



# THE PILGRIM QUILL

APRIL 2026

Journeying With Jeannie  
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Dear Friends and Members,

“Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!”

These are the words we will proclaim on Easter morning—words that will echo through the sanctuary, through our lives, through the Easter season. We say them again and again because we need to. We need to be reminded that resurrection is real—because so much of what we see around us still feels like death. We carry grief. We witness injustice. We experience loss, disappointment, and uncertainty. And yet—into that reality, we proclaim something deeper, something truer: **“Christ is risen”**.

The month of April reminds us that Easter is more than just one day. Easter is an *every Sunday* celebration, where we gather to remember the forgiveness, grace, and new life given to us through Christ. But even more than that, Easter is an *everyday* reality. Because resurrection is not only something that happened long ago—it is something that is still happening. All around us. Within us. Every single day.

We live in a rhythm of death and resurrection more often than we realize. Each night, we lay the day to rest—releasing what has been, letting go of what we cannot carry forward. And each morning, we rise again—given a new day, a new beginning, a quiet chance to start again.

There is resurrection in forgiveness—when something broken is made whole. There is resurrection in hope—when despair does not get the final word. There is resurrection in courage—when we try again after failure. There is resurrection in love—when we choose compassion instead of fear. These may seem like small things, but this is how resurrection takes root in ordinary life.

But we might ask—what does death and resurrection mean for us *right now*? What does it mean when we are watching conflict unfold in our world, when war reminds us how fragile peace can be, when the cost of living continues to rise, and many feel the weight of decisions they did not choose but must now carry?

Resurrection does not ignore these realities. It does not pretend that suffering is not real. Instead, resurrection speaks *into* them. It reminds us that even when the world feels uncertain, God is still present. That even when systems fail, love does not. That even when we feel powerless, we are not without purpose. Resurrection calls us not to withdraw in fear, but to remain rooted in compassion, generosity, and hope. Because the promise of Easter is not that life will be easy—but that death, in all its forms, will never have the final word.

Remember, the first witnesses to the empty tomb did not stay there. Mary Magdalene, Joanna, Mary the mother of James, and the others heard the Good News—and then they *went out and told others about the Good News*. The disciples, too, returned to their everyday lives—to fishing, to working, to living—but they were no longer the same. They now carried the Good News with them, they carried the resurrection with them. And so do we.

We may not stand at an empty tomb, but we stand in a world still waiting for signs of new life. And God sends us into that world, as God sent the disciples, as resurrection people. In our homes. In our work. In our relationships. In the ordinary, everyday moments that make up our lives. We are called to carry grace into strained conversations, to bring hope into weary places, to offer kindness where it is least expected. This is how we “tell all these things”—not only with words, but with the way we live.

So, as we move through this Easter season, let us remember: Easter did not end when we left church on Sunday morning. Easter continues in the quiet resurrections of daily life. In every new beginning. In every act of love. In every moment we choose faith over fear.

Because Christ is risen—and that changed everything. Not just once. But again, and again. Every single day.

So, we can say, *everyday*: “Christ is risen! He is risen indeed, alleluia!”

Continued Easter blessings to all of us,  
Rev. Jeannie

# ADULT EDUCATION OPPORTUNITIES

To join the zoom link: <https://us02web.zoom.us/j/87682457999?pwd=NkICTOZEYwTtRnlwcEtrNDhCMGRhQT09>

## ADULT FORUM

Sunday Mornings 10:15AM to 11:15AM in the lounge following the 9:00AM worship.



### APRIL 3 – EASTER SUNDAY – NO SESSION

April 12

**Marsh Haven Nature Center**

**Leader: Matt Rupnick – Director**

Sometimes we have these local treasures of which we might be unaware. Let's celebrate Earth Month by learning more about such a place. Matt will be joining us in the Fellowship Hall with some of his animal friends to talk about the history of and great opportunities at Marsh Haven Nature Center.

April 19

**Sustainable Products**

**Leader: Katie Gindt**

As stewards of the creation, we are always looking for ways to protect our beautiful home for today and the future. Katie will join us to discuss the impact of using sustainable products and offer suggestions so that we can personally participate in caring for our earth home.

April 26

**Survival, A History of the War of Religion by Jeremie Foa**

**Leader: Ben Blanc**

Can you imagine? Join Ben as he shares this interesting time in religious history. In the world of the war of religion - 1562 - 1598, survival became an artform. how to lie, disguise himself, or hide his religious confession.



## EXPANDING HORIZONS

Monday Afternoons 1:00PM-2:30PM in the lounge.



April 6

**Spiritual Audacity - The Rabbi Joshua Abraham Heschel Story**

**A Documentary by Martin Doblmeier**

**Leader: Adult Ed. Team**

Known as a Prophet's Prophet, Heschel was a courageous voice of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, and a pioneer of interfaith dialogue. Heschel aimed, through his writing and teaching, to shock modern people out of complacency and into a spiritual dimension.

April 13

**Listening from the Heart - The Palestine Justice Working Group**

**Leader: Tracy Abler**

Tracy will guide us through this session featuring a video of a Palestinian and an Israeli as they share their stories of loss – and their willingness to transform feelings of anger, revenge, despair, and helplessness in the choice to act for hope and reconciliation with other bereaved Israelis and Palestinians.

April 20 and 27

**A Look at Paul's Letters to the Corinthians**

**Leader: Dr. Brian Smith**

Paul's letters deal with major issues going on in this early Christian community. Join Professor Emeritus of Religion at Ripon College, Dr. Smith, as he helps us to explore these writings in light of their original context and meaning for today.

**IN CASE YOU'RE INTERESTED.... FROM THE UNITED METHODIST CONFERENCE**

Biblical scholar Amy-Jill Levine will be speaking at a few upcoming events in Wisconsin this April — one in Madison, one in Oshkosh, and one in Manitowoc.

