



THE PILGRIM QUILL

DECEMBER 2025

Journeying With Jeannie
Journeying With Jeannie

Dear Members and Friends,

I know we are only beginning the month of December, but before we know it, Christmas will be upon us. Some of us will soon be decorating our homes, putting up Christmas trees, and finishing our shopping lists. But before we enter Christmas, we walk through Advent. Advent is not just a countdown to December 25—it is a season of preparation. It is the church's waiting time, when we prepare our hearts and minds for the coming of Christ, the arrival of "God with us." It is a season that reminds us how deeply we long for God's presence in the midst of the world as it is right now. We don't need to look far to see how weary our society has become: conflict in our communities, division among neighbors, uncertainty about the future, and questions about what peace really looks like. In these times, Advent speaks to us with its steady rhythm of hope, patience, and forgiveness.

Hope. Even when life does not look the way we want it to, we hold onto hope because we believe God is still at work in the world. Advent assures us that God is not finished yet—that the One we trust is still coming with power to renew and redeem.

Patience. Advent's four weeks are an invitation to slow down in a world that wants everything instantly. Waiting is not wasted time—it is sacred time in which God is shaping us, teaching us to trust that joy and healing will come in God's time.

Forgiveness. In a culture quick to point fingers, forgiveness is perhaps the hardest gift of all. And yet, Christ came so that we might be reconciled—to God, to one another, and to ourselves. Forgiveness clears the way for new beginnings, for mending what has been broken, for preparing room in our hearts for Christ's birth.

Advent teaches us that Christ comes not in the halls of power but in a manger. He comes not to reinforce the world as it is but to turn it upside down—with faith, hope, and love. And so we ask ourselves: *Are we watching? Are we expecting? Are we ready to see the new thing God is doing?* This is a season to look for light, even when the headlines seem heavy. It is a

season to focus on the possibility of birthing new life and rekindling the vision of God's kingdom—a kingdom where love is stronger than hate, where peace is more lasting than war, and where joy surprises us even in difficult days. As November turns to December, I leave you with a poem that reminds us of the mystery and beauty of God's light breaking into our lives:

What is this light that dances at the center of my life?

This golden light that dances upon the leaves

These idle clouds sailing across the sky

This passing breeze leaving its cooling on my head

The sky opens, the wind runs wild,

Laughter passes over the earth,

Butterflies spread their sails in the sea of light

Lilies and jasmine surge upon the crest of the waves of
light

The light is shattered into gold on every cloud, and it
scatters gems of profusion.

Laughter and mirth spread leaf to leaf and their glad-
ness is without measure

Heaven's River has devoured its banks

The flood of joy is abroad

The flood of joy must indeed be love

For love is the only reality and it is not a mere senti-
ment.

It is truth that lies at the heart of all creation.

~~Tagore~~

This year, let us take time to reflect on what God would have us learn in this Advent season. May it be for each of us a time of watching and waiting, of preparing and praying, and may Christmas come to you with unexpected joy and peace that the world cannot give.

Blessings to all,
Pastor Jeannie

ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

Welcome back Sunday & Monday participants!

ADULT FORUM

Sunday mornings from 10:15AM to 11:15AM in the lounge. There will be a few minutes to chat after Worship before the program begins promptly at 10:15AM. For those who prefer to join from home, the link for the programs will be the same throughout the semester. To join the Zoom Meeting the link is:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87682457999?pwd=NkICT0ZEYWtTRnlwcEtRNDBCmGRhQT09>

DECEMBER 7 – COFFEE FELLOWSHIP ALTERNATE GIFT FAIR

December 14

St. Nicholas: The Man and the Myth

Enhance your Advent and Christmas experience by joining Mary Ann Otto for a video on this historical, mysterious and wonderful saint. Bring some of your own family traditions to share as we enter into stories of this legend of love and generosity.

December 21

Stories of Christmas

Come and enjoy some Christmas treats as Rachel Wichowski shares some inspiring and heartfelt stories of Christmas. A perfect time to breath deep and relax during this busy season!

DECEMBER 28

NO SESSION - CHRISTMAS BREAK

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EXPANDING HORIZONS

Monday Afternoons 1:00PM-2:30PM in the lounge. To join from home via Zoom the link is: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87682457999?pwd=NkICT0ZEYWtTRnlwcEtRNDBCmGRhQT09>

December 1, 8, 15

What the Gospels Really Teach About Jesus' Birth By Marcus Borg and John Dominic Crossan

Join leader Neal Sieglaff in this three-part series as he reflects this important writing. The Washington Post Book World says, "Borg and Crossan, leading scholars of the historical Jesus, explore the nativity in much the way they tackled the crucifixion and resurrection in their previous book, "The Last Week."

December 22

Christmas Celebration

Join the Adult Education Team as we celebrate the season with treats and conversation.

December 30

CHRISTMAS BREAK

WATCH YOUR MAIL FOR OUR WINTER/SPRING SCHEDULE!



Alternative Gift Fair

Pilgrim United Church of Christ Alternative Gift Fair is a positive holiday experience that brings together our church members in a fun way. We bypass the annual steps 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 be any amount and are not disclosed to the recipients making alternative gifts the perfect solution for co-workers, family, friends, and the “hard to shop for” person.

Attendees use a “shopping list” with the names of all the nonprofits who are represented at the fair. They can stroll among the booths and talk to the organization’s sponsor who will have information to share about their mission and current projects. As shoppers browse, they can match what charities they might support with the interest of the people on their gift list. Once complete, shoppers can check out and pay for all their gifts at once. 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 give to their recipient. 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 you shop alternatively, your purchase is more than a gift to just the recipient. Your choice emphasizes community, outreach, service, and justice. It is a celebration on nonmaterial values. It honors the true meaning of Christmas.

