



Pilgrims' Progress



The Monthly News of the People of Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Warwick, Rhode Island
August/September 2018

October's Progress Deadline is Saturday, September 15

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.

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

It's hard to think about something that isn't there yet. But in many times and situations in life that is exactly what we must do. So we are in a time of planning and research, exploring our possibilities and clarifying what we would like to replace the old oak.

Of course, like much else in life, we can never replace the old tree. It had its time and it served us well, but now it is time for something new, something different. We think about how the new will reshape our yard, how different it will feel, not only to have the empty place but also after the new tree is planted how different it will feel. But we will get the job done, and once again a tree will grow and with care flourish where the old had been.

Times of change are difficult, but all of life is change. In fact, a man who writes about change in corporations once commented, "for things to stay the same things have to change." Change in life is that inevitable. It cannot be avoided, and if it is ignored we become the victims of fate. Change calls for serious study and diligence. It calls for serious thought and conversation for discernment. Pilgrim Church stands at one of those times of discernment and planning and study and dreaming what might be.

In September this community of faith, Pilgrim Lutheran Church, will be given into the pastoral care of another rostered person. But it will not be given to another God. Jesus will still be the head of the community that gathers here on Sunday mornings. And because of Jesus' faithfulness, he will be here on Sundays when you come to celebrate the resurrection with bread and wine and words of forgiveness and hope. In other words, things will be different, but in a very

From Our Pastor

Dear Fellow Pilgrims,

Last month I wrote about a tree that is gone from our yard. It was a great ancient oak tree, and it provided shade and beauty as well as being the tree from which our kids' swing hung. I watched it being taken down. It had died from the gypsy moth invasion from a few years before. Karin and I thought about what we would like to plant in its place, and we decided we would put a red maple in that spot. But we haven't done so yet. So we are still researching the best tree possible for the yard, and the one that would be most beautiful.

important way things will be the same, just as the new tree in our yard will still provide shade and eventually a place for the swing for the kids.

In this newsletter is a covenant all retiring pastors in our synod sign. It states clearly what I agree to do for the sake of the future. Please read it.

While Pilgrim Church shares in the struggles of most congregations in our world today, you continue to be a great community: open to the world around us, able to discuss difficult things, able to work together in trust and for a greater good than the individual. You are a congregation that knows you exist not for yourself, but for others. In that regard Pilgrim Lutheran Church is a blessing for Warwick, the State of Rhode Island, and the world beyond.

Personally, my family and I have been blessed to spend the last 25 years with you. It is amazing that a congregation that is about 80 years old has had only three pastors over that time. Thank you for letting me be part of your story. I will always carry you in my heart and have memories of times our lives have intersected in tender, intimate, and trusting ways. And I ask for your forgiveness for ways I have not served well.

I want God's blessings for you and will hold you in prayer. God is a God of surprises and always works for life, always redeeming what needs to be made new and guiding what is already blessed in life. You will be in good hands because whoever serves as your pastor (temporary or called) will be serving you by serving Jesus.

In gratitude and love,



Pastoral Acts:

Baptisms:

Sara Lyanna Ebbitt
Milo Edward Jenkins
Adeline June Hanson
John Joseph Kelly, V
Brady James Kitterick
Maura Ellen Kitterick

Wedding:

Brittany Ann Newton & Dennis Joseph LaFleur

Funerals:

Sarah "Sally" Williamson
Darryl Craig Paul
Donald Lindall
Arthur Rowan Jones
Joanne M. Bidon
Allan James Kaufman
Richard W. Berggren*
Laura Lee Chartier
Kristen Anderson
Helen I. Tella
Edward (Tom) Johnson*

*Member of Pilgrim Lutheran Church



SUNDAY SCHOOL classes begin on September 9 at 9:15 a.m. We're looking forward to a great year! See you then!

Our food pantry is a wonderful thing. It helps to feed many people and it has given me life participating in this ministry. I worked at the food pantry this past Wednesday, August 8. It was a Wednesday like any other except that it was my very last day. I am not sure how many years I have worked for the pantry, but it goes back to the Jim Higgins days. One of the highlights of this ministry has been sharing food with other churches like St. Michael's, St. Theresa's, Calvary Baptist and a Pentecostal Church in the Chad Brown area. Some of these churches have also donated food to other pantries, expanding the ministry. My special area of ministry has been in the toiletry pantry where we help provide items for clients' physical needs. Starting the coffee and donut ministry has been a wonderful success with people eating and sharing and just having fun together.

These two pantries have been made possible from the kind donations of many people and places. Trader Joe's has provided the core of what we give as food. This has been supplemented by Dave's, two Stop & Shops, Big Lots and St. Rita's as well as numerous one-time donations from schools and other agencies. Of course we thank you for your ongoing donations. As I write this, your ongoing money donations are providing backpacks and school supplies for forty children.

We have had so many people from this church and from other places helping with this ministry. A big thanks goes to Bob Laurent and Don West for their work and vision. I also want to mention some other people who have particularly put their time and energies into this ministry: Bill Eisemann, Roy Wagner, Reneé Woodward, Calvin Linden, Glen, Sharon Spencer, Sharlene LaRoque, Laurie Connors, and Norberta Brown.

I will miss the pantries and the church terribly. I especially thank those who were there to listen to me and give advice in tough times. Who knows how the Holy Spirit will

work in my life now, but I can already feel the nudgings toward new things.

You will be in my heart. I thank you for all that you are and all that you have done.

All the best to you all,
Karin Kohl

FROM THE COUNCIL.....

