

Pilgrim's Progress September 1, 2015 – Vol. 57 No. 7

FROM THE



PASTOR

It's officially September, and we'll soon be back to our regularly scheduled programs here at Pilgrim Church. Our Staff is offering a new opportunity for all Pilgrims beginning on Sunday October 4 at 9:30 AM. And I'm trying to get this on your radars now!

On the first Sunday of each month, you're invited to participate in All Church Education & Family Sundays! The children will be in Fellowship Hall with Lisa and the adults and youth will be in Pilgrim Hall with me from 9:30-10:15 as we explore Christian topics and get to know more about our expression of Christianity in the United Church of Christ. We'll then head into the sanctuary together for worship at 10:30, including Communion.

Now hold it right there—I know you may be thinking that there's no way you can come to church earlier on a Sunday morning to do one more thing. Why should you make this a priority?

Well, we've held several Visioning Sessions over the years to give you a chance to share what you want to see and experience at Pilgrim Church. Here's some of what you requested:

- 1.) *More socializing as a group*
- 2.) *More access to contemplative spiritual practices and individual spiritual growth*
- 3.) *More adult programs*

I'm listening, my friends! I already offer **Bible Study Tuesday mornings at 10:30** and several **Book Studies**. Trust me, I get that life is busy. So I'm offering these short lessons on the first Sunday of each month, a day when you'll likely be at Pilgrim Church anyway, to help meet your requests.

And for all you parents out there, it's already been proven that your faith greatly effects your children's faith. The results of *the National Study of Youth and Religion* were released last year and the number one thing that keeps youth religiously active as young adults is . . . their parents. Sadly 70% of teens raised by Mainline Protestant parents had minimal or lower levels of religiousness as young adults.¹ Parents are the most important religious voice in children's lives! So I want to help you parents develop your Christian faith, so that you in turn can guide your children. I want to turn around this troubling trend. And I'm starting right where I am: at Pilgrim Church with all of you.

Adult Lessons will include: our UCC History, Extravagant Welcome, Jesus Christ, Covenant, Baptism, Communion, Social Justice, and Listening for our Still Speaking God.

So today I'm calling on Pilgrims young and old(er) and somewhere in between to attend All Church Education and worship together as a united faith community on Family Sundays.
Onward!

Lauren

¹ David Briggs, "The No. 1 Reason Teens Keep the Faith as Young Adults," Huff Post: Religion, October 29, 2014, http://www.huffingtonpost.com/david-briggs/the-no-1-reason-teens-kee_b_6067838.html?utm_hp_ref=religion

UPCOMING SEPTEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

Sunday September 13 (Regular Worship resumes at 10:30 AM)

We'll be back to 10:30 worship in the sanctuary—the choir and Dan will be back in the chancel, a liturgist will be back at the lectern, I'll be back in the pulpit, and you all will be back in the pews. We'll receive Communion together as we celebrate the beginning of another church program year. It's Welcome Back Sunday!

Sunday September 20 (Service of Blessing at 10:30 AM)

Everyone's invited to bring the water you collected from your summer travels to add to our holy water supply, and the children are invited to bring their backpacks to be blessed during the Children's Message. *This year, weather permitting, we'll hold the service outside on the front lawn!* So bring lawn chairs or a blanket to sit on. (We'll also have a few extra chairs on hand for those who need them, not to worry.) Blessings abound and what better way to celebrate than worshipping outside in God's good creation?

And after worship, we'll continue the Pilgrim tradition of our all church barbeque. We hope you can stay for food, fellowship, and fun!

Sunday September 27

It's a "regular" worship service. What can we say, we can't do new stuff *every* Sunday!

BIBLE STUDY RESUMES ON TUESDAY SEPTEMBER 15 AT 10:30 AM

Just a reminder, Bible Study meets Tuesday mornings at 10:30 AM (September-June) in the Sunroom. Led by Rev. Lauren, a book of the Bible is selected by group vote and various chapters are explored each week. We discuss the text in its historical context as well as what it means in our everyday lives. Right now, we're finishing up the Book of Genesis!

Here at Pilgrim Church, we take the Bible too seriously to take it all literally. God gave us minds and hearts and we use both to discern how God is still speaking to us today. We ask questions and discuss how to apply biblical stories in our various modern contexts. We also begin and end each class with a prayer.

Since Bible Study is on-going, there's really no beginning or end date. It's an open adult educational opportunity! You, that's right YOU, are most welcome to come and explore the Good News with us on any Tuesday morning that works for you.

SAVE THE DATE:

BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS SERVICE SATURDAY, OCTOBER 3 AT 11 AM

We'll hold our second annual Blessing of the Animals service on **Saturday, October 3 at 11 AM**. Join us for this brief service on the church front lawn (or in Pilgrim Hall if the weather is uncooperative) as we welcome and bless companion animals that bring so much joy into our lives.