**Madison – First UMC** \*Attendance at the Madison event will earn CEU Credits

April 17, April 18, April 19

**Manitowoc- Lakeshore UMC** April 20

**Oshkosh – First UMC** April 21–22

Each event is hosted locally, with details, times, and registration information available at the links below. Some events are free and open to the public.

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**Christian Outreach**

**Outreach Ministry Offers the Chance to “Reach-Out”**

On April 7th the Outreach Ministry will provide dinner. For the EmpowHer children. Forty to fifty children will be enjoying pizza. We appreciate donations made in the past to Outreach which allows us to order pizzas. Thanks also to Mary Ann Otto, Adult Education Coordinator, for making 60 of her special cupcakes for dessert.

**“Reach-Out” to Fond du Lac Humane Society**

April is the month we celebrate Earth Day and we will be collecting items needed by the Fond du Lac Humane Society. Most of us have had the joy of loving one of God’s “critters”. By donating items to the Humane Society we can say thank you for all they do to protect and find homes for homeless animals. The following items are needed:

**Dogs:** Nylabones, Dog Treats (any brand), Soft Dog Treats (any brand), Filled/Stuffed bones (similar to Busy Bones), Large Durable Dog Toys, Martingale Collars, Durable Leashes (6 to 8 feet), Purina One Lamb and Rice Dog Food, Purina One Puppy Food, Taste of the Wild Pacific Stream/Salmon Dog Food, Enrichment Toys (lick mats, puzzles, etc.), Peanut Butter

**Cats:** Non-Clumping Cat Litter, Purina Kitten Chow-Yellow Bag, Purina Cat Chow-Gentle Stomach-Purple Bag, Purina Cat Chow-Blue Bag, Cat Toys, Kitten Milk Replacer, Stage 1 Baby Food (Chicken or Turkey), Fancy Feast Pate Canned Food

**Other:** Paper Towels, Dawn Dish Soap, Regular Bleach, Sticky Notes, Pocket Folders, Stamps, Zipper Storage Bags (Quart and Gallon), Liquid Laundry Detergent, Copy Paper, Fleet Farm Gift Cards, Walmart Gift Cards, Amazon Gift Cards, Chewy Gift Cards

As usual, please place your items on the shelves in the entry way. Shopping lists are also available on the shelves.

**What Is Blanket Sunday?**

For many years it has been a Pilgrim tradition to celebrate Blanket Sunday on Mother’s Day. Church World Service provides blankets to people who are experiencing difficult times. A simple blanket becomes a holy offering: warmth on a cold night, peace after a disaster, and a reminder that no one is forgotten by God.

\$10 - Provides a CWS Blanket to someone in need.

\$25 - Provides a CWS Blanket and a CWS Hygiene Kit, offering warmth and essential supplies.

\$60 - Family Bundle! Provides blankets and hygiene kits for an entire family, ensuring that they have what they need during challenging times.

It is simple to make a difference in someone’s life. Just use the included form, and write a check to Pilgrim UCC (note Blanket Sunday in the memo area).

You may give your gift in honor or memory of someone special in your life...mother, father, daughter, son or friend etc. On Mother’s Day a list of those being remembered will be in the bulletin. You may contribute anytime during May but names will only be shared on Mother’s Day. Forms will be available in the bulletin on April 19, 26, May 3 & 10 and on the table in the narthex.

**MANY THANKS FOR YOUR CONTINUING GENEROSITY!**

**Detach here and turn in to donate for Blanket Sunday**



**BLANKET SUNDAY/MOTHER’S DAY  
MAY 10, 2026**

**SUBMIT THIS FORM WITH YOUR BLANKET DONATION ON OR  
BEFORE WEDNESDAY, MAY 6, 2026**

**GIVEN BY:**

**In honor of:**

**In memory of:**

**Number of blankets \_\_\_\_\_ @ \$10.00 each**

## Honoring Earth Day through KIVA Loans

Earth Day will be celebrated this month and the Outreach Ministry decided this is the right time to make loans that are eco-friendly. We were able to loan \$600 to three women with businesses that honor the environment. The money loaned was all from other loans we have made that have been repaid. KIVA is a 501(c)3 nonprofit organization whose mission is to connect people through lending to alleviate poverty. KIVA works with micro finance institutions on five continents to provide loans to people without access to traditional banking systems. Pilgrim has made 134 loans totaling \$21,565 in 41 countries.

The first loan of \$200 was made to Faridah who lives in Uganda. She is a single mother of two children. The loan will help her buy mulches and manure for her coffee and banana farm which will improve her yields. She relies entirely on her farm to provide for her family, keep her children in school and meet their daily needs. Despite the challenges of single parenthood, Faridah remains determined to build a stable and hopeful future for her children. Uganda's average annual income (USD) is \$1,353.

Reduce, reuse, recycle has been the mantra of the environmental movement for many years. Ama and Pamela both have businesses that focus on "reuse". Ama is the mother of two and lives in Togo. She sells underwear that she receives at the second hand market. She is seeking a loan to order bales of tights, briefs, and underwear. She wants to be able to meet customer demand. She was loaned \$200. Togo's average annual income (USD) is \$1,120.

Pamela who lives in Kenya sells second hand blankets. She is a 38 year old married mother of three. She has successfully operated her second hand blanket business for the past seven years. This loan of \$200 will help her expand her business. She will use the profits from the loan to support her family's basic needs. Her longer dream is to own a big blanket shop where she can serve her customers better and grow her business further. Kenya's average annual income (USD) is \$2,549.

Just as Pilgrim Church works hard to keep our Creation Justice commitment, Ama, Pamela, and Faridah are also doing their part to heal the earth. All our efforts make a difference! If you would like to learn more about KIVA see their website [www.kiva.org](http://www.kiva.org) or talk to Peg Bradley or any member of the Outreach Ministry.



## **Pilgrim Green Team is taking on Plastic**

After much discussion, the Green Team has decided that our focus this year will center on reducing plastic consumption and disposal — especially single-use plastics (SUPs). Every straw, plastic spoon, and grocery bag makes a difference.