This year’s Alternative Gift Fair will be on Sunday, December 7th after worship. The Just Fair Store will also be present....and of course, lots of Christmas

cookies and coffee will be provided. The Alternative Gift Fair is sponsored by the Outreach Ministry.

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Tails For Life

Mission statement: Tails for Life's mission is to empower children with disabilities to increase their independence and enhance their quality of life. We are dedicated to training service dogs to service the needs of children with medical and /or psychological disabilities. Our goal is to foster independence, instill comfort, and bring security to their lives by providing a "best friend" for life. Tails for Life is a 501(c)3 charitable organization. Locally owned and operated in Fond du lac Wisconsin. The positive effects of dogs on people suffering from and injury, illness or loneliness has been well documented. In fact, dogs are being used more and more as an integral part of patient rehabilitation. Doctors are realizing the amazing differences dogs can make in the lives of their patients. A service dog can provide life changing experiences for disabled or ill people. Tails for Life, trains each service dog to each child's individual/ specific needs. There is not one size fits all scenario, in the realm of disabilities. Each children/individual is different from the next, regardless of similar diagnosis's or disabilities. Not every dog in training can make it as a service dog. To increase graduation rates, through our rigorous training program, we provide bonding sessions with each child/individual throughout the training process to insure a strong connection and best friend for life!

Types of service dogs we train:

- physical assistance canines
- psychological assistance canines
- diabetic alert canines
- autism service canines

Total cost for a training dog can be in excess of \$30,000. Donations are used to offset those costs so a child/individual need not be denied the service dog.

Mercy Ships

Mercy Ships is a global humanitarian organization that delivers free, world-class healthcare services, capacity-building, and sustainable development to people in some of the world’s poorest regions. Founded in 1978, Mercy Ships operates hospital ships staffed by volunteer professionals, providing medical care and training in port cities where access to healthcare is severely limited.

Mercy Ships’ mission is rooted in the belief that everyone deserves access to safe, affordable, and timely medical care. Their vision is to use hospital ships to transform lives and serve as a beacon of hope, particularly for those facing poverty and limited healthcare infrastructure. The organization operates under Christian principles and emphasizes compassionate service, regardless of race, gender, or religion.

The core of Mercy Ships’ operations is their hospital ships—most notably, the Africa Mercy and the Global Mercy. These ships are fully equipped floating hospitals, with operating rooms, recovery wards, laboratories, dental clinics, and more. Volunteers from over 60 nations donate their time and expertise, making Mercy Ships a unique collaboration of individuals united for a common purpose.

Services Provided

Life-Changing Surgeries: Mercy Ships provide free surgeries for conditions such as cleft lips and palates, cataracts, tumors, club feet, obstetric fistulas, and more.

Dental and Eye Care: Comprehensive dental care and vision restoration surgeries are performed on board and in local clinics.

Medical Training: The organization invests in local health professionals through mentoring, courses, and workshops, helping to build sustainable healthcare capacity.

Community Development: Mercy Ships supports water and sanitation projects, agricultural training, and infrastructure improvements to enhance overall community well-being.

Global Reach and Impact

Since its inception, Mercy Ships has worked in more than 55 developing countries, providing services valued at over \$1.7 billion and treating more than 2.8 million beneficiaries. The organization’s impact is felt not only in the lives of patients but also in the broader healthcare systems of the countries they serve. By training local professionals and upgrading medical facilities, Mercy Ships leaves a legacy of improved care long after its ships depart.

Mercy Ships stands as a testament to the power of compassion, global cooperation, and faith in action. By bringing hope and healing to the world’s forgotten ports, the organization continues to transform lives and inspire others to serve. www.mercyships.org

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We Got This MKE

“**We Got This**” is a program based out of Milwaukee, WI. This program began 12 years ago with a crew of kids cleaning up their neighborhood and learning about gardening. The program grew each Saturday as youth in middle and high school came out to assist in duties and were each subsequently paid \$20 for their 4 hours of service to the neighborhood, but the life lessons and tangible skills they learn are priceless.

Our mission is to incorporate the “neighbor” back into our “hoods” and recreate a real sense of neighborhood. One action at a time we believe that we can restore our neighborhoods to what they should be.

In 2024 We Got This completed 3000 hours of work within the neighborhood.

The program has continued to grow and each week during the summer kids continue to make their way to 9th and Ring in Milwaukee’s 53206 Zip Code for cleanup and gardening. Upon arrival, the youth are met by positive role models from the community to assist with their efforts.

Participants of the We Got This program learn the basics of gardening and care for the organization’s multiple garden spaces within the neighborhood. Through weeding garden beds, planting trees, and figuring out how to bring water to newer garden spaces, the young people working with We Got This develop skills in communication, collaboration, and problem solving while changing the physical spaces and providing healthy food to residents within the poorest areas of the state of Wisconsin. **We Got This** is a 501(c)(3) organization that employs youth to beautify their neighborhood with garden spaces. <https://wegotthismke.com/> Wishlist: https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/2H73EZ1H1QGOR?ref=wl_share

[Donate today!](#)

SSM HEALTH ADULT DAY SERVICES

SSM Health Adult Day Services on Merrill Ave. in Fond du Lac may be an option for your loved one. The Service provides care for the elderly, chronically ill and disabled adults Monday-Friday, 7:30 .a.m. - 5:30p.m. The director is a registered nurse and the staff are CNAs with experience caring for qualified clients. The Service provides activities, field trips, socialization, lunch and snacks. Also available are personal hygiene care, medication and medical services. One of the most important services provided is a monthly support group for caregivers. Peer discussions provide resources, problem solving and support for the caregiver.

