



THE PILGRIM QUILL

DECEMBER 2023



Hello Pilgrims!

I remember growing up my grandparents would always have an Advent calendar for me at their house. The calendar would hang on the wall and show a nativity scene. This was a tool they used to prepare me for Christmas by opening one of twenty-four little perforated “doors” built into the paper calendar. The doors were numbered and needed to be opened, one door each day, in order from the first day of December until Christmas Eve. Upon opening each door I would find a tasty piece of milk chocolate and a bible verse that tells a part of the Nativity story. As a child all I cared about was the chocolate. As an adult all my grandmother cared about was my learning about our faith and the birth of Jesus. I always wanted to get right to the chocolate and skip over the stories. I wish I had listened more to the stories my grandmother told me, had asked more questions, and ate even more chocolate. Now the holidays are still magical but half way through my fifth decade Christmas is not only magical, but also a bit, how should I say it? Sad? Tinged with grief? A time of longing for days gone by and the people who used to fill rooms with laughter who have long died and are dearly missed? That’s it right there.

I still love the seasons of Advent and Christmas as much as, if not even more than, I did as a child. This is still truly a magical time of year. As a person of faith I now find the season of Advent not only as a time of waiting and preparation for the birth of Jesus and what that means for us today; I also find the 4 weeks before Christmas known as Advent as a time of remembrance and renewal. Where as a child I used to always look forward to what I was going to get for Christmas, as an adult I now always seem to look back at what I have lost. In my youth making my way through the Christmas holiday seemed so easy and filled with light. Now the holidays are also hard and filled with shadows of grief I don’t ’always know quite what to do with.

They are there every year waiting for me like an old friend I don’t see very often and now I don’t know what to say to them anymore.

This is why we offer a Blue Christmas service. This year on December 21st, also known as the longest night, (AKA *the winter solstice*), you are invited to join us at 7 PM in the sanctuary for a service that speaks to those who have lost loved ones and are experiencing grief. It does not matter if you have lost someone to death this year or are grieving the loss of many over the course of several years like I am, you are most welcome. We will share a quiet and reflective time in worship with beautiful poetry and comforting music. We will let go of the stress of the holidays and simply be present in the moment with each other and our God. We will sing and pray and sit in the silence and find our rest in the blessed assurance that we are not alone.

What I wouldn’t give to walk into my grandmother’s house on Christmas Eve on the farm with the four living generations of my family from the days of my youth all crammed into that tiny little house. I remember the smells of Christmas candy and cookies, cakes and pies, baked ham and a Christmas goose, all in the same house with my great aunts’ dominating perfumes, the smell brandy old-fashioned sweets, and too many cigarettes floating across the top of the room over far too many card games being played a little too late into the middle of the “O Holy Night.” But that is no more. The idyllic days of my childhood have surrendered themselves to the reality of a world filled with suffering and violence, injustice and insurrection, oppression of the poor and the marginalized, wars and sickness. My father always threw around the phrase that the world was going “to hell in a handbasket” and now I believe him. I know how he likely felt when he said this often when I was a child who did not understand. And this feeling tells me we need the birth of Jesus now more than ever. The great coming of the Son of God, of hope eternal and everlasting, peace and justice for all of God’s children. May it be so.

Amen and Alleluia,

Pastor Rob

Sunday Scriptures

- Sunday, December 3:
Mark 13:24-36 - Be Ready
- Sunday, December 10:
Mark 1:1-8 - John the Baptizer Prepares the Way
- Sunday, December 17:
The Gospel According to Sheep
- Sunday, December 24:
Luke 1:26-38 - Angels Visit
- Sunday, December 24 10:00PM:
Luke 2:1-20 - Jesus is Born
- Sunday, December 31:
Luke 2:22-40 - Simeon & Anna



News from Council President, Patti Burns

Hello Pilgrim Family,

As we prepare ourselves for Thanksgiving and Christmas, I have been reflecting on how thankful I am to be part of the Pilgrim Family. God has blessed us with a congregation of loving members who are welcoming and supportive to all.

It was amazing to watch Pilgrim pull together for the Annual Ham Dinner. So many hands to help out to make this another hugely successful Ham Dinner. This year with the encouragement of Pastor Rob, we were able to feed others in the community who wouldn't have otherwise been able to enjoy the wonderful meal. I truly hope this becomes part of the tradition of the Pilgrim Ham Dinner.

I am looking forward to all of the traditions that Pilgrim celebrates with the Christmas Season. We will begin the Advent Season with the Hanging of the Greens.

Wishing our Pilgrim Family a blessed Christmas Season.

Patti Burns

Why WISE? (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged for Mental Health.

“Stigma is a cluster of negative attitudes and beliefs that motivate the public to fear, reject, avoid, and discriminate against people with mental illness. Stigma is one of the biggest barriers to recovery.” Mental Health First Aid. This is huge for anyone with a mental wellness challenge and those who love them. One of the goals of WISE is to decrease/eliminate negative stigma in the congregational setting.

Our WISE Task Force liaisons – Dr. Harvey from the UCC Mental Health Network, and Lisa Hart from the WI Conference - have both complimented us on our WISE Covenant and our plans moving forward. Please, if you have any questions, concerns, or comments, contact one of the Task Force members.

WISE Covenant: Pilgrim United Church of Christ (PUCC) of Fond du Lac, Wisconsin has embraced the UCC General Synod's call to become a Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive and Engaged (WISE) congregation for mental health.

With Jesus as our model for how to live and love, we strive to provide a warm welcome, promote inclusion, and offer support for all who live with mental health challenges and to those who love and support them. Our objectives are to promote understanding and compassion, reduce stigma through education and to support connections with local community agencies that advocate for those living with these challenges.

At Pilgrim we seek to be a community that cares for the whole person. We recognize that mental wellness is on a continuum and that stressors, loss, and life events can challenge us at any point. We recognize that many among us and those we encounter in our lives are dealing with mental health, brain disorders, and substance abuse challenges every day.

Our Congregation's atmosphere of openness and acceptance of people with the above concerns makes members, friends, and visitors more likely to feel safe and free from judgment. This acceptance and sense of safety can create a place of belonging where truly everyone, no matter where they are on life's journey towards mental wellness is welcome.