Here's what we have planned so far:

**Adult Forum — April 19th:** The topic is Sustainable Products, led by Katie Gindt of Sustain Fond du Lac. Katie will bring examples of household and personal hygiene items with reduced packaging and lower plastic content.

**Soft Plastic Recycling--** We encourage everyone to recycle soft plastics by dropping them off at a local grocery store. Visit the bulletin board in the Narthex for a list of accepted items — and take a copy home with you!

**Monthly Tips--**Look for information each month in the Quill on simple ways to reduce your plastic use.

### **Why reduce your plastic use?**

Global awareness is growing around the crisis created from the prolific production of plastics. Many plastics are not recyclable or can only be recycled once or twice before ending up in landfills--or worse in rivers, oceans, soils and eventually our bodies.

Plastics that end up in the environment break down into tiny pieces called microplastics, which have been found in the stomachs of animals and as contaminants in our soil, water and even our food.

Single-use plastics such as plastic bags, straws, cups, plates and utensils are used just once, for mere minutes, but will remain on the planet indefinitely because plastics do not biodegrade.

### **Breaking the Plastic Habit: It's About More Than Just Swapping Products**

Cutting down on single-use plastics (SUPs) in daily life isn't as simple as finding a better bag or a trendier water bottle. Some of the latest research reveals that lasting change depends on two things working together: having genuinely good alternatives available, and shifting the everyday habits and social norms that keep plastic so deeply embedded in our routines.

On the alternatives side, that means reusable containers, smarter packaging, and products that are not only better for the environment but also affordable and actually convenient to use. No one is ditching plastic wrap for an option that costs three times as much and falls apart after a week.

But access to better products is only half the picture. Real progress requires rethinking the small, automatic choices we make every day — remembering the tote bag, skipping the disposable cup, choosing the shop that packages things responsibly. These aren't dramatic lifestyle overhauls; they're the quiet accumulation of new defaults.

**The Great Compost Giveaway --April 19th**

For more than two years, Pilgrim members have been adding food scraps to our two compost bins. By adding water, green material, and air, our two compost bins have produced what gardeners call "black gold" — rich, nutrient-dense compost.

The bins are nearly full, and we're ready to share the harvest. If you'd like some compost, simply label a container with your name — an ice cream pail, bucket, planter, or similar — and drop it off between April 12–19th. How much each person receives will depend on supply and how many containers are collected.

The compost is ready to use: mix it into a garden bed or blend it with potting soil for planters. It's packed with nitrogen, phosphorus, and potassium, and helps balance soil pH so plant roots can absorb nutrients more effectively.

Happy planting.

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**Lay Life**

Lay Life will be hosting Easter Sunday, April 5 after the service with a coffee hour of refreshments.

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For those of you that may not be aware, the SCRIP program at Pilgrim is an ongoing weekly program that allows you to purchase gift cards at their original value while at the same time earning a percentage from each gift card purchased to help our church's operating budget. Last year the SCRIP program was able to give \$7000 to our church's budget. For each gift card purchased a percentage is earned. We all go to the grocery store, out to eat or put gas in our vehicles, so everyone can use SCRIP cards in one way or another. Kwik Trip is offering 10% back to the church as of now!! If you have never used SCRIP, stop by the SCRIP table in the narthex and talk with me and I'd be happy to explain it to you. Again, THANK YOU SO MUCH for your support of this program.

"Need an ark? I Noah guy." 🤔



### **Intergenerational Fellowship Nights**

Join us for our next Intergenerational Fellowship Night on Friday, April 17 at 6:00 PM! This month, the WISE Ministry will host a screening of Inside Out 2, a heartfelt and engaging film that explores the complexity of our emotions in a way that resonates with both children and adults. Come enjoy snacks, a meaningful movie, and time together in community.

As always, friends and family are always invited to our Intergenerational Fellowship Nights!

### **Youth Group**

All 6th–12th graders are invited to Youth Group on Friday, April 17th from 4:30-5:45pm. We will be headed to the thrift shop to decorate our youth space! Let Michael know if you can attend!

### **Sunday School**

On Sunday, April 12th Sunday School will be joining Adult Education for a presentation about the Marsh Haven Nature Center. Some animal friends will be joining us as we learn about the nature center.

No Sunday School on Sunday, May 3rd due to Confirmation Sunday. Join us in the lounge as we celebrate our Confirmation Students with cake!

## Easter Sunday Music

As musicians at Pilgrim UCC, we work hard to provide music for special seasons of the church year that will lift our spirits as we worship together and help our congregation gain insight into the meaning of our liturgical celebrations. Easter 2026 will be no exception. Work began last year on every aspect of the worship service and how we could better find ways to lift our hearts and minds, as well as our service to the Risen Christ. We would like to thank Pilgrim's Worship Committee and the members of our congregation for supporting us in making this year's Easter service an experience of life and living in the footsteps of Resurrection hope.

Zach has been able to not only secure us the services of a trio of trombones, but he has also written the music for them to accompany our choir and congregation. The trio will also play with piano for part of the Prelude and with organ for the Postlude. The choir will be singing two anthems this Sunday. For our Offertory, our guest pianist will join us for a piano/organ duet of "Crown Him with Many Crowns."

The Prelude will be comprised of three selections, Bach's "Fantasy in G Major" for organ, "When You Believe" from *The Prince of Egypt* for trombones and piano, and Bach's "Fugue in G Major" (Jig) for organ. Zach chose the selection for trombones "When You Believe" from *The Prince of Egypt*, is an inspirational anthem about the power of faith and perseverance to overcome impossible odds. While many usually wouldn't associate the song with our Easter story, the lyrics focus on finding hope in desperate times, emphasizing that miracles occur when you truly believe, even when faced with fear.

The Hebrew lyrics in the bridge of this anthem translate to the following message:

"I will sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously.

Who is like you, oh Lord, among the celestials.

Who is like you, majestic in holiness.

In your Love, you lead the people you redeemed.

