being Reborn."** The session will consider the marks of the church, with reference to Mary Hinkel's book, "Signs of Belonging" which draws upon Luther's writings and which the congregation council is discussing this year. (Truly, it is not boring!)

With the church experiencing the crisis of diminished membership and participation, as well as financial support, it is incumbent to consider Pilgrim's ministry of facing the next few years. As Edwin Friedman has said, "If you can't think your way out of a problem, you need a spirit of adventure." The adventure is before us.

Come join the discussion on May 6<sup>th</sup> in the Community Room following the 9:30 worship hour. Bring your coffee/tea/juice and snack from the Christian Life Center and join in. It will be a time for Pilgrim people to decide how to take the next step in considering actions as to "what's to do next"!



Yes, we are still looking for a **Kitchen Committee!** If you like to cook, if you like to organize meals, if

you like to make people happy with food, please let us know. We do have breakfasts and dinners occasionally and would like to have a group of people who are comfortable in our kitchen. Can we count on you? Let the church office know that you'd like to help by calling (401) 739-2937 or by emailing us at [parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org](mailto:parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org).



**Dear Friends and Members of Pilgrim Lutheran Church,**

We've been sending regular weekly "Life Together" email to all who have given us their email addresses. If you have not received your email or you would like to be added to our Parish Member email list, please send your email address to [parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org](mailto:parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org).

Thank you!