Task Force Members: Sue Schmitz, Randy Stutz, Barb Geiger, Donna Overbo, Judy Burton, Judi Faubel, Chris Frederick, Kaitlynn Zick, Advisors: Pastor Rob, Dr. Brian Christenson.

CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICE

will be at 9:00PM.

Potluck Reception to follow.

A sign-up sheet is in the narthex to bring treats.



Loaves and Fishes

Pilgrim Church will serve its final Loaves and Fishes meal for this year on **December 6th** at the Church of Peace.

Each time we provide a meal, several volunteers are needed to donate and prepare food, set-up, serve, clean-up and distribute leftovers. It is hoped that those that have helped in the past will volunteer again; new volunteers are always welcome!

The sign-up poster is in the narthex. If you have any questions, please contact Jim Bentley at 920-922-5093.



Flowers for Church

Members can continue to sign-up to provide flowers in church on the Sundays of each month **In Memory Of Someone or In Honor Of Someone or Special Occasion.**

The sign-up poster is hanging on the window (of Cathy's office) behind the Scrip table.



Diner's Club!!!

The next get-together will be on **Sunday, December 3** at **Gino's Italian on Johnson Street**
Sign-up sheet is in the narthex
Please sign-up by December 1st
Gathering begins at 5:00PM with sit down for the meal at 5:30PM.

As always, if you have suggestions for other restaurant choices, let Patty Minter know.
Happy Dining!!!



Coffee Hour

1st Sunday of Each Month
(except where noted)

Volunteers are Needed and if no one signs up for any given month, there will be NO coffee hour. We can have coffee hour for a reason or no reason!

The sign-up poster is in the narthex with dates and instructions; **any member of the church can sign-up.**

If you notice supplies getting low or if you have questions, please let Patty Minter know at 920-251-0425 or pattyminter@gmail.com



Meet on Sunday Mornings from 10:15AM to 11:15AM in the **lounge** for those wishing to attend in person. We will have a few minutes to chat after worship before the program begins promptly at 10:15AM. Those preferring to join from the comfort of your home, the link for the programs will be the same throughout the fall semester.

To join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87682457999?pwd=NklCTOZEYWtTRnlwcEtRNDBCMGRhQT09>

Meeting ID: 876 8245 7999

Passcode: 769374

December 3
Coffee Fellowship



December 10
Forward Services

Presenter: Maurice Pentek

Forward Service Corporation is a team of dedicated, caring professionals working to help clients reach their dreams. They do this with employment, training, support, case management and other services that lead to a more prosperous future. They meet clients where they are, ask them to share their dreams and then help them create a map to realize them. Whether a dream is big or small, each is important to them, treated with the care and attention it deserves.

December 17
Review of the book, Red: The History of a Color
Presenter: Ben Blanc

Ben Blanc will present a review of the book [Red: The History of a Color](#) by Michel Pastoureau. Red isn't just the color of Christmas. It has a history which is often associated with religion. The author navigates centuries of symbolism and complex meanings to present the fascinating and sometimes controversial history of the color red. We will follow the author from the first development of the color red in painting and dying, to its rise as the favorite color in

the Middle Ages and its decline during the Reformation until its rediscovery after the French Revolution. Join us in the lounge for coffee and Christmas treats as Ben leads us on this unusual exploration of the color red!

EXPANDING HORIZONS



Meet Wednesday Mornings 9:30AM -11:00AM in the **lounge** for in-person learning; the link for those wishing to view via Zoom from home is as follows:
<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88978012384?pwd=cGxJa0pJbExSM0FFWEtIMmtJYzNodz09>
Meeting ID: 889 7801 2384 Passcode: 762316

December 6
Christmas on the Screen: Reviewing the Evolution of American Spirituality
Presenter: Pastor Rob & Chris Deaner-Rogers

In the Spirit of Christmas, from Miracle on 34th Street to Love Actually, generations of Christmas films tell us about American spirituality and social values: In Christmas on the Screen, journalist John A. Zukowski takes readers on a tour of Christmas films and American values, asking the question, "What does Christmas mean to us?" We'll bring the popcorn and you can bring your Christmas cheer and we'll learn a little something about the Christmas spirit and hang some holly for this exploration of beloved movies!

December 13
Christmas Brunch



Once again, Pilgrim Church will beautify its Sanctuary with lovely poinsettia plants for the holiday season.

All plants come in 6.5" pots wrapped in green foil with 5-6 flowers. If you wish to order a plant(s), please fill out this form and put it along with your payment in an envelope and mail it to the church or drop it in the offering plate. Please make checks payable to: Pilgrim United Church of Christ and denote "Poinsettia" in the memo.

Please indicate the quantity you would like:

<u>Color</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Total</u>
Red	_____	\$8.00 each	_____
		Grand Total:	_____

<p><u>Final day to order is Sunday, December 3rd.</u></p>
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Our December 24th bulletin will list:

Poinsettia given by: _____

In Memory of: _____

In Honor of: _____

(Please complete as you would like it to appear in the bulletin.)

The plant is yours to take home after the Evening Service on Christmas Eve or, if you wish, your plant can be given to a shut-in.

Please indicate your choice:

I will take my plant with me After the Evening Service on Christmas Eve _____

I would like my plant to be given to a shut-in _____

Ordered by: _____

COPIES OF THE POINSETTIA ORDER FORM WILL BE ON THE TABLE IN THE NARTHEX.





Pilgrim United Church of Christ Alternative Gift Fair is a

positive holiday experience that brings together our church and community members in a fun way to bypass the annual stress of holiday shopping and accumulation of “stuff” while honoring friends and relatives with donations that fit their values. The Alternative Gift Fair provides critical support for a diverse collection of local, national, and international nonprofit organizations that have established track records of helping people -- diverting money to these charities rather than to department stores and malls. Each year we strive to feature 8 or 9 local, national and international organizations that we have researched and chosen. We strive to feature different organizations as much as possible in order to educate our shoppers about the diverse and extensive number of worthwhile nonprofit charities that exist. This *alternative* approach honors the spirit of giving. Gifts can range from any amount and are not disclosed to the recipient, making *alternative* gifts the perfect solution for co-workers, family, friends and the “hard to shop for” person.