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St. Katharine Drexel Homeless Shelter

The St. Katharine Drexel Homeless Shelter came to be through the collaborative efforts of St. Vincent de Paul and Solutions Center, the two primary agencies that serve those in our community experiencing homelessness. These two agencies came together to address the unmet needs related to homelessness both equitable and effectively. They place a high value on positively impacting the human condition and subsequently, improving the lives of our neighbors.

Home is a safe haven. A cornerstone of stability. A place where meals are cooked, homework is done, and rest happens after a long day. For too many people in our community, home is not a guarantee. The gap between rising housing costs and low wages continues to grow, leaving thousands on the brink of homelessness and hundreds more without.

You can help ensure individuals and families in our community have a safe, stable support system to help them find a home. The St. Katharine Drexel Shelter is a very tangible way of how we can help individuals and families thrive.

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MECA—Middle East Children’s Alliance, mecaforpeace.org

Mission Statement—MECA works for the rights of children in the Middle East by sending humanitarian aid, supporting projects for children and educating North American and International communities. We support children and families in Palestine, Iraq and Lebanon through: Direct aid including food, medicine, medical supplies, and clothes as well as books, toys, and school supplies. Since 1988, we have sent more than \$19 million in aid to children in these countries; provided financial support and professional assistance to community organizations in the West Bank and Gaza; sponsored educational and cultural programs in the US and internationally; provided university scholarships for Palestinians in the Gaza Strip and the West Bank; and provided clean water to children in Palestine.

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Healing Justice...From Harm to Healing

Healing Justice works to prevent and alleviate the harms caused to all by wrongful convictions through advocacy, education, and direct support. Jennifer Thompson founded Healing Justice in 2015, based on her personal experience as a crime survivor who, a decade later, experienced new trauma when it was discovered that an innocent man had been convicted. Jennifer’s personal journey with a wrongful conviction and exoneration inspired her to create an organization to provide direct support to others from similar cases and to address the harm caused to all by these justice failures.

Healing Justice helps crime victims and survivors, exonerated individuals and their families, and agencies and practitioners. It is a multi-state organization that offers a variety of interrelated and transformative programs to address the widespread harms caused to all by wrongful convictions. They provide direct support services to victims and survivors of crime, individuals who have been exonerated and the family members of both groups. They train and offer technical assistance to prosecutors, police, judges, victim advocates, and other professionals to empower them to better support victims and survivors post-conviction. The Post-Conviction Survivor Resource Center is an online resource center where all crime victims and survivors can find critical information and get support after a conviction in their case. The Post-Conviction Practitioner Resource Center provides information and specialized tools to improve post-conviction services and support for crime victims and survivors.

“Healing Justice’s programs have helped so many people find their way out of the darkness of injustice. Through their unique and powerful approach, they are able to give people hope where there once was none.”

John Grisham, Best-Selling Author

GLACIAL LAKES CONSERVANCY, INC

Glacial Lakes Conservancy, Inc. is a private, non-profit land conservation organization. The original founders saw that during the 1990s, approximately 8,000 rural acres were subdivided for residential purposes in the unincorporated areas of Sheboygan County alone, prompting a deep concern for the future of our region's lands and waters. This realization prompted the founding of the Sheboygan Area Land Conservancy in 1996. Originally, this was an all-volunteer organization with a goal of serving to protect and preserve natural areas and farmland within the Sheboygan Country area in Wisconsin.

In January 2005, Glacial Lakes Conservancy (renamed in 2004), expanded its coverage area northward to Kewaunee County. This was accomplished by merging with The Rural Land Legacy Committee of Kewaunee County, an active local group dedicated to preserving farmland, natural areas, and undeveloped Lake Michigan shoreline. Today, the land trust offers land conservation options, organizational support, and technical guidance to landowners and organizations in a five-county region: Sheboygan, Manitowoc, Kewaunee, Calumet and Fond du Lac. Glacial Lakes Conservancy (GLC) owns five properties: William F. Christel Woods and Wetlands Preserve, Grasshopper Hill Preserve, Charles & Winifred Spring West Twin River Preserve, Willow Creek Preserve, the Hunner Preserve, and also holds 30 conservation easements.

Executive Director Jennifer Rutten, Land Director Miriam Duero, Land Project Coordinator Intern Ashley Muench and a dedicated, all-volunteer Board of Directors spearhead GLC's land and water protection mission. A donation to this reputable organization in someone's honor, or simply to honor Mother Earth, will help support GLC's mission. *Thank you!*

"If I have any lasting worth, it will be because I have tried to make people remember what Earth is meant to look like." – Mary Oliver

Learn more at <https://www.glaciallakes.org/>

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The American Red Cross: "Sleeves Up, Hearts Open, All In."

The American Red Cross shelters, feeds and provides comfort to victims of disasters; supplies about 40% of the nation's blood for transfusion; teaches skills that save lives; distributes international humanitarian aid; and supports veterans, military members and their families. The Red Cross is a nonprofit organization that depends on volunteers and the generosity of the American public to deliver its mission.

In Wisconsin, the American Red Cross works from 5 chapters to support the 5.8 million people in the state. Started in 1909, the initial focus was first aid. After Pearl Harbor, a blood service program was established, and in 1950 - 3,456 pints of blood were shipped from Madison to South Korea. The Wisconsin Red Cross also developed the curriculum for Babysitting Education that is now a national program. After any disaster, the Red Cross is most times the first support service called - for meals, shelter, generators, clothing, blood donations and mental wellness support.

www.redcross.org

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.