Thank you to all who helped make the celebration for Pastor Kohl a success. It was great to see so many people attend. We gave Pastor Kohl a Memory Book with pictures, cards, and messages from the congregation. We still have the book and welcome any additional pictures or memories that you would like to share. You may leave them in the collection plates on Sunday or put them in the church office.

As you know, we are now in a transitional phase, preparing to call a new Pastor. The Council is working with the Synod to formalize a plan for preparing the congregation for the call process and will announce plans as soon as they have been formalized. During this transitional phase, the congregation has the important task of carefully considering our future and how we envision going forward. We began to do some of this with Don Williams as we read and discussed Bishop Hazelwood's commentary on the changing church. The challenge before us requires input from every member of the Pilgrim community. I hope that I can count on each and every one of you to participate. Please do not hesitate to contact me or other members of the council if you have questions or concerns.

For the next three Sundays (August 19, 26 and September 2) Pastor Rafaela Morales will be serving as our Pastor.

Blessings to All,
Mary Brinson, Council President

A Message from Pastor Morales (Sermon from August 19)

Last Sunday you said good-bye to Pastor Dennis Kohl. He was your Pastor for over twenty-five years. He presided every Sunday in Holy Communion and partook with all of you the body and blood of Jesus. In today's gospel lesson Jesus says, "I am the living bread that came down from heaven." Every Sunday Pastor Dennis helped you to be nourished with the bread of heaven. Pastor Dennis baptized many of you, confirmed many of you, married some of you, visited many that were sick or afflicted and buried your loved ones. Over all those years Pastor ministered to you and you ministered to him and his family.

I imagine that many of you have been worried, concerned, preoccupied, and even fearful about what the next steps for your congregation are now that Pastor Kohl has retired. I have been retired for over six years and I know how hard it is to make that decision. Some of you might be happy for Pastor Dennis that he took this next step in his life. Other might be angry about his decision because you felt that you needed more time with him. Others will get into the task mode that will be geared to the checklist of what needs to be done – A, B, and C, 1, 2, 3.

One thing I know for sure, my brothers and sisters, is that the departure of a Pastor, especially one that has been with you for so many years, will stir up everyone out of their comfort zone. And when people are moved out of their comfort zone there is going to be a lot of different feelings in the process.

First let me share with you that you are not alone. God will be with you every step of the way and you have one another. Advice that I have for all of you is to be honest with your feelings and let them out in a healthy way. Talk about them with one another but, more importantly, listen to one another. When you are listening, remember to listen with your hearts and not your head. Put yourself in

each other's shoes, wear the sandals of Jesus, keeping Him in the center of your hearts and lives. Each one of you will be able to share your feelings and act with wisdom. Not your own wisdom but God's wisdom. Today's second lesson says, "be careful then how you live, not as unwise people but as wise", be wise of minds and hearts too.

Last year our congregation, Zion Lutheran in Oxford, Massachusetts, went to the process of Call for a new Pastor. Why? Because our Pastor came back from Sabbatical and a week later was diagnosed with a brain tumor and could not continue serving the congregation. At first, we were shocked and lost. We prayed for God's guidance and we listened for God's answer. Then the congregation began to work together.

We evaluated what we have and discerned our needs and our wants, our strengths and our weaknesses. I believe that the most important thing we did was to pray. Every Sunday we prayed for our Pastor's healing. She died a few months ago. Every Sunday we prayed for members of the congregation. We prayed for clarity, we prayed for God's guidance, we prayed and prayed. We prayed unceasingly asking God to lead us and guide us. God heard our pleas and answered our prayers. Last August we called a new Pastor and he has been wonderful.

Today's second lesson says: "be filled with the Spirit as you sing psalms and hymns and spiritual songs among yourselves, singing and making a melody to the Lord in your hearts, giving thanks to God the Father at all times and for everything in the name of our Lord Jesus Christ."

My brothers and sisters, I invite you to remember these words of Paul from prison and make them part of your congregation and your personal lives right now. Read the passage again. I invite you to open your hearts and minds, worshipping and praising God. I invite you in every step of the way to

open your hearts and minds, worshiping and praising God for everything that God has done and will do for you and your congregation every day. I assure you that the peace of God that passes all understanding will keep your hearts and minds in Christ Jesus, the bread from heaven, the bread of life.

Thanks be to God!
Pray Unceasingly!
Amen.

Pastor Rafaela Morales



Altar Flower Dedications

What a wonderful way for you to honor your family and loved ones. Your dedication can be in memory of someone or in honor of a birthday, wedding anniversary or another special accomplishment.

For each request, we ask for a \$30 donation, and the flowers will be distributed after the late service each week to those who are ill or to shut-ins. Donation envelopes are available on the table in the Narthex. Once completed, envelopes may be placed in the offering plate or dropped off to the church office.

September 9th, 23rd, and 30th are still available! Please consider supporting the Altar Guild. If you have any questions about flower dedication, please contact Pat Frazier at 941-7656.



Confirmation Classes begin September 18

The first Confirmation Class meets on Tuesday, September 18, at 6:30 p.m. Parents are asked to stay and participate in the session. We need to know if your student will be participating in the program in 2018-2019. The program lasts for three years and begins for kids in 7th grade. However, we welcome everyone who wants to learn more about faith and the difference it makes in living. Please let the church office know if you have someone who will begin confirmation preparation in September. Also watch the Sunday bulletin for more information.



Choir News!!!

Choir rehearsals resume on Wednesday, September 5, at 7:00 p.m. New members are always welcome! The first handbell rehearsal will be held on Tuesday, September 11. If you are interested in joining the choir, please talk to Denis Brunelle.