Pilgrim Church’s Alternative Gift Fair has raised a considerable amount of money for nonprofit charity organizations over the last 17 years. The Fair has supported a wide range of causes including organizations dedicated to environment, poverty, children, animals, nature, the arts, education, housing, women, hunger, refugees and more. We consider a successful fair one in which our shoppers are more educated about each charity’s mission and good work.

Attendees are given a “shopping list” with all of the nonprofits who are represented at the fair. They can stroll among the booths and talk to featured nonprofit groups who will have information to share about their respective mission and current projects. As shoppers browse, they can match what charities they might support with the interests of the people on their gift list. Once complete, shoppers can check out and pay for all their gifts at once, eliminating any pressure to give to particular causes or groups at the individual booths. Shoppers may pay by cash or check and 100% of all donations go to the designated charities.

The shopper will receive a gift card for each monetary gift donated to a designated charity that they can share with their gift recipient. This card can then be addressed to “the honor of” or “memory of” a loved one or friend and can be signed by the shopper. Information is posted on the gift card about the charity’s general mission and contact information.

Pilgrim Church’s checkout eliminates the need for multiple transactions. After the event, Pilgrim will issue one check to each charity with all of their donations consolidated into one.

As one shops *alternatively*, your purchase is more than a gift to just the recipient. Your choice emphasizes community, outreach, service and justice. It is a celebration of non-material values. It honors the true meaning of Christmas.

This year’s Alternative Gift Fair will be on Sunday, December 3, 2023.

Listed below are descriptions of some of the organizations represented this year at Pilgrim Church:

Brightpoint

www.brightpoint.org

Brightpoint has been serving families since 1883. We believe strong families are at the center of thriving children and that the most important asset for child and youth well-being is the family. Our work seeks to dismantle system inequities and create a more even playing field for everyone. We understand that navigating obstacles such as poverty, trauma, and systemic barriers to equity can be challenging, and we offer support through the highs and lows. At Brightpoint, we put families and children at the forefront of every decision we make. We know prevention works, and we are committed to working with families before small problems become life-altering crises. We serve 30,000 children and families each year through five program areas:

Early Childhood Care & Education - A child’s experience and relationships during the first five years of their life are critical for development. Our programs promote growth and development for the child, while also providing support services and basic needs for parents and caregivers.

Child Welfare - Our services provide guidance and tangible support, and our staff walk alongside families as they navigate solutions to strengthen their ability to nurture their children and prevent fixable challenges from becoming life-altering crises.

Parent Support - When families stay together, children thrive. We strengthen families by providing parents and caregivers with support and resources through our doula, home visiting, family support and fatherhood services.

Mental Health & Wellness - We provide therapy and guidance for parents, children and young adults to heal from trauma, make positive changes in their lives and achieve their dreams.

Youth Services - We provide youth with job placement, mentorship and therapeutic programs that are essential for positive relationships with their families and communities.

Visit our website at www.brightpoint.org to learn more.

FAITH IN PLACE

<http://www.faithinplace.org>

Faith in Place is an affiliate of Interfaith Power & Light, a national organization working for environmental justice across the United States. *Faith in Place* has outreach staff supporting communities across the three states of Illinois, Indiana and Wisconsin.

The mission of *Faith in Place* is to empower people of diverse faiths and spiritualities to be leaders in advancing environmental and racial justice, providing resources to educate, connect, and advocate for healthier communities.

Free online resources include energy saving guides, curricula and toolkits, indigenous and anti-racism education, webinars, blogs, podcasts, newsletters, and Covid 19 resources. They offer special partner events, fairs, and summits.

Faith in Place implements programming in five key areas - Climate Change & Energy, Sustainable Food & Land Use, Water Preservation, Advocacy, and Youth Empowerment - in close collaboration with their 358 faith partners and over 180 Green Teams, including Pilgrim United Church of Christ, Fond du Lac WI.

Your donation to *Faith in Place* will support the work of empowering communities of faith, and those who identify as spiritual or motivated by justice but don't identify with a specific faith tradition, to advocate for the climate.

When people of diverse faith and spiritualities engage with each other, they are empowered to take action in addressing environmental and racial injustices within their communities. These actions result in healthier, more equitable, and resilient communities. To learn more, visit: <https://www.faithinplace.org/>

UNION OF CONCERNED SCIENTISTS

www.ucsusa.org

The Union of Concerned Scientists was founded in 1969 by scientists and students at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. That year, the Vietnam War was at its height and Cleveland's heavily polluted Cuyahoga River had caught fire. Appalled at how the United States government was misusing science, the UCS founders, including [Henry Kendall](#) and [Kurt Gottfried](#), drafted a statement calling for scientific research to be directed away from military technologies and toward solving pressing environmental and social problems.

The organization has remained true to that founding vision. Throughout its history, UCS has followed the example set by the scientific community: to share information, seek the truth, and let the findings guide conclusions. UCS uses science to help people, whether it's working for change at the policy level, or helping individuals understand what's happening in their neighborhoods.

By mobilizing scientists and combining their voices with those of advocates, educators, business people, and other concerned citizens, UCS has built a reputation for fairness and accuracy and amassed an impressive history of accomplishments.

Wins for a healthy planet and safer world:

- **Strengthened** US fuel efficiency standards to eliminate almost half of all emissions from new cars and trucks by 2025.
- **Encouraged the growth** of clean energy through renewable energy standards in 29 states and Washington, DC.
- **Reduced** US and Russian nuclear stockpiles through the passage of the New START Treaty.
- **Blocked** anti-science legislation and protected bedrock environmental laws—such as the Clean Air Act

RAWtools

RAWtools is a Grassroots Organization with the mission to *“Disarm Hearts and Forge Peace”*. From their website, “Our nation has been through a variety of horrific events surrounding gun violence, and it has brought the conversation to the forefront...It has largely become a binary conversation of either more guns or more laws. RAWtools wants to open a new option, a third way: What if we made a commitment to solve our problems without guns and violence?”

RAWtools has several programs: Swords to Plowshares – the Sword to Plow program allows someone to donate their gun(s) to RAWTools and receive a garden tool from that gun for free. RAWtools keeps any remaining parts to make more tools or items to raise money for their work in nonviolence training, resource connection, and violence prevention. They legally disable the gun according to Federal ATF guidelines and provide paperwork upon request that a gun has been disabled. “Turning guns into garden tools connects our programs and enables storytelling – stories of magnificent transformation as well as the deep trauma of grief and loss.”