Please indicate the quantity you would like:

<u>Color</u>	<u>Quantity</u>	<u>Price</u>	<u>Total</u>
Red	_____	\$9.00 each	_____
		Grand Total:	_____

**Final day to
order is
Wednesday,
December 17th .**



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 Christmas Eve Worship Service or, if you wish, your plant can be given to a shut-in.

Please indicate your choice:

I will take my plant with me on Christmas Eve_____

I would like my plant to be given to a shut-in_____

Ordered by: _____

SNOW AND ICE CONTROL WITH CHEMICALS: By Pete Vercouteren

Winter season is upon us, and with the colder temperatures our thoughts turn to keeping our roads, driveways, sidewalks, steps, porches, and even parking lots and garages safe from sliding and slip and falls. Safety could be enhanced by using abrasives such as sand, gravel, or cinders on the snow and ice, but these materials cause tremendous tracking in adjacent buildings and/or clean up problems. Common chemicals such as salt, magnesium chloride, calcium chloride, or urea have been the preferred ways to enhance safety. The problem is that there is an environmental trade-off for the use of these materials. Salt (sodium chloride) works down to 18 degrees F. Below that temperature it doesn't melt snow/ice, so if salt isn't working, applying more will not cause it to work. It is too cold for salt to be effective. The downside is that once applied and dissolved to be effective, the chemical will either soak into the ground or be carried away through the storm sewer system. Whatever soaks into the ground can end up in ground water (wells) where high sodium can be a health problem. The chloride can also be a health problem along with chloride damaging concrete and being corrosive. Our storm sewer's system feed directly into our local rivers and ends up, untreated, in Lake Winnebago. **It only takes 1 teaspoon of salt in 5 gallons of water to be at a level that is toxic for freshwater ecosystems.** So while salt is relatively cheap to buy, its environmental cost is huge. The same can be said of calcium chloride and magnesium chloride. Our surface waters, ground water, and soils have been absorbing virtually all of the salt spread in our state for more than 60 years. The widespread use of salt has led to the steady salinization of surface water and ground water, threatening fresh water resources and drinking water. Over time we have seen freshwater species of aquatic life and plants decline, and saltwater species increase as the surface water becomes more salty. This increase can also affect humans and pets.

You can keep your sidewalks and driveways safe this winter by following these simple steps:

Apply before the snow/ice event (anti-ice). Those are the liquid stripes that you see on our roads/bridges/intersection.

Shovel before you apply.

Scatter--a coffee mug of salt is enough to treat a 20 ft. driveway or 10 sidewalk squares.

Switch—when pavement temperatures drop below 15 degrees, salt won't work. Switch to an ice melter that works at lower temperatures.

Select a trained contractor—ask if their staff has attended a Smart Salting Workshop. If not, encourage them to do so and to follow appropriate application rates.

There are ice control chemicals (like those that we use on our church sidewalks) that will bio-degrade, work at very low temperatures, require low application rates, won't kill grass, are non-corrosive, and are reasonably priced.

THANK YOU!

The FDL Women's Chorus is so very grateful to Pilgrim for allowing us to use space here to make Pilgrim our 'home base'. We needed a safe place to store music and supplies, and Pilgrim has generously accommodated us. Even with the overflow of items for the recent rummage sale, our space was respected; we did not get that respect at our previous location, so we are grateful. We also appreciate being able to use the church for our rehearsals and concerts. THANK YOU! All are invited to attend our 75th annual Christmas Concert here on Sunday, Dec 14th at 2pm. We promise we'll be done in time to watch the Packers play!

Blue Christmas Service — December 18 at 7:00 p.m.

Not everyone enters the Christmas season with joy and celebration. For many, December carries grief, stress, loneliness, or complicated emotions. If this season feels heavy, you are not alone. Pilgrim UCC will offer a gentle and contemplative **Blue Christmas Service** on **Thursday, December 18 at 7:00 p.m.** This quiet worship experience includes soft music, candlelight, and prayer, creating sacred space for healing, reflection, and comfort. It is designed for anyone carrying sadness, loss, or weariness during the holidays, as well as for those who wish to support others. Advent reminds us of the promise of *Emmanuel—God with us*: a God who meets us in both joy and sorrow. Blue Christmas acknowledges the reality of grief while holding space for God's peace and hope to be born in us again. **Friends, family, caregivers, and community members are warmly welcome.**



WISE (Welcoming, Inclusive, Supportive, Engaged)

December is recognized as Seasonal Depression Awareness Month, focusing on Seasonal Affective Disorder (SAD). SAD is a type of depression linked to the shorter days of fall and winter.

During this time, it is also important to be mindful of increased mental health challenges related to the holidays for many, such as stress, anxiety, or sadness due to grief and isolation.

Symptoms:

Low energy, sadness, oversleeping, changes in appetite, and social withdrawal.

Coping strategies:

- Light therapy: Use a light box for 20-30 minutes each morning.
- Exercise: Engage in regular physical activity.
- Sleep habits: Maintain a consistent sleep schedule.
- Diet: Eat a balanced diet and limit caffeine and alcohol.
- Social connection: Stay in touch with friends and family.
- Go outdoors: Spend time outside, even on cloudy days.

Mental health during the holidays:

- Increased stress: The holiday season can be overwhelming, so it is important to prioritize self-care and not overcommit.
- Managing expectations: Be realistic about what can be accomplished and be kind to yourself.
- Coping with loss: The holidays can be difficult after a loss, so it's important to have a plan for how to cope with feelings of sadness.
- Finding balance: It can be helpful to balance personal needs with the needs of others.

It's important for us all to realize that Christmas and New Year do not bring 'great joy' to everyone sitting in Pilgrim's pews. Always be mindful of that – even when people try to keep it to themselves. Understand that you will not know everyone's story, but you can learn it! Continue to be WISE!