I will sing to the Lord for He has triumphed gloriously."

This Easter morning we reflect on these words, as we sing to the Lord for He has gloriously triumphed o'er the grave.

His choice of "Jesus Christ is Risen Today" by Chris' friend who is well known here at Pilgrim (Phil Lehenbauer) is for brass and organ. That choice takes us back to the beginning of worship and a reminder of why we have gathered in celebration this special day.

The Prelude on Easter Sunday will begin at 8:40 AM. Join us as we celebrate together with Word and music.

Zach Ball and Chris Deaner-Rogers

## Memorial Garden Update

The Memorial Garden committee has been meeting for about a year. We visited other churches in the area that have Memorial Gardens. Our first task was to write the policy for using the Memorial Garden. We also drafted an application form to start the process to use the Memorial garden to spread ashes/cremains of a loved one. The Memorial Garden policy and application form was approved at the January 2026 council meeting, and it was approved by the congregation at the Annual Meeting on February 1, 2026.

### What Is a Memorial Garden?

- The **Memorial Garden** will consist of 2 parts; the **Prairie Garden** and a new **Meditation Garden** located around the tree planted in memory of Ruth Sandidge.
- The **Prairie Garden** would be the designated area to spread ashes and will be the final resting place for earthly cremains. It will be a special space treated as holy and reverent.
- The **Meditation Garden** is a new garden of 480 native wildflowers and shrubs. It is an area for healing, renewal & quiet contemplation and a place of quiet beauty surrounded by wildflowers.
- The **Memorial Garden** is a setting for meditation of our faith in eternal life.

The name of the loved one whose ashes are spread in the Prairie Garden will be added to a bronze plaque. The cost for a name plate is \$250, and this plaque will be in the Meditation Garden near Ruth's tree. Ruth's name plate is the first name plate on the bronze plaque.

The cost of the new Mediation Garden is now fully funded from the two original donations of \$17,695 a year ago and from another recent donation of \$2,500.

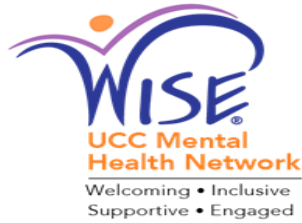
We hope that the planting of 480 wildflowers in the new Meditation Garden will begin this spring and will be done by early June.

We hope to have a dedication service for the Memorial Garden sometime this fall.

Donations to help maintain the Memorial Garden can be made to the Pilgrim UCC for the Memorial Garden fund #118.

Respectfully submitted by Gary Ring,  
Memorial Garden chairperson.





### Spring Time Play Time

Play is the foundation of connection and belonging. Play is a primary way to build connection and community. Children know this intuitively and have the wonderful capacity to simply ask, “will you play with me?” As adults we seem to have to be specific when we plan to do something with others. When you think back on gatherings, chances are, that times that involved play, cards, dice, board games, etc, were times that may have been the most memorable with people in your life that you cared about.

As you begin to enjoy spring time, think of a relationship that you might want to improve, don’t exclude the relationship you have with yourself.

Here are a few ideas to get you started,

- \* Try a new recipe with your favorite music playing while you work in the kitchen
- \* Invite a friend over to cook out, even cook out for yourself
- \* Leave a bottle of bubbles on a friend’s porch with a note
- \* If you live with others, leave a note on their bathroom mirror with an uplifting comment
- \* Ask a friend to go to a movie on the cheap movie night and hide some favorite candy in your pocket
- \* Plan a game or card night
- \* Plan a summer night at the school ball diamonds or soccer fields

Remember that if you are struggling with your mental health, do not isolate. Reach out to a trusted family member, friend, church community member or professional service provider.

DON’T DO LIFE ALONE, try to engage in light hearted activities.

### WISE Affirmations - Gratitude Moments

There are feelings of uncertainty, sadness, confusion and conflict in our lives it seems. These feelings can be so overwhelming that we forget that there is also joy, fun, gratitude, love and wonder. We need to be reminded and affirm each other, those in our midst, what we see in our environment, and share those positives.

The WISE Committee would like to try a “Gratitude Moment”... a listing in the bulletin and e-blast after the Prayer Support List of positive recognitions. These could be a thank-you to someone for behind the scenes work, completing therapy after a surgery, a celebration announcement, or as simple as witnessing a beautiful sunrise.

Anyone - young and young at heart - may submit a Gratitude by emailing it to Amy ([pilgrim.info@pilgrimuccfdl.org](mailto:pilgrim.info@pilgrimuccfdl.org)), calling her (Mon-Fri 9:00am-1:00pm at 920-921-0415) or leaving a written message on her desk labeled “Gratitude Moment”.



### **Blood Pressures with Judy Burth on April 12th**

The first Sunday of each month, health professionals offer informal blood pressure screenings after worship. Due to Easter on April 5<sup>th</sup>, Judy will be available the **second** Sunday after worship on April 12<sup>th</sup>. Stop in the room across from the Office and she will be glad to take your post Easter celebration blood pressure!

### **April 20<sup>th</sup> is the 130<sup>th</sup> Boston Marathon**

This famous marathon is 26.2 miles long. To qualify to just register, I would have had to run a sanctioned marathon in at least 4 hours and 50 minutes. (for my female age group) That is not going to happen. I can however walk the equivalent 58,950 steps during the month of April to equal 26.2 miles...that's a bit less than 2000 steps per day. A perfect goal to shake off winter and welcome spring!

I came across this fantastic thought when it comes to doing what we know we should do...***"You are never going to feel ready – ready is not a feeling – ready is a decision."*** Spring is here with greater opportunities for being active! Maybe not a marathon all at once – maybe a routine walk. All good!

### **A Bit about Nutrition - Ultra processed food**

March was actually National Nutrition Month; an educational campaign sponsored by the Academy of Nutrition and Dietetics. Their focus is on the importance of making informed food choices and physical activity habits.