They are growing a **“Disarming Network”** that helps “people connect with others who have the knowledge, resources, and safe spaces to disable guns,” and then safely send the gun parts to RAWtools. (In Wisconsin there are people in Madison and Milwaukee who are part of this network.)

War No More nonviolence training. “We believe there are tools to resolve conflicts that don’t involve violent weapons.” **RAWpower Workshops:**

Tools for a Third Way can include:

- Restorative Justice
- De-Escalation
- Bystander Intervention
- Circle Process
- Open Dialogue
- Mental Health First Aid

At this time, workshops are offered in Colorado, are tailored to any group and include theory and practice.

Vine and Fig is based on *Micah 4:4* “...everyone will sit under their own vine and under their own fig tree, and no one will make them afraid.” “This is initiative to encourage us to look inward and address the triggers in our hearts that lead to violence, such as fear and hate.” And connects with community resources like The Rebels Project (a national victim support group for those who

have endured violence, resilience yoga and community gardening as a response to trauma.

RAW is War spelled backwards. They believe that guns have no place in conflict resolution. And, “By using weapons to make garden tools and other hand tools, we are creating a symbol for change.”

**THE ALTERNATIVE GIFT FAIR
SHOPPING LIST
DECEMBER 3, 2023**

HONOREE	ORGANIZATIONS	AMOUNT

_____ **CASHIER'S COPY** _____

_____ **Bright Point**

_____ **Sandi Paws**

_____ **Interfaith Power & Light/Faith in Place**

_____ **Solutions Center**

_____ **Mahala Fund**

_____ **Team Rubicon**

_____ **Rawhide**

_____ **Union of Concerned Scientists**

_____ **Raw Tools**

_____ **TOTAL**

_____ **CUSTOMER NAME**

Notes from Karen

(Our Sunday School Director)

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS

Sunday School Update

Sunday school attendance continues to fluctuate. There was no class on November 26th due to the Thanksgiving holiday. **PLEASE NOTE: There will not be any class on December 24 or December 31 also due to the holidays.**

During the months of November and December, the Sunday school program is collecting arts and crafts supplies for the St. Katharine Drexel Homeless Shelter. They have identified needs such as crayons, washable markers, glue sticks, beads for making friendship bracelets and any other arts and crafts supplies one can think of. These supplies are being used by the children while parents are often attending classes at the shelter. Karen will have a box set up in the narthex for anyone wishing to donate.



On December 3rd we will hold a make n take craft event for the children and youth in the fellowship hall in place of Sunday school class (from 10:15AM – 11:15AM). This is held in conjunction with the Alternative Gift Fair with emphasis to the children that not all gifts have to be store bought. Homemade gifts provide just as much, if not more, through memories for years to come. Please feel free to invite your grandchildren to come and participate in this event.



Chili Cook-Off and Game Night

On **Friday, November 17th**, the CE Ministry hosted a chili cook-off. While we had a lot of chili, we only had 11 people attend. But it goes without saying that nobody went home hungry.

A huge thank you to the people who made chili (and to Chris Frederick for her yummy desserts). This year we had a tie for the winning chili. Our winners were Rachel Wicichowski and Pastor Rob Van Ess! Congratulations to them both.

Birthday Dimes

The youth came up with 3 possible organizations to donate the birthday dimes to and then they voted. This year's donation will be given to Hope on the Block, an organization that provides community pantries that allow people to get the essential items and resources they need at no cost to them.

We hope to have a representative from this organization here on December 17th so that the children may present the check and we can all hear a little more about this organization.

KNOCK KNOCK MIDDLE SCHOOL RETREAT

We had 3 youth who attended the Knock Knock Middle School Retreat in November (1 youth had to cancel). A special thank you to Rachel Wicichowski for volunteering to chaperone these youth.

Christmas Caroling

We will be going Christmas caroling to some of our shut-ins as our December Family Fun Night Activity on **Friday, December 15th**. We will plan to meet at church between **5:45PM - 6:00PM**, then leave promptly at 6:00PM. We can car pool when we see how many participants we have.

Following our fun with caroling, we will return to church for fun and fellowship as we enjoy hot chocolate, cookies (anyone wishing to donate a plate of cookies for the carolers to enjoy after caroling may certainly do so!) and play JINGO BINGO! This is a wonderful way to begin some of your many holiday activities and it brings joy to so many! Please plan to join us...**EVERYONE IS WELCOME!**

NOTICE: There will not be any Sunday School class on December 24th or 31st !

Holiday Blessings,
Karen



On behalf of the Pilgrim SCRIP program, I invite you to consider using SCRIP as you prepare for your many holiday needs. It truly is very easy and it helps Pilgrim at no additional cost to you! From food preparation (groceries) to gift giving, SCRIP can provide you with a variety of gift cards with which to do your shopping.

You purchase gift cards to various businesses at face value (Ex: \$25 Festival Foods= \$25 purchase price) and Pilgrim receives a percentage from each card sold.

If ordering something out of the ordinary, like Cabela's or Bath & Body, for example, please plan ahead as I do not keep those on hand.

It's as simple as stopping at the SCRIP table in the narthex on Sunday mornings, calling me @ 920-904-5740, or texting me (please leave your name if sending a text).

I will do all I can to make this as simple as possible to keep Pilgrim's SCRIP program available to you. I wish you all a Blessed Christmas season!

Thanks for supporting Pilgrim's SCRIP program

Peace,
Karen Goodacre, 920-904-5740

Christian Outreach News!



It's time to collect for the Toys for Tots program for all the children who are in need of Christmas presents. There is a box inside the front door. We do not have a deadline date for the last day to collect at this time, so the earlier you donate your gift, the better. Thank you for your generosity.

Tags for the Angel Tree are hanging on a window in the narthex; **please make sure to sign out your tag on the list provided.**

Remember December 3rd is the Alternative Gift Fair.

Don't forget about the hat and mittens/gloves rack! Winter is right around the corner!



“The season of Advent, more than any other time of the church year, invites us to embrace the spiritual discipline of waiting. The season of Advent will not be rushed. The advent carols must be sung, the Advent candles must be lighted week by week, and the doors of the Advent Calendar must be opened day by day. Christmas will finally come when all the expectant Scriptures have been read and when the baby has finally been born...Waiting is an enormous opportunity if we regard it as a wise teacher. Waiting offers us a great deal when we choose to learn.”