Children & Youth Ministry

Intergenerational Fellowship Nights

Join us on Friday, December 19 for caroling and cookie decorating! We'll meet at church between 5:45–6:00 p.m. and then head out together to go caroling. Afterward, we'll return to the church to decorate cookies. Snacks and hot chocolate will be provided.

Youth Group

All 6th–12th graders are invited to our Christmas Party on Friday, December 19, from 4:30–5:45 p.m. Come enjoy games, dinner, and desserts! Please let Michael know if you plan to attend. Remember, friends are always welcome!

Confirmation Class

We are seeking snack and beverage donations to serve during Confirmation Class. Items such as juice, gatorade, lemonade, chips, snack cakes, and crackers are all appreciated.

If you'd like to contribute, please sign up in the narthex next to the date you'd like to provide food or drinks.

Sunday School

We invite everyone to join us for Make and Take on Sunday, December 7, following the worship service. This hands-on crafting time is open to all ages and all skill levels. Kids, parents, grandparents, adults, and anyone who wants to create alongside others in our church family. Come make a craft, enjoy conversation, and be part of a fun, relaxed time together!

We also want to thank the congregation for your donations to the Birthday Bank throughout the year. Because of your support, we were able to donate \$445 to Project Linus, helping bring comfort to children in the Fond du Lac area.

Book Drive

We are continuing to grow our collection of children's books for use during church. We hope to include a diverse range of books that celebrate inclusion. If you'd like to purchase a book for our library, please take a tag with a book title from the narthex and return the book to the church office.

If you have a favorite children's book that isn't on our list, feel free to donate that as well!



Recycling Updates from the Green Team

Amber Pill Bottles

Thank you to all for paying attention to the directions for recycling amber pill bottles by removing the labels, washing the bottles in soapy water to remove any sticky residue, and recapping the dry bottle. If you have bottles with a sticky adhesive that you can't get off, please discard them.

Recycle Your Christmas String Lights with the Green Team!

Once again this year, the Green Team is making it easy to recycle your unwanted holiday string lights. Recycling string lights helps protect the environment in several important ways. These electronic items don't break down in soil and can release harmful chemicals. However, many of their components—like glass, plastic, and copper—can be reclaimed and reused, reducing waste and conserving resources.

Please remember: do not place string lights in curbside recycling bins. Their wires can tangle in machinery and cause costly shutdowns at recycling facilities.

To help, the Green Team has placed a collection box in the narthex. All donated lights will be properly shredded and separated into reusable materials.

Before dropping off your lights, remove any large, old-fashioned bulbs and place those in the trash.

Thank you for helping us care for creation.

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Three Bullet Points

- Fellowship hour food on March 1, 2026 will be supplied by our team.

Amber pill bottle collection is complete for October.

The bottles will be shipped to the party that handles the distribution.

Prairie Garden has received three mowings this summer. There is no need to mow again.

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Ham Dinner

I want thank everyone for their help with Ham Dinner. We served 668 meals. We had 49 donated adult meals and 7 children meals. People who benefited from the meals were Domestic Abuse Shelter, Blandine House, Berry House and the Franklin House. Leftovers were taken to the Catherine Drexel Shelter and the warming shelter. As of November 7th our income was \$13,707. 89.

Watch for the Annual Report as I will report on the final numbers.

Randy Stutz

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CHRISTAIN OUTREACH



The Outreach committee is asking for donations for a family in need. There is a sign-up board in the Narthex with the different family members and their needs. Please take a minute to check it out and sign up for one of the many needs the family has.

If you would like to help but you do not like to shop, we will take cash and buy the gifts. Please make your check out to Pilgrim Church and note "Christian Outreach " in the memo line.

Thank you for your generosity.

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Lay Life Ministry

Diner's Club

We had a good turnout for the October gathering. Because of the holidays there won't be Diners until January 2026. Look for the sign up sheet. Have a happy holiday season!!!!!!

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There is a box between the two glass doors for the collection of toys for ages 0-14. Please remember, there are many children in our community that will benefit from our generosity and caring for them. Thank you.



Green Team

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Thank you for helping us care for creation.

THE GROWING PROBLEM OF MICROFIBERS

by Diana Beck

Just a few years ago, a European researcher found widespread microplastic pollution on shorelines and coastal waters all over the world. A major source was from synthetic clothing fibers that were less than 1 mm in size. This problem is also affecting fresh water in our own area. Microfibers were the second major type of debris found in Lake Michigan. A study of the Fox, Manistowoc, Sheboygan and Milwaukee rivers found that over 70% of the plastic captured were microfibers.

It is estimated that 60% of the clothing in the world is made from polyester, which is a plastic made from fossil fuels. We have all come to appreciate polyester's wicking capability, breathability and stretching qualities.

The problem arises when the clothing is washed. One study found that a single fleece jacket could release 250,000 microfibers into the wash water. Now multiply that by an estimated 89 million washing machines in just the U.S. doing an average of 9 loads of laundry a week.

These microfibers pass through the water treatment facilities and into the environment. Some fibers are captured in the sewage solids but then may be applied on the land as fertilizer. The rest are released into the waterways.

We now know that these micro plastics are corrupting aquatic life. The small critters at the base of the food chain are ingesting the plastic and ultimately affect the predators higher up the food chain. Microfibers are showing up in shellfish and fish that humans are consuming. The fibers absorb persistent organic pollutants such as PCB's and concentrate them in the animal tissues.

Here are a few suggestions of ways that you can help reduce this fiber pollution: buy and wear more natural fiber clothing; wash synthetic clothing as infrequently as possible, and for shorter wash intervals on the gentle cycle; spot clean when possible; use liquid laundry soap (powder is more abrasive but can be dissolved ahead of time); when purchasing a new washer, remember that front load washing machines cause less fiber shedding; use garment filter bags, such as Guppy Friend, for fleeces or install a washing machine filter.