Informed food choices...about ultraprocessed foods. A standard description is, "Ultra-processed foods have one or more ingredients that wouldn't be found in a home kitchen, like chemical-based preservatives, emulsifiers (hydrogenated oils), sweeteners (like high fructose corn syrup), and artificial colors and flavors. These foods undergo processing techniques and chemical alterations that leave the final products bearing almost no resemblance to the original ingredients." This engineering makes these foods *hyper-palatable*...*"foods engineered to be extremely appealing by combining high levels of fat, sugar, salt, or refined carbohydrates, which strongly stimulate the brain's reward system"* - making it hard to stop eating them. Consequences of these industrial formulations and engineering are less actual nutrition, energy levels that escalate and plummet, cravings and overconsumption. Generally, children and adults get over half of their daily calories from ultraprocessed foods.

It's not black and white though! Many ultra-processed foods are considered junk foods, but others are products that are used in everyday meals and are not bad in moderation. For example, whole grain breads, many yogurts, instant oatmeal, and jarred spaghetti type pasta sauces are all ultra-processed foods, but have lower levels of saturated fats and added sugars. Another example is baked beans; which fit the ultra-processed definition but contain protein, fiber, and minerals like iron and potassium. It's a balancing act. The most common ultra-processed foods consumed include sandwiches (including

burgers), sweet baked goods (pastries, cookies and cakes), salty snacks (chips and crackers), and sugary drinks (soda, juice cocktails). Other examples are candies, sports drinks, instant soups/sauces/drink mixes/seasonings, sweetened yogurts, margarines, pre-prepared meals, hot dogs, breakfast cereals/bars, and meal supplement drinks.

Reducing ultra-processed food intake is a goal that can be a gradual process.

- Fewer fast food stops by preparing meals at home in advance that use less processed foods.
- Read the nutrition labels and ingredient lists on products before buying. Look for foods that have only a few pronounceable, recognizable ingredients.
- Try replacing an ultra-processed food with fruit or vegetables. Use minimally processed frozen or canned options if fresh fruit or vegetables aren't available.
- Replace sugary beverages with water.
- Choose whole grains, like whole wheat bread and cereal over processed grains like white bread and sugary cereals.
- Make a homemade version of a processed food, like sweet potato chips, fruit muffins, bread, or salad dressings.
- Choose healthier menu options when eating out, like grilled chicken instead of a cheese burger and fries.

Informed food choices...everyone makes them based on time, accessibility, affordability and preference. As we ease into summer, there will be a wider variety of fresh foods available...a good time to take advantage of having more choices!

Information taken from John Hopkins and Harvard Schools of Medicine

#### **A FREE WEBINAR from the Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging (WIHA)**

***“Inside the Algorithm: How Social Media Shapes What We See, Think, and Believe”. April 16, from 11:00am-12:00pm.***

“Join Dr. Dietram A. Scheufele, UW– Madison professor and nationally recognized researcher, for an engaging presentation on how social media algorithms are designed and how they shape the information we see every day. Learn how these behind-the-scenes systems can influence attention, emotions, and beliefs, contribute to mis- and disinformation, and affect how we make sense of the world.

This talk will help better understand social media and navigate today's digital environment with greater confidence.”

Go to the “Wisconsin Institute for Healthy Aging” website to register.

**Thank-you to those who helped represent Pilgrim at CELEBRATE CommUNITY in February!**

Renee Holl, Sue Kaiser, Gary Ring, Joy Behrens, Fran Schmid, Mary Berens, Judy Burton, Jeff Start, Sue Schmitz, Barb Roder, Michelle Buck-Stark. We had many positive comments, gave out pride flags, sensory strips, canvas bags, pride heart stickers and temporary tattoos. It was a great afternoon! Membership and Evangelism Ministry.

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**Quilt Raffle Drawing:**

We are honored to have been the recipients of the beautiful quilt raffle. Thank you Deb Wamser for your extraordinary talent, for all the countless hours you put in and all the special details. Also, thank you to Gary Ring for donating materials from Lois to bring it all together. We are very proud to be part of the Pilgrim UCC family and their many talents. You are all very special and giving of yourselves.

Doug & Joanne Baltz



“Moses was the first person with a tablet, downloading data from the cloud”

**Wisconsin Conference UCC Annual Meeting**

The 2026 Annual Meeting of the Wisconsin Conference United Church of Christ will be held April 10–11, 2026, at the Green Lake Conference Center. The theme is *Cultivating Community: Rooted in Christ and Bearing Fruit*, grounded in Jesus’ words from John 15:5: “I am the vine; you are the branches.”

This gathering offers an opportunity to connect with congregations across the conference, share resources and stories, and strengthen our collective witness for justice, vitality, and faithful ministry. Our church is permitted **two voting delegates** to attend. Registration deadline is March 26, 2026.

If you are interested in attending as a delegate, please contact **Linda Stutz, Jim Bentley, or Amy Rector (Administrative Assistant)**.

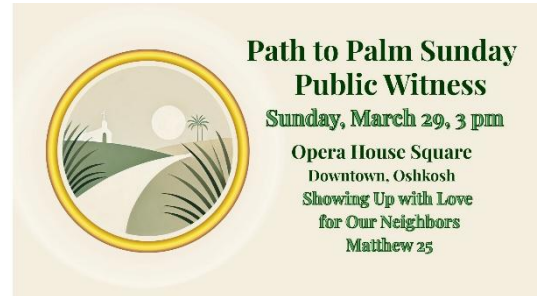
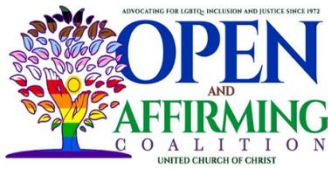
For more information, visit **[wcucc.org](http://wcucc.org)**.

To view the meeting schedule, visit: **[wcucc.org/annual-meeting/schedule](http://wcucc.org/annual-meeting/schedule)**



**Worship ministry** is reaching out for anyone who would like to participate in our worship service. We are seeking worship leaders, ushers and individuals to share a story or reflection with the children and young at heart

Please speak with Linda Stutz or Deb Wamser if you can help with these areas of worship.