From Seven Spiritual Gifts of Waiting
by Rev. Holly Whitcomb



The following donations were made in November from the 2nd and 3rd quarter trust fund dividends.

Salvation Army - Back to School	\$ 500
Holy Family Church - Warming Shelter	\$1000
FDL High School - Challenge Days	\$ 500
Feeding America Northeast WI	\$ 500
UCC Global Funds	\$1500
(\$1000 Middle East, \$500 Ukraine)	
Salvation Army	\$1000
United Way	\$ 500
Rosenow School	\$ 500
Fondy Food Pantry	\$ 500
Solutions Center	\$1000
Solutions Center Youth Services	\$ 500
Rawhide	\$ 564.92

Caring for God's Creation

Have a Green Christmas!

- *Shop at Pilgrim's Alternative Gift Fair
- *Buy less...give a homemade gift or sweet treat
- *Look for locally made gifts
- *Connect with nature...decorate an outdoor tree with seed balls, suet, pine cones with peanut butter
- *Reduce the impact of holiday outdoor lighting...reduce size of display, use LED lights, turn off lights at bedtime
- *Be creative in wrapping gifts - check the internet for ideas



**Shoulders Up – Shoulders Back – Head Up –
Phone Down!**

Advent begins December 3 - Happy New Year!

To be prepared means to be “in a suitable state for an activity, action, or situation; duly equipped, completed, adjusted or arranged, as for an occasion or purpose” (dictionary definition). Advent is all about preparing for the coming of Jesus – and (in my head) about welcoming the new year...new options...new ideas...new opportunities...each day brings the unexpected and I may not be as prepared as I think I should be, but I am enough.

We Welcome the Returning Sun and National Flash-light Day

In the dark silence comes whisperings of new beginnings. December 21st is the shortest daylight day of the year. (8 hours, 58 minutes and 15 seconds...) in this area. Personally, I’m not a fan of extended physical darkness but there can be a quiet softness in the darkness – a time of rest and restoration for the earth and in us. God is here...strengthening, guiding, supporting, and loving. I celebrate December 22nd – because that daylight is just a tad longer, and the light at the end of the tunnel.

*“Happiness can be found, even in the darkest of times, if one only remembers to turn on the light.”
Albus Dumbledore*

Sleep and Blue screens

And thinking of longer night/dark time hours, it’s easy to watch television and play on tablets in the evenings. Looking at those screens can affect how a person sleeps.

VERY simply - In response to darkness, brains make the hormone melatonin. It’s the same hormone that causes bears to hibernate and birds to fly south for the winter. An increase in melatonin causes a feeling of sleepiness. Light – natural sunshine and specifically the blue wavelength light in the spectrum – (think a prism as light passes through and splits into colors – the blue one) messes with the body’s ability to make melatonin. It just so happens that “human made” blue light sources are in screens - televisions, smartphones, tablets, gaming systems, computer

monitors – as well as fluorescent and LED bulbs. Both natural and artificial blue light can boost alertness and mental sharpness, but too much of it may keep a person from being able to “wind down” at the end of the day.

This is an awareness for both youth and adults who have difficulty falling or staying asleep. The recommendation from sleep experts is to “turn off or dramatically cut back screen time 2-3 hours before bedtime”. There are apparently blue light-blocking glasses and blue light filtering apps as options, or for example books, puzzles, decaf tea and conversation, cribbage, phone a friend, music, journaling, writing a snail mail letter...during the time of relaxation and reflection and we wait for the return of the sun.

December is 3-9 is National Handwashing Awareness Week

I have written ad nauseum about handwashing as a simple illness prevention practice. Check out the bulletin board for more reminders. Historically, the number of upper respiratory illnesses (influenza, RSV, COVID, the common cold...) increases during the months of December and January. Tis the season for gatherings in poorly ventilated areas with grazing type food. Be safer than average.

And, a reminder that everyone can get 4 free COVID test kits through the mail by calling 1-800-232-0233 or online, <https://www.covid.gov/tests>. Every COVID illness has a possibility of developing into “Long COVID”, and all viral illnesses spread easily and quickly.

Gift Giving Reminders

When choosing gifts for children: Look for labels that assure you the toys have passed a safety inspection – “ATSM” means the toy has met the “American Society for Testing and Materials” standards. And, an easy rule when choosing toys for toddlers, - if the piece can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for kids under the age of three.



Thank-you to Donna Jost for donating 2 wheel chairs to Pilgrim! One is a “regular” large wheelchair that will be kept in the coat room for use during services, meetings and events at Pilgrim. The other is a “travel wheelchair” that will be kept in the office that Karen and Sue use. This one is lighter and can be used at Pilgrim or borrowed for short needs by Pilgrim members. If you need to take this one out of the building, please let Cathy know.

Dear Members of Pilgrim Church and Friends,

Karen and I would like to thank Pilgrim Church Members and Friends for your continued support and Prayers during the past year for our 25 year old granddaughter, Reilly Mathews, great-granddaughter Evelyn and Reilly’s husband Phil.

Reilly suffered a Brain Aneurysm a year ago on the evening of December 11th, she was 6 months pregnant at that time. Evelyn was delivered by C-section at an Appleton Hospital just after midnight, weighing 2 lbs – 14 ozs, then both were transferred to Theda Clark in Neenah, where Reilly had Brain Surgery. Both were hospitalized for 3 months of prenatal care and recovery & therapy.

To date, Evelyn is doing fine, normal development about 2 months behind, sitting and beginning to crawl. Reilly was paralyzed on her left side, both limbs. She now walks with a partial limp, but no cane. She has some use of her left shoulder, but no use of her left arm and hand. She continues to have physical therapy.

We Thank You all for your prayers, kind words, concerns and are thankful for many blessing to date. We have asked Pastor Rob, that they be taken off the current Prayer list, but we continue to pray for recovery and blessings.

Thank you,
Ron & Karen McCreedy

Dear Council Members,

We just wanted to thank you for the wonderful dinner and warm welcome to Pilgrim. We’re looking forward to being part of your community.