Traditions...

Apparently Cannibal Sandwiches are a Wisconsin thing during the holidays. - fresh raw ground beef on a piece of rye bread with salt, pepper and a slice of raw onion. As your Nurse, I must tell you that the USDA would prefer that no one participate in this holiday treat. But... while there will always be a risk with eating raw meat, there are steps you can take to lower it. According to Dr. Zorba Paster — a longtime cannibal sandwich fan and public radio host — “The best cannibal sandwich with the lowest risk is if you take steak, and you grind it up,” he said. “The worst cannibal sandwich is if you simply eat ground beef out of a package because then the risk of E. coli is greater...aim for the leanest cut of beef you can get, let your butcher know you’re using the meat for cannibal sandwiches and ask for it to be freshly ground with a clean grinder...and don’t dawdle. Eat the meat the same day you buy it, and preferably before the end of the party.”

Some traditions do not fall under the Hallmark brand. But they do revive memories and hopefully ones of gratitude, a caring family (of blood, choice and/or chance), and a reminder of the beginning of Jesus’ life on earth. Check out the bulletin board for self care tips during the holidays!

“May you never be too grown up to search the skies on Christmas Eve.” Unknown

Mid-Advent Blood Pressures

Fran Schmid will be available after the worship service on Sunday, December 14th to take your Mid-Advent/11 days before Christmas blood pressure. No worries!

Several General Reminders:

December 5-11 is National Handwashing Week

All respiratory infections enter through facial mucous membranes – eyes, nose, and mouth. Intentional hand-washing/hand hygiene - before eating, after using the bathroom, when visibly dirty, and before touching the face - is basic disease prevention. The power to prevent getting ill is (literally and figuratively) in your hands...!

This is the season for gatherings in poorly ventilated areas with grazing type food and there are upper respiratory viruses circulating in Fond du Lac. Please be safer than average.

Buying Safe Toys Reminders

An “ASTM” label means the toy has met the “American Society for Testing and Materials” standards. And, an easy rule when choosing toys for toddlers, - if a piece can fit inside a toilet paper roll, it is not appropriate for kids under the age of three.

Magnets and batteries (“regular” and “button”) are dangerous if swallowed. They contain zinc, mercury, silver, nickel, cadmium and lithium plus concentrated solutions of potassium and sodium hydroxide. The danger internally is both pressure damage (it becomes lodged) and leaking caustic alkalis and metals. It’s an automatic Emergency Room visit. Make sure batteries are put away and that battery compartments are “childproof”.

Local Resources Reminder:

Adding the holidays to quickly changing news, viewpoints, and uncertainty can become overwhelming on physical and emotional resources. The Aging and Disabilities Resource Center maintains a Directory of FDL County Resources on their website:

www.fdlco.wi.gov/adrc) or call them at 920-929-3466 Mon-Fri. Or call 211 and get connected with resource assistance 24/7/365. There are Regional 211 contact centers through-out Wisconsin that are supported through the United Way. These are confidential services also - Please reach out as needed.

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Loaves and Fishes 2025 Summary

For approximately 50 years, Pilgrim UCC has participated in Fond du Lac’s Loaves and Fishes Program. This wonderful program provides 2 meals per week for people in need in our city. This is a most helpful effort that allows us to be representatives of our faith in our community. When you work one of these meals, you can truly sense that this is just where Jesus wants you to be.

This year we worked at 4 meals. We served over 660 meals. We often had food left over and were able to donate it to local food support causes and groups. Nothing goes to waste. Approximately 50 of you donated, prepared, or served food. Thank you so much for your faithful support.

In 2025, we have been assigned the following dates: February 4, April 1, July 1, and September 9. We hope that those of you who helped this year will be able to help again. We are always looking for new helpers. If you have questions, please contact us.

Karen Goodacre & Jim Bentley



Hello Pilgrim family & friends! We want to thank Sue Kaiser for providing the November meal for Open Circle Unitarian’s Church Café Q’s (LGBTQ+ youth) monthly gathering. When asked if help with meal prep was needed, Sue responded: “I’ve got it easy! Pizza was the requested Thanksgiving meal!”

Friends, as Pilgrim UCC continues to grow into our ONA covenant, we look for new ways to educate ourselves about the difficult lessons we need to spend time with.

GLAAD, is the media advocacy organization formerly known as the Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation. They promote fair and accurate representation of LGBTQ people in the media.

GLAAD states: “At a time when transgender people have become targets of extreme political discrimination and violence, it’s imperative that anyone who is interested in and invested in protecting a free society learn the facts about who trans people are, become educated about the realities trans people face, and understand that our collective equality is connected to the safety and freedom of people who are transgender.”

We look back onto November 20th, Transgender Day of Remembrance, an annual commemoration of those whose lives were lost in acts of anti-transgender violence. Transgender Day of Remembrance (TDOR) was started in 1999 by transgender advocate Gwendolyn Ann Smith as a vigil to honor the memory of Rita Hester, a transgender woman who was killed in 1998. Here is a video – which includes members of Rita’s family - explaining how the Day of Remembrance started: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MjaKfFUlpQo&t=15s>

Trans Day of Remembrance is a day to honor those we have lost within the trans community. As of November 2025, advocates have reported at least **58 transgender people** who have passed away in the United States since November 2024, with 27 of these being due to violence and 21 to suicide. READ their stories! SEE

them as the people they were. (and YES! Wisconsin is part of the list!! <https://www.transremembrance.org/in-memoriam>)

But honoring the trans people we’ve lost is not enough. Transgender people and people who defy gender norms have always existed. We fight for a world where trans and non-binary people belong and where trans lives are honored no matter the day. We all have the right to live openly and authentically. We all have the right to be ourselves — today, and EVERY DAY.