Hello Pilgrim family & friends!

HUGE shout out to Tracy Abler and CSA Associate Home Circle for doing the meal prep and delivery to Café Q on March 20<sup>th</sup>. We encourage all to sign up to serve! Following is the link. See Sue Kaiser with any questions. <https://www.signupgenius.com/go/4090F4CA4AF2AA4F58-60367587-2026/182850317#/>

Pilgrim's Scrip program is another way we can support Café Q. Cards for grocery stores or restaurants are always appreciated. And when we purchase Scrip, Pilgrim also sees a benefit!

Your ONA Team is still planning to meet in April so please let Chris or Sue know if you'd like to be included. We will also be meeting Sunday, June 7<sup>th</sup> in the Sanctuary after worship. This is when we will have our 2nd and final "We are ONA - What Now" discussion. This will be a duplicate of our January discussion – giving you a chance to give input you might not have thought of in January. Or giving people who couldn't attend in January the chance to give input. We would love to see a majority of our congregation give input into our potential ONA covenant revision(s).

As we lean into the final weeks of Lent and enter Holy Week (March 29<sup>th</sup> Palm Sunday – April 5<sup>th</sup> Easter) we share with you, words from Rev. Derek Terry Acting Executive Director, Open and Affirming Coalition:

"Over the past year, I have been asking a question that many pastors and people of faith are asking right now: **How should the people of faith be responding in this moment?**

At the Open and Affirming Coalition's National Gathering last year, I issued a challenge to our churches. I said it is time for us to move beyond safe statements and symbolic gestures. It is time for us to **A.C.T OUT.**

A.C.T OUT stands for **Advocacy, Community, Transformation**. It is our invitation to move from affirmation to action in a time when so many of our neighbors are experiencing fear, exclusion, and injustice.

This invitation is not about being loud for the sake of being loud. It is about being faithful. And faithfulness sometimes asks us to show up. When we step back and look at the whole picture, it becomes clear that what we are witnessing is not a series of unrelated policy debates. It is a broader struggle over whose lives are valued and whose voices are heard and people of faith are called to sound the alarm!"

As Pilgrim UCC boldly steps up and into our ONA commitment during 2026, we encourage our congregation to join in the Palm Sunday Path happening on March 29<sup>th</sup>. We have two opportunities to be involved on March 29<sup>th</sup>. We hope to see you there!

1) 1pm – 3pm - Multi-Church and Interfaith Rally in Houdini Plaza (111 W College Ave, Appleton)

2) 3pm - March, Music, & Message - Opera House Square (315 N. Main St., Oshkosh)

Rev. Terry challenges us to remember - **IT IS A MORAL ACT!** Scripture reminds us again and again that people of faith are called to stand with those who are pushed to the margins of society, silenced, or harmed by unjust systems of oppression. The prophets confronted kings. Jesus spoke truth to power. The early church refused to bow to empire. Faith has never been about passive comfort. It has always been about courageous love.



## Palestinians and Israelis Share Their Stories of Loss and Peacemaking

The Palestine Justice Working Group of the Wisconsin Conference UCC is providing an opportunity for churches and members to learn more about the lived reality of both Palestinians and Israelis through *Listening from the Heart* workshops. These 90-minute, interactive workshops also aim to help participants be better listeners. Participants who joined the first session in February shared these testimonies:

*“The difficult choices made by bereaved Palestinian and Israeli parents highlight the path of healing following deep loss. The videos invite us to share this path, as described by parents who found their way to reconciliation.”* - Rev. Diane Dulin

*“It was encouraging to see people that were perceived as enemies being able to open their hearts and minds to each other after sharing their common experiences. This exchange revives my trust in humanity and my hope for peace and understanding not only in Palestine but throughout the world.”* - Dale Bakke

We hope you will consider joining the session this Spring!

To sign up for the **April 20, 6:30-8 pm virtual ZOOM** workshop featuring speakers Robi and Layla go to: <https://tinyurl.com/ListeningRegistrationApril>

Or Join *Expanding Horizons* for an **in-person session** at Pilgrim UCC on **Monday, April 13, 1-2:30 pm.**



In 2026 The WCUCC invites you to learn from Bereaved Palestinians and Israelis by attending a FREE 90 minute ZOOM Workshop:

**Listening From The Heart**

- Deeply rooted in the painful and loving work of the Parents Circle-Family Forum, which brings together Palestinian and Israeli family members who have lost loved ones to the violence to share their grief and humanity with each other and the world amid ongoing, brutal war – with the goal of peace.
- To empower others around the world to engage in meaningful dialogue about the Israeli-Palestinian conflict—and other seemingly intractable conflicts.
- Will equip participants with tools to bridge divides, foster empathy, build respectful communication skills, and create inclusive spaces for hard conversations.
- Come prepared to listen with an open heart and engage in difficult but meaningful conversations.

**WE WON'T GIVE UP ON PEACE**

parentscirclefriends.org

AMERICAN FRIENDS OF THE PARENTS CIRCLE  
www.parents-circle.org

For more info go to: [wcucc.org/Palestine-Justice-Working-Group](http://wcucc.org/Palestine-Justice-Working-Group)  
To set up an in-person workshop in your church contact Lisa Hart



### ***“To Form a More Perfect Union” Speaker Series***

The Congregation of Sisters of St. Agnes will present a series on the theme *“To Form a More Perfect Union: Division and Unity in the US at 250”*. This three-part series will take place at the Prairie Theater and Event Center in April, September, and October.

Speakers include retired Wisconsin Supreme Court Justice Janine Geske, renowned theologian Sister Dianne Bergant, and representatives from Project Unite, an organization dedicated to promoting civil discourse. They will explore the enduring principles of the U.S. Constitution and their relevance to today’s challenges. From the roots of representative democracy to the evolving meaning of liberty and justice, each of the three lectures will aim to deepen public understanding and inspire constructive engagement.