Thank you again,
Mary & Kevin Berens

Dear Pilgrim United Church of Christ,

Thank you for your generous donation to the Holy Family Warming Shelter. Your gift will help us to achieve our goal of purchasing, renovating and operating a seasonal warming shelter used to care for the homeless in our Fond du Lac community. The Holy Family Warming Shelter will operate on the Christian values of compassion, dignity and care for people of all backgrounds and beliefs. We will offer up to 30 individuals a warm, clean place to sleep; hot, nutritious meals and access to community resources every night from November 15 through April. With the Warming Shelter’s central location, the clients will have access to public transport, as well as to many community resources. It is our hope that through the shelter, those who are struggling will be able to move forward and take steps towards stability. Thank you for your servant leadership as a participant in this exciting endeavor!

Thank you so much for your generous gift of \$9,483.00 for the Holy Family Warming Shelter campaign; you are supporting a healthy future for our community in a very special way.

I, along with the priests and parish staff of Holy Family, will continue to pray for God’s blessings for you and your organization. Please continue to pray for us, as well.

May God bless and keep you always,
Ellen Kant
Director of Finance & Human Resources
Holy Family Catholic Community

Pastor Rob,

Thank you so much for thinking of us on ham dinner night at Pilgrim. The guys loved it and I very much along with the cooks for the week, appreciated it. It was a blessing.

Sincerely,
Julie Feilbach
Blandine House Executive Director



PUCC YOUTH GROUP ACTIVITIES (AUGUST – DECEMBER 2023)

Steven and Rachel Wicichowski are coordinating our youth group events.

(Contact Rachel at ra.burns@hotmail.com or 920-238-5919)

Wednesday August 23, 2023 — Meet at 5:45 PM at church for Pizza Party/ arrive at 6:45 PM at Fondy Sports Park for putt-putt and go-karts.

Sunday September 10, 2023 — Packers vs. Bears (Tailgate in church parking lot starting at 2 PM — Game at 3:25 PM on a big screen)

Saturday October 28, 2023 — Burial Chamber Haunted House Complex Haunted house in Fox Crossing, Wisconsin (Time/Date TBA) Meet at church, ride up as a group (Necnah area).

Friday November 17 — Sunday November 19, 2023 — Knock Knock Middle School Retreat at Daycholah Center on Green Lake (for grades 6-8) Parents drop off and pick youth up from camp.

December 2023 — Serve food at new Fondy Warming Shelter (Time/Date TBA) Meet at warming shelter.

Jan – May 2024 Events TBA



Ushers for December

Date	9:00 Service
December 3	Bill & Patti Burns
December 10	Jim & Dianne Bentley
December 17	Steven & Rachel Wicichowski
December 24 9:00AM	Jim & Dianne Bentley
December 24 9:00PM	Randy & Linda Stutz
December 31	Pete Vercouteren & Connie Anderson

Welcomers for December

Date	9:00 Service
December 3	Alternative Gift Fair - No Special Welcomer
December 10	Jim & Dianne Bentley
December 17	Wendy Ellison
December 24 9:00AM	Linda Stutz
December 31	Bob & Jane Flaherty

Worship Leaders for December

Date	9:00 Service
December 3	Sue Schmitz
December 10	Noreen Henderson
December 17	Children's Program
December 24 9:00AM	Jill Barbeau
December 31	Jim Thomas



- 1 Kaden Goetsch
- 2 Laura Hawkins
Blair Holl
- 6 Joanne Baltz
- 12 Alia Abler
- 13 Charle Wicichowski
- 14 Kameron Keys
- 15 Nate Dietenberger
- 16 Gary Greenfield
Tina Potter
- 18 Rick Goetsch Jr.
- 19 Megan Christenson
Merry Walter
Christopher Luckow
- 21 Linda Graves
Hannah Connor
- 25 JESUS
- 27 Isabelle Schilling
- 28 Beth Fedyszyn
- 29 Tim Flaherty
- 30 Paul Dille
Rob Steinert

- December 14 Mike & Jane Steinke
- December 22 Tom & Sarah Kirchhoff

Did we miss your birthday or anniversary? If you have a birthday or anniversary this month and your name is not on the list, perhaps we don't have your information. Please call Cathy in the church office (921-0415) or fill out the form below so your name can be included next year! Thank you!

✂

If you would like your birthday and/or anniversary listed in The Quill, just fill out this form and return it to the church office.

Name: _____

Birthday: _____

Anniversary: _____

Pilgrim UCC Fall 2023 Master Schedule

Worship & Event Schedule

Special Events in Orange
Mission Moments in Blue
Additional worship services in Red
Choir in Green
Themed Sun Services in Purple

Confirmation Classes in Light Blue
Special Music Highlighted
**all services at Pilgrim UCC unless otherwise noted*

December 2023

Sun Dec 3: 9 AM Worship (1st Week of Advent/Hope) – **Alternative Gift Fair after worship** – **Choir** – **Make N' Take Crafts for Youth**
 Sun Dec 10: 9 AM Worship (2nd Week of Advent/Peace) – 10:15 Adult Ed & Sun School – Handbell Quartet
 Wed Dec 13: 6-7:30 PM – 8th Confirmation Class
 Fri Dec 15: 6 PM **Intergenerational Christmas Caroling/Jingle Bingo/Cookies & Hot Cocoa**
 Sun Dec 17: 9 AM Worship (3rd Week of Advent/Joy) – **Children's Christmas Program** – 10:15 Adult Ed/ No Sun School
 Wed Dec 18: 6-7:30 PM – 9th Confirmation Class
 Thurs Dec 21: 7 PM Worship – **Blue Christmas Service**
 Sun Dec 24: 9 AM Worship (4th Week of Advent/Love) – Christmas Eve morning
 Sun Dec 24: 9 PM Worship – **Christmas Eve Candle-light Service** – **Choir**
 Sun Dec 31: 9 AM Worship – New Year's Eve morning – No Ad Ed/Sun School

Special Sunday School Dates*

*Sunday School runs Sept 17, 2022 – May 12, 2023 after worship (10:15AM – 11:15AM)

Dec 3: Make N' Take – During our normal class time, while the Alternative Gift Fair is happening, students will be able to make a variety of crafts as gifts while learning not all gifts have to be store bought.
 Dec 17: Youth Christmas Program – during worship. No Sunday School Classes
 Dec 24: Christmas Eve – No Classes
 Dec 31: New Year's Eve – No Classes

Family Fun Nights

Fri Dec 15: 6 PM Intergenerational Christmas Caroling/Jingle Bingo/Cookies & Hot Cocoa

Scripture Readings for Fall 2023*

*Scripture readings are used both in worship and Sunday school.