Thanks for being you, Pilgrim! And all you do to keep your hearts and minds OPEN to all that God is teaching us.

Your Pilgrim ONA Team!

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With the new program year beginning and everyone getting back into their routines, please consider making a stop at the SCRIP table on Sunday mornings and get back into the habit of using the SCRIP program.

Every Sunday morning there is the opportunity to help the Pilgrim budget by purchasing SCRIP cards. With the new fall schedule in place, SCRIP will be available for purchase before and after the 9:00 am service until 10:15 a.m. If you haven’t given SCRIP a try yet, it is a very friendly user program and can meet just about all your purchasing needs.

So from food to gas, home repairs to birthday gift cards, let the SCRIP table in the narthex be one of your Sunday morning stops!!

Thanks for your support. If you have any questions, please don’t hesitate to ask Karen Goodacre . 920-904-5740



DECEMBER

birthdays

Kaden Goetsch	Dec 1
Laura Hawkins	Dec 2
Blair Holl	Dec 2
Dennis Stephany	Dec 6
Joanne Baltz	Dec 6
David Lawrence	Dec 10
Alia Abler	Dec 12
Charlie Wicuhowski	Dec 13
Kameron Keys	Dec 14
Nate Dietenberger	Dec 15
Gary Greenfield	Dec 16
Tina Potter	Dec 16
Richard Goetsch, Jr	Dec 18
Mary Hobbs	Dec 18
Megan Christenson	Dec 19
Christopher Luckow	Dec 19
Merry Walter	Dec 19
Linda Graves	Dec 21
Hannah Connor	Dec 21
Jesus	Dec 24
Isabelle Schilling	Dec 27
Beth Fedyszyn	Dec 28
Tim Flaherty	Dec 29
Paul Dille	Dec 30

Susan & Thomas Kirchoff	Dec 22
Barbara & Benjamin Roder	Dec 19
Jane & Michael Steinke	Dec 14

Ushers for December

Date	9:00 Service
Dec 7	Jim & Dianne Bentley
Dec 14	Max & Lucia Hoyer
Dec 21	Barb & Avery Geiger
Dec 24	Randy & Linda Stutz
Dec 28	Bart & Dawn Dahlke

Welcomers for December

Date	9:00 Service
Dec 7	Jim & Dianne Bentley
Dec 14	Fran Schmid
Dec 21	Avery Geiger
Dec 24	Randy & Linda Stutz
Dec 28	Wendy Ellison

Worship Leaders December

Date	9:00 Service
Dec 7	Sue Kaiser
Dec 14	Noreen Henderson
Dec 21	Sue Kaiser
Dec 24	
Dec 28	Fran Schmid

Pilgrim United Church of Christ

Church Council Meeting

October 20, 2025

Present: Linda Stutz, Pastor Jeannie Douglas, Peg Bradley, Donna Jost, Steve Wicichowski, Ron McCreedy, Patty Minter, Fran Schmid, Avery Geiger, Fran Schmid, Wendy Ellison

The meeting opened with the acknowledgment of a quorum by Linda Stutz and Prayer by Pastor Jeannie at 6:00 PM.

Secretary's Report: With corrections for the September minutes Linda made a motion to accept the corrected minutes, Fran seconded the motion, minutes passed with Unanimous Consent.

Treasurer's Report: Report attached. Fran made a motion that the minutes be approved, Steve seconded the motion. Motion passed with Unanimous Consent.

Donna also shared that she and Kevin will be doing a Financial Audit of the 1st 3 quarters of 2025.

Pastor's Report: Report for September 12 – October 16th attached. Pastor met with 29 people; attended 9 meetings of the church; Provided special services 12 times and provided 5 church services.

Vice President's Report: Amy still needs her own log in for email. Linda will look into this

Donna is working on getting Amy added to the credit card and correcting the other names on the account.

President's Report:

Old Business:

Spurlock Associates to set up Payroll for the church: Donna reported that Spurlock does set up payrolls for a lot of churches. It costs \$2960/year, a one time \$200 set up fee and an additional \$70/ hour if it takes longer than 2 hours to set up. There would be a CPA that deals with all the issues. Discussion ensued about the positives and negatives of hiring this firm. Donna will talk with some of the churches that utilize their service and see what the positives and negatives are and report back.

New Business:

Copier: There was a letter received that stated that the copier was purchased and no longer has a contract for repairs. No one is sure as to who the contract was with or if it is legitimate. Linda and Amy will work on trying to find said contract on the copier. Suggestions were made who to contact such as Jill to see if she is aware of anything. Perhaps it may need to be looked as to, as to purchase or lease a new one. (Add to Old Business)

Ministry/Committee Reports and updates (as necessary)

Worship and Ministry- Steve Wicichowski (council rep.) Minutes attached.

Paul Thelan and his musicians will do all the music for worship service on Sunday, November 30th.

Hanging of the Greens will take place after the November 23 worship service. Steven will let Fran know about this date. By October 20th Deb will submit the details of Hanging of the Greens for publication in the November Quill.

Riley Lipke is selling poinsettias as a fundraiser for a school trip. Linda will find out the details and if the price is reasonable, she will order 29 red poinsettias from him to be delivered to the church mid December.. Poinsettias will be watered ¼ to ½ cup of water every 5 days by Fran, Marilyn, and Linda.

Christian Education- Dixie Sullivan (Council Rep.) Minutes attached written information provided.

Sunday School Children decided the Birthday Bank donations will be split between Sleep in Heavenly Peace and the Linus Project.