The official press release will go out as soon as we have solidified a date with our October speaker, but in the meantime, please mark your calendar for April!

**At 6 p.m. on Thursday, April 23, Janine Geske**, former justice of the Wisconsin Supreme Court, will speak about the constitutional history of unity in this country.

Details and Registration link: <https://www.csasisters.org/engage-with-us/usa-at-250.cfm>



|                 |        |
|-----------------|--------|
| Jill Peterson   | Apr 2  |
| Cynthia Fischer | Apr 3  |
| Susan Michler   | Apr 3  |
| Molly Abler     | Apr 4  |
| Sally Turk      | Apr 5  |
| Marilyn Hoch    | Apr 5  |
| Kaitlynn Zick   | Apr 8  |
| Arianna Steier  | Apr 8  |
| Pearl Diorio    | Apr 9  |
| Dawn Dahlke     | Apr 11 |
| Avery Geiger    | Apr 12 |
| Linda Stutz     | Apr 12 |
| Gail Vandenack  | Apr 16 |
| Chris Frederick | Apr 17 |
| Gregory Prus    | Apr 20 |
| Jim Bentley     | Apr 22 |
| Michael Potter  | Apr 22 |
| Patrick Friedel | Apr 24 |
| Joni Greenfield | Apr 24 |
| Gary Ring       | Apr 26 |
| Pastor Jeannie  | Apr 27 |

| Ushers for April |                              |
|------------------|------------------------------|
| Date             | 9:00 Service                 |
| April 5          | Bobbie Flaherty & Donna Jost |
| April 12         | Jim & Dianne Bentley         |
| April 19         | Deb & Jim Wamser             |
| April 26         | Barb & Avery Geiger          |
|                  |                              |

| Welcomers for April |                      |
|---------------------|----------------------|
| Date                | 9:00 Service         |
| April 5             | Judie Behnke         |
| April 12            | Jim & Dianne Bentley |
| April 19            | Gary Ring            |
| April 26            | Avery Geiger         |
|                     |                      |

| Worship Leaders April |                  |
|-----------------------|------------------|
| Date                  | 9:00 Service     |
| April 5               | Linda Stutz      |
| April 12              | Ellen Sieglaff   |
| April 19              | Noreen Henderson |
| April 26              | Sue Kaiser       |
|                       |                  |



|                        |        |
|------------------------|--------|
| Susan & Donald Schmitz | Apr 4  |
| Barbara & Peter Tadych | Apr 4  |
| Sharon & Ronald Murphy | Apr 24 |
| Wendy & Paul Dille     | Apr 26 |

**Pilgrim UCC Church Council Meeting  
February 16, 2026**

Present: Jim Bentley, Peg Bradley, Reverend Jeannie Douglas, Wendy Ellison, Avery Geiger, Donna Jost, Patty Minter, Ron McCreedy, Fran Schmid, Linda Stutz, Dixie Sullivan, Steven Wicichowski

Guest: Tracy Abler

Jim welcomed everyone and established a Quorum. Pastor Jeannie opened with a prayer.

**Secretary's Report:** Motion was made to accept with corrections, Patty seconded the motion and motion passed with unanimous consent.

**Treasurer's Report:** Report attached Donna reported by next month the Christmas account should be cleared. There are gifts from the Annual Meeting that will fall under Misc. Expense. There also may have some more bills coming in for Pastoral Search. Linda made a motion to approve the Treasurer's report, Steve 2<sup>nd</sup> the motion. Motion passed with Unanimous consent.

**Pastor's Report:** Report attached. Note Bird not yet merged. Amy is having some difficulty with it all meshing together.

The First Wed. during Lent there will be a movie. Discussion of Note Bird at next month's meeting.

**Vice President's Report:** All evaluations are completed.

**President's Report:** None

**Old Business:** None

**New Business:** Tracy Abler presented and proposed idea of 'Guns to Garden' program. Other UCC Churches have started these programs. Individuals can bring unwanted guns so they are cut so they are no longer guns then made into garden tools. She was wondering if there is a group at the church or people that may be interested in working on an event in coordination with the Sisters of St. Agnes and Marian University and possibly the FDL Police Department.

Fitchberg UCC Church is doing this. It takes place outside the church in the Parking Lot. People get Cash or gift cards for turning them in. Tracy is requesting to open this up to the church and anyone that would like to get involved. There would be training.

On April 8<sup>th</sup>, there would be a presentation at the Mother House by the Blacksmith that performs the gun dismantlement and what he does to make them garden tools. She would like us to think about this support and if we are interested in the collaboration. She also handed out a flier from Jeff Wild the Director of Guns to Gardens, Wisconsin.

General Synod supports these efforts. We need to contemplate this effort when we have a settled Pastor.

## Ministry Reports:

- **Worship and Music:** Steven Wicichowski (Council Rep.): Report attached  
Steven will fill out the request form for \$500 to be moved from the Trust Fund Allocation to the PUC 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary dedicated fund. Steven made a motion that the Funds be transferred as described above, Wendy seconded the motion. Motion passed with unanimous consent.
  1. Amy will order the eco-palms for Palm Sunday
  2. Lenten study will be on the four Wednesdays in March. Bring your own dinner at 5:00PM and at 5:30 the discussion will begin. The Lenten study will be centered around the movie *Chocolat*. The movie will be shown on Wednesday, February 25, at 5:00PM.
  3. It has been confirmed that Sandy Eithen from Appleton will bring her Bell Choir to perform a concert at 2:00 on March 29.
  4. Linda shared about what types of announcements will be made before the church service. They will be those from Ministries or committees that have business for the church. There will not be announcements regarding personal or community events. Those will be put on a separate page in the bulletin and on the "screens" before the service. Linda will write an article for the Quill.
  