Dec 3: *Be Ready* (Mark 13:24-36)
 Dec 10: *John the Baptizer Prepares the Way* (Mark 1:1-8)
 Dec 24: *Angels Visit* (Luke 1:26-38)
 Dec 24 10 PM *Jesus is Born* (Luke 2:1-20)
 Dec 31 *Simeon & Anna* (Luke 2:22-40)

Dates for Fall Term (Sept – Dec) 2023 Confirmation Class*

Wed Dec 13: 8th Class
 Wed Dec 20: 9th Class w/ Mentors
 *Field Trips and retreat TBD
 Wed Evening sessions are from 6-7:30 PM
 (Spring Term Jan – May 2024)

Christian Outreach

December 3: Alternative Gift Fair (After worship), Toys for Tots, Angel Tree

Health Ministries Fall 2023

December 2023

Advent begins Dec. 3rd. Happy New Year!
 National Handwashing Awareness Week
 Winter Solstice and National Flashlight Day
 The Longest Night
 WISE – Covenant again with any changes and
 questions/comments
 Bulletin Board - Handwashing
 Youth – Sleep and blue screens

Adult Forum

“Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world.” -Nelson Mandela

ADULT FORUM Meets Sunday mornings from 10:15AM to 11:15AM in the lounge for those wishing to attend in person. There will be a few minutes to chat after worship before the program begins promptly at 10:15AM. Those that prefer to join from the comfort of your home, the link for the programs will be the same throughout the winter/spring semester. To join Zoom Meeting:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87682457999?pwd=NkICT0ZEYWtTRnlwcEtRNDBCmGRhQT09>
Meeting ID: 876 8245 7999
Passcode: 769374

December 3: Alternative Gift Fair – No Adult Ed

December 10: Forward Services – Presenter: Maurice Pentek

Come hear about a wonderful resource in Fond du Lac that provides training, education, career guidance and supportive services for anyone needing a little help.

December 17: Review of the book, *Red: The History of a Color* – Presenter: Ben Blanc

Ben Blanc will present a review of the book *Red: The History of a Color* by Michel Pastoureau. *Red* isn't just the color of Christmas. It has a history which is often associated with religion. The author navigates centuries of symbolism and complex meanings to present the fascinating and sometimes controversial history of the color red. We will follow the author from the first development of the color red in painting and dying, to its rise as the favorite color in the Middle Ages and its decline during the Reformation until its rediscovery after the French Revolution. Join us in the lounge for coffee and Christmas treats as Ben leads us on this unusual exploration of the color red!

December 24 & 31: No Adult Forum due to Christmas & New Year's Eve.

Expanding Horizons

EXPANDING HORIZONS will meet Wednesday Mornings 9:30AM -11:00AM in the lounge for in-person learning; the link for those wishing to view via Zoom from home is as follows:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/88978012384?pwd=cGxJa0pJbExSM0FFWEtIMmtJYzNodz09>
Meeting ID: 889 7801 2384
Passcode: 762316

December 6 - **Christmas On The Screen: Reviewing the Evolution of American Spirituality** with Pastor Rob and Chris Deaner-Rogers. In the Spirit of Christmas, from *Miracle on 34th Street* to *Love Actually*, generations of Christmas films tell us about American spirituality and social values: In *Christmas on the Screen*, journalist John A. Zukowski takes readers on a tour of Christmas films and American values, asking the question, “What does Christmas mean to us?” We'll bring the popcorn and you can bring your Christmas cheer and we'll learn a little something about the Christmas spirit.

December 13 – CHRISTMAS BRUNCH – A time to review our fall schedule and talk about our spring speakers.

December 20 – No Expanding Horizons due to the holiday week.

December 27 – No Expanding Horizons due to the holiday week.

Pilgrim United Church of Christ
Council Meeting Minutes
November 20, 2023

The meeting was called to order at 6:00 pm.

Pastor Rob provided an opening prayer and had council members add links to the Paper Chain of Gratitude.

Members present: Pastor Rob Van Ess, Linda Stutz, Bayard Fredrick, Patti Burns, Karen Goodacre, Patty Minter, Fran Schmidt, Donna Jost, Jim Bentley, and Avery Geiger

Secretary's Report: The minutes from Oct. 16, 2023 meeting were reviewed. Minutes as written were accepted with unanimous consent.

Treasurer's Report: The treasurer's report from Oct. 13, 2023 was reviewed. The treasurer's report as presented was approved with unanimous consent.

Pastor's Report:

Written report submitted and reviewed.

Plans are being made for the annual children's Christmas Program. This year's program is *The Gospel According to Sheep*. Looking for additional children to play the role of the sheep.

Making plans for the Advent Season which will include Hanging of the Greens, Blue Christmas and a Christmas Eve Worship Service.

Vice President's Report: Beginning to work on the annual employee reviews. Jim is seeking input from council and handed out a sheet for input. Still seeking an Adult Education Coordinator to fill the vacant position.

President's Report: Updated council on search for Adult Education Coordinator. Asked council for ideas on what the church needs to be included in a mission moment later in Nov.

Old Business: none

New Business:

Date set for Annual Congregational Meeting which will be held January 28, 2024 following the 9 am worship service.

New kitchen door code will be created at the Dec. 2023 Council Meeting.

Ministry Reports:

Christian Outreach – Coats for Kids drive completed and very successful. Toys for Tots collection will be held in Nov. The Salvation Army Angel Tree will arrive in late Nov. The Alternative Gift Fair date set for Dec. 3, 2023.

Worship and Music – Minutes submitted. Piano was tuned. Working on readers for Advent. Will gather poinsettia order. Youth have been invited to perform musical composition during Advent Season. Hanging Of the Greens scheduled for Nov. 26 following worship

Christian Education – Minutes submitted. A decrease in attendance has led to a One Room Sunday School. Make and Take is scheduled Dec. 3th. Christmas Program will be held Dec. 17. Christmas Caroling will be Dec. 15.