Adult Education Ministry was held at 4:00 on Monday, Oct. 20th

Property Maintenance – Avery Geiger (Council Rep) Minutes attached

Snow removal contract has renewed with Paul's

Silica repaired toilet, replaced all shut off valves and faucet valves in Woman's Bathroom

Neal Sieglaff renewed their membership on Property/ Maintenance Bill Burns did not.

There are flies in the sanctuary. We are trying fly tape, insect traps, and night light with insect trap.

Lay Life & Leadership – Patty Minter (Council Rep.)

Stewardship & Finance – Ron McCreedy (Council Rep.) Minutes attached.

Total income received for September was below average for the monthly needed amount. Average monthly income needed to meet budgeted expenses is \$18,029.

Monthly Income for September (Pledges) were ahead by \$1,593

(Pledges and Other Income was behind by \$8,416) Reason? Rummage sale is not held until October and the Ham Dinner in Nov.

Neighbors in Need Income to date was \$825

Pledge Drive planning continues for Nov and Dec.

Membership and Evangelism – Fran Schmid (Council Rep.) Minutes attached.

Letters to Inactive members were mailed and are due back by October 31st. Details will be shared with the council at the November meetings.

We continue to work on the budget.

Christian Out reach – Peg Bradley (Council Rep) Minutes attached

There was 290 # of food for the Fondy Food Pantry in September. Coats for Kids donations are going well for the month of October.

We had over \$500 in the KIVA account and it was lent out to 3 individuals.

COMMITTEE REPORTS

Nominating Committee: The following Ministries/Committees need members.

ONA

Membership and Evangelism

Stewardship and Finances

Property and Maintenance

Ham Dinner: It is coming along. There are still spots for volunteers to sign up.

Memorial Fund Committee

Green Team: Minutes attached

Fellowship hour food on October 1st will be supplied by the Green Team

Ham dinner plans for helping with composting potatoes peels and cleaning and recycling soup cans will be taken care of by the Green Team.

Adult Forum on November 9 will be on winter salt use and issues arising from salt runoff.

WISE

SCRIP: There will be a 10% return to Pilgrim from Kwik Trip cards.

Trust Fund Report**Memorial Garden**

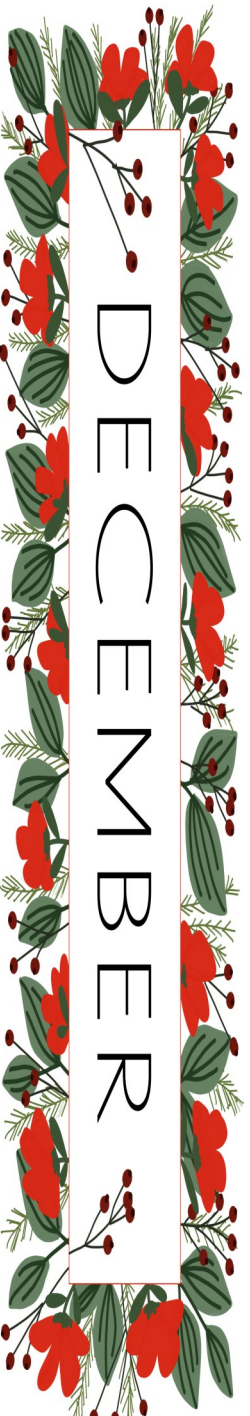
ONA: A revised ONA covenant was presented in writing. Sue Kaiser and Sue Schmidt have worked long and hard on this. There was a lot of discussion on this and how it was hard at this time to digest. We will take it and review it again and send recommendations to Linda.


Celebrations:

The meeting closed at 8:25PM

Respectfully Submitted:

Wendy Ellison, Council Secretary.



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 1 PM Expanding Horizons	2	3 5 PM Confirmation Class	4 7 PM Choir Practice	5	6
7 9:00 AM Worship/Choir Alternate Gift Fair after Worship/Coffee Fellowship	8 10 AM COP 1 PM Expanding Horizons 4 PM Christian Ed	9 10 AM Christian Outreach 11 AM M & E Meeting 5 PM P & M Meeting	10 4:30 PM Worship Meeting	11 7 PM Choir Practice	12	13
14 9:00 AM Worship/Bell Quart. BP Checks after Worship 10:15 AM Adult Forum 2 PM Women's Chorus Concert	15 1 PM Expanding Horizons 6 PM Council Meeting	16 10 AM Christian Outreach 11 AM Membership & Evangelism Meeting 5 PM WISE	17 5 PM Confirmation Class **Poisetia Order Deadline** **Quil Deadline**	18 7 PM Blue Christmas Svc	19 Intergenerational Night Cookies & Carolling	20
21 9:00 AM Worship/Choir 10:15 AM Adult Forum	22 1 PM Expanding Horizons	23	24 7 PM Christmas Service	25 	26	27
28 9:00 AM Worship	29	30	31			

Pilgrim United Church of Christ
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The Pilgrim Quill

Pilgrim United Church of Christ Mission Statement

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.

Those Who Serve

Pastor Rev. Jeannie Douglas
Administrative Assistant..... Amy Rector
Parish NurseSue Schmitz
Child & Youth Coordinator Michael Friedel
Adult Education Coordinator..... Mary Ann Otto
Worship Musician..... Chris Deaner-Rogers
Choir DirectorZachary Ball
Choir AccompanistChris Deaner-Rogers
Custodian..... Green & Clean
Church Council President Jim Bentley
Church Council Vice President Linda Stutz
Church Council Secretary Wendy Ellison
Church Treasurer..... Donna Jost

Rides to church are available by contacting Randy Stutz 920-539-6277

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.