- **Christian Education:** Dixie Sullivan (Council Rep.): Minutes attached
  1. Collaboration with Adult Ed. - Christian Education will attend Adult Education meeting on March 9 at 4 PM
  2. Confirmation outings are scheduled
  3. Seed Packets as Sunday School student involvement initiative in April ("spread the love")
  
- **Adult Education:** Report attached.
  1. Mary Ann has confirmed some programs and presenters for Fall 2026
  2. Members of Christian Education Ministry will attend the March meeting of Adult Education to discuss possible time changes for Sunday School in September of 2026
  
- **Property and Maintenance:** Avery Geiger (Council Rep.): Minutes attached
  1. The water pipe to the west side froze the night the temperature (with windchill) hit -40. Attic panel vents in the janitor's closet were opened to thaw the pipes.
  2. Toilet in the Pastor's office was loose causing water to flow into the Administrative office. This was repaired.
  3. Recycle Bin pick up will now be Thursday starting March 19<sup>th</sup> and will occur every 4 weeks.
  
- **Lay Life & Leadership:** Patty Minter (Council Rep):
  1. Patty is revamping some of the kitchen and guild room cupboards and relabeling them.
  2. May 17<sup>th</sup> is Recognition Sunday. Lay Life is not in charge of this event.
  3. September 13, 2026 is also not responsible to plan the entire Kick Off of programming.
  
- **Stewardship & Finance:** Ron McCreedy (Council Rep): Minutes Attached.
  1. Review of January Monthly Financial Statement showed that January monthly income was below average. This included pledges and other income including Fallfest & Rummage Sale.
  2. Overall The Budget is on track with spending and income.
  3. There were a total of 62 pledges returned out of 143 Pilgrim Family Member units.

- **Membership and Evangelism:** Fran Schmid (Council Rep.) Minutes attached
  1. There still is a need for participants for Celebrate CommUNITY on Feb 21
  2. A new Feather Flag will be at the table for Celebrate CommUNITY.
  3. The next Celebration will be the Pride Picnic the end of June.
  
- **Christian Outreach:** Peg Bradley (Council Rep.) Minutes attached.
  1. Meal for Warming Shelter will be provided Thursday, 2/19/2026.
  2. Donations will be accepted for the “Help for the Homeless Hygiene Drive 2/22 – 3/15.
  3. During April we will be sponsoring a collection for the FDL Humane Society and provide a meal for EmpowerHer.

### **Committee Reports:**

- **Nominating Committee**
- **Ham Dinner**
- **Memorial Fund Committee:** Written presentation Gary Ring Ron made a motion that \$5400 from the Memorial Fund be used so the Memorial Garden can be completed. Fran Seconded the motion. Motion passed with unanimous consent.
- **Green Team:** Minutes attached
  1. Michael Friedel made a request that the Christian Education ministry would like to spread seeds this spring in the Prairie Garden to plant flowers that attract butterflies. Barb will obtain the butterfly plant seeds and give them to Michael so planting can be completed.
  2. Pill Bottle Collection is going well. Each month there are enough bottles to be shipped for recycling. The cost to UPS to ship the box is about \$25.
  3. Bike Rack press- Pilgrim UCC will be featured in an upcoming article by the Wisconsin Conference newsletter. The Kairos Call to Action. Barb provided the Bike Rack information and photos for this upcoming article.
  
- **WISE**
- **SCRIP**
- **Trust Fund Report**
- **ONA**
- **Pastoral Support**
- **Search Committee**

### **Celebrations**

### **Information Sharing**

### **Adjournment:**

The meeting was adjourned at 7:40 PM Closing with the Lord’s Prayer.

Respectfully Submitted:

Wendy Ellison, Church Council Secretary.



| SUN                                                                                                 | MON                                                                            | TUES                                                                | WED                                  | THUR                                                                           | FRI                                      | SAT                          |
|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------------------------------------|------------------------------|
|                                                                                                     |                                                                                |                                                                     | 1<br>Loaves & Fishes                 | 2<br>7pm Maundy<br>Thursday Service                                            | 3 Good Friday<br>Service at Peace<br>UCC | 4                            |
| 5<br>9AM Easter<br>Sunday Worship                                                                   | 6<br>1PM Expanding<br>Horizons                                                 | 7                                                                   | 8<br>4:30PM Worship<br>Mtg           | 9<br>Conference<br>Annual Meeting<br>(Green Lake)<br><br>7PM Choir<br>Practice | 10                                       | 11                           |
| 12<br>9AM Worship<br><br>**BP Checks**<br><br>10:15AM Adult<br>Forum                                | 13<br><br>1PM Expanding<br>Horizons                                            | 14<br>10AM Christian<br>Outreach<br><br>11AM M & E<br><br>5PM P & M | 15<br>4PM Memorial<br>Garden Meeting | 16<br>Spring Rummage<br>Sale<br><br>7PM Choir<br>Practice                      | 17<br>Spring Rummage<br>Sale             | 18<br>Spring Rummage<br>Sale |
| 19<br>9AM Worship<br><br>10:15AM Adult<br>Forum                                                     | 20<br>1PM Expanding<br>Horizons<br><br>6PM Council Mtg<br><br>*Quill Deadline* | 21                                                                  | 22                                   | 23<br><br>7PM Choir<br>Practice                                                | 24                                       | 25                           |
| 26<br>9AM Worship<br><br>10:15AM Adult<br>Forum<br><br>2PM Fox Valley<br>Bronze Handbell<br>Concert | 27<br><br>7PM Women's<br>Chorus                                                | 28                                                                  | 29                                   | 30<br><br>7PM Choir<br>Practice                                                |                                          |                              |

**Pilgrim United Church of Christ**  
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Website: www.pilgrimuccfdl.org

**RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED**

## 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 Nurse.....                  | Sue Schmitz          |
| Child & Youth Coordinator.....     | Michael Friedel      |
| Adult Education Coordinator.....   | Mary Ann Otto        |
| Worship Musician.....              | Chris Deaner-Rogers  |
| Choir Director.....                | Zachary Ball         |
| Choir Accompanist .....            | Chris 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.