SCRIP Update – Karen encourages Scrip purchases for the holidays. Would prefer those orders be placed no later than Dec. 17. Scrip will be available at the Alternative Gift Fair.

Property & Maintenance – Minutes submitted. Signed contract with Paul’s Snow removal. Planning to replace windows in the fellowship hall. Avery made a motion to use \$3,891 from the dedicated Environmental Project account to replace 7 windows on the south side of the fellowship hall. Motion seconded by Patty Minter. Motion carried unanimously. These funds will be combined with funds from the dedicated Building Fund to replace the windows. Next meeting Dec. 12, 2023

Lay Life & Leadership – will provide refreshments following the children’s program

Stewardship & Finance – Has a display in the Narthex of all the Pilgrim Ministries/Committees. Has scheduled speakers for Mission Moments to promote needs.

Membership & Evangelism – New Welcome Center has received positive reviews. Donna donated 2 new wheel-chairs.

Nominating Committee -note that per By Laws, Ministries need 4 members (not 5). Checking with ministries and committees to see who will be remaining on the teams.

Ham Dinner – Successful Ham Dinner. Thank you to all the helped. Approximately 800 meals were served. This year meals were also donated to several community organizations.

Memorial Fund – no report

Trust Fund – A motion was made by Avery Geiger and seconded by Karen Goodacre to accept the committee’s suggested distributions. Motion carried.

Celebrations: Linda has completed her chemotherapy and was present at the council meeting. Welcome back Linda!

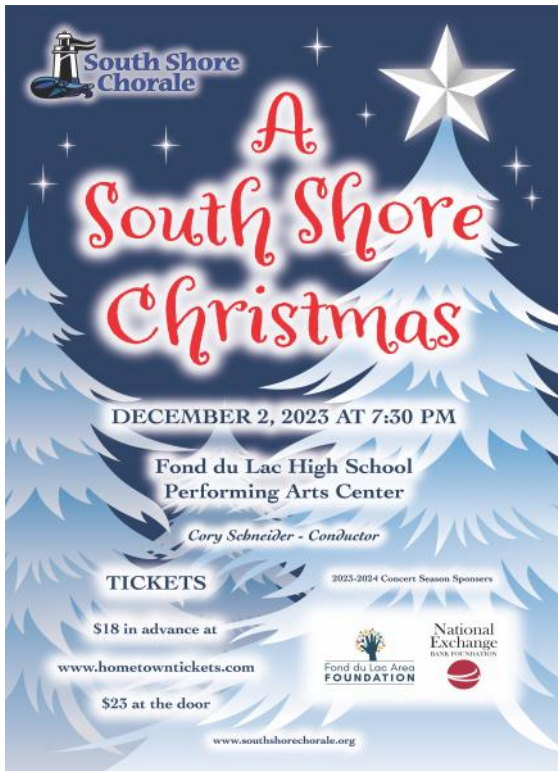
The meeting ended with the Lord’s Prayer.

Next Meeting is scheduled for Dec.18, 2023 at 6:00 pm.

Minutes respectfully submitted by Patti Burns, President



South Shore Chorale Christmas concert on Saturday, December 2. Five members of the Pilgrim choir are in this large chorus.



Church of Our Saviour Performing Arts Series presents

Advent Music and Meal

Wednesdays, December 6 & 13
 CONCERTS 12:00 NOON • LUNCH 12:30 P.M.

December 6
 Brass Menagerie (brass quintet)



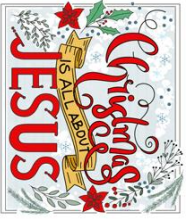
December 13
 Fond du Lac High School Cardinal Singers

Seasonal Music • Open to the Community
Concert and Lunch are free!
 -free-will offering-

Church of Our Saviour
 363 S. Main Street • Fond du Lac
 922-0020 • oursavioursfdl.org


Fond du Lac High School Music Department presents *Night of Silence* on December 8th & 9th at 7:30PM and December 10th at 2:00PM at the High School Performing Arts Center. Tickets can be purchased at hometowntickets.com.





December 2023



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 7:00 AL-ANON	2
3 9:00 Worship 10:15 Alternative Gift Fair 10:15 Coffee Fellowship 10:15 Sunday School 6:00 NA Mtg	4 4:30 Christian Ed	5 PEO	6 9:30 Expanding Horizons 11:30 Christian Outreach 5:00 Loaves & Fishes	7	8 7:00 AL-ANON	9
10 9:00 Worship 10:15 Adult Ed 10:15 Sunday School 6:00 NA Mtg	11 11:00 Membership 4:00 Adult Ed	12 4:30 Worship 5:00 Property	13 9:30 Expanding Horizons - Brunch 6:00 Confirmation Class	14	15 6:00 FFI - Caroling & Bingo 7:00 AL-ANON	16
17 9:00 Worship - Children's Presentation 10:15 Adult Ed	18 6:00 Council Meeting	19 1:00/2:30 Book Club	20 6:00 Confirmation Class	21 7:00 Blue Christmas Service	22 7:00 AL-ANON	23
24 9:00AM Worship 9:00PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Followed by Potluck 6:00 NA Mtg	25 	26	27	28	29 7:00 AL-ANON	30
31 9:00 Worship 6:00 NA Mtg						

Pilgrim United Church of Christ
535 Stow Street
Fond du Lac, WI 54935-2865
Phone: 920-921-0415
Email: pilgrim.info@pilgrimuccfdl.org
Website: www.pilgrimuccfdl.org

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The Pilgrim Quill

We are happy to send you our newsletter, but if you no longer wish to receive it, please contact us and we will remove you from our mailing list.

Pastor Rev. Rob Van Ess
Administrative Assistant Cathy Drew
Parish Nurse Sue Schmitz
Sunday School Coordinator Karen Goodacre
Youth Coordinator
Interim Adult Education Coordinator Peg Bradley
Worship Musician Chris Deaner-Rogers
Choir Director Zachary Ball
Choir Accompanist
Custodian Floors2Clean
Church Council President Patti Burns
Church Council Vice President Jim Bentley
Church Council Secretary Wendy Ellison
Church Treasurer Donna Jost

Those Who Serve

Pilgrim United Church of Christ, a theologically progressive Christian church, pursues growth in faith, social justice, and respect for all voices-with Jesus as our model for how to live and love.

Pilgrim United Church of Christ Mission Statement