For safety, please bring dogs on a leash, cats in a carrier or on a leash, and keep other animals appropriately within your control. We look forward to seeing you and your pets!





Neighbors in Need Special Mission Offering of the UCC: Collection on October 4.

Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry (CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC's Justice and Witness Ministries (JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering. We will receive the NIN offering at Pilgrim Church on Sunday October 4 as part of our World Communion Sunday observance.

PILGRIM JOYS AND CONCERNS

- Beth Kurth asks for prayers for her friend Claire, who has colon and liver cancer. Prayers as they determine the next steps this week. Beth also asked us to hold the Calverley family in our prayers. Dale Calverley drowned recently and a service remembering him will be forthcoming.
- Mona Roy asked for prayers for all children who are going back to school.
- David Nuss expressed gratitude for successful procedure done last week.

WORSHIP ON SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 6 AT 9:30 AM

This will be the final Summer Worship, which begins at 9:30 in Pilgrim Hall. Mike Clark is preaching, and Sylvia Ferrell-Jones will be the liturgist. Bob and Carolyn Beckwith will be hosting.

SAVE THE DATE! THE PUMPKINS ARE COMING!

On **October 10th** the pumpkins will be delivered for our annual Pumpkin Patch! Please save the date, as more information will follow regarding the time of delivery.

We are excited about this annual fundraising event!



FROM LISA HULBERT

Christian Education News

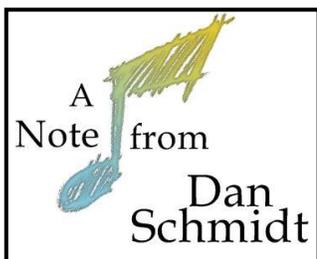
Let's kick things off with a party! Starting September 13 we will be holding a registration party for all children and youth participating in programs here at Pilgrim Congregational! Each week following worship there will be a table devoted to registration during coffee hour. We are working hard to update all our family records so instead of using past registration forms to roll over we would like to start fresh. Along those same lines we are starting fresh with new curriculum for all our Pilgrims. There are three new and improved opportunities to learn about faith. One, the first of every month we will be holding All Education Sundays. This multigenerational program is designed to offer education to disciples of all ages. Starting at 9:30AM I will be hosting multi-age class for children and youth while adults are encouraged to attend Rev. Lauren's study that will cover similar topics. The bridge between the ages will help bring the congregation together as we worship at 10:30AM on those mornings as one Church.

In addition to All Education Sundays we will also be improving upon the Spark curriculum that is being used in Pilgrim Church School. Our students in kindergarten through fourth grade will explore one Bible story for three weeks at a time, attending a different workshop each week. In every workshop, kids open the Bible and dig into the story in lively, age-appropriate ways. Pilgrim Church School will offer art, video, and science workshops each month. This teaching strategy allows students to embrace the Bible stories in all three learning styles, visual, auditory and kinesthetic. The flexibility also offers our teachers more opportunity to balance teaching and worship. Volunteers are only asked to donate three consecutive weeks at a time.

Our students in fifth through seventh grade will also be diving into a hands-on experience of their own. The Christian Education and Youth Committee has spent a lot of time designing a program that would place great emphasis on mission inside and outside the walls of Pilgrim Congregational Church. The new Mission Kids program offers students and volunteers the opportunity to identify problems within our community and use the Bible as a guide to help solve them. Being a pilot program for Pilgrim is exciting and we are looking for input and feedback from all members of the congregation. There will be an informational parent meeting on Sunday, September 27 following worship for all involved. Students will have the opportunity to interact with multiple community organizations as well as many outreach committees that are already established within the church.

This year is an exciting and busy year for Pilgrim Congregational Church! We are in need of many volunteers to ensure these opportunities will be successful. Please email me at education@pilgrimcongregational.org if you are interested in learning how you can help.

Lisa Hulbert
Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministry



As September begins, we swing back into regular mode. Choir rehearsals begin on **Thursday, September 10 at 7:30pm** in Pilgrim Hall. Bells will begin rehearsals on **Sunday, September 13, 11:45am** in the Sanctuary. A new option, a pick-up family choir will rehearse the **last Sunday of the month at 11:45**. This choir will only perform on family Sundays, the first being October 4. All are welcome to participate in these groups. I hope to see you in one of the groups!



VOLUNTEER SIGN UP INFORMATION - UPDATE:

A big thank you to all who have signed up thus far!

We have a total of 126 volunteer slots to fill each year which covers Greeters, Liturgists, and Coffee Hour Hosts. Thus far, we have only 26 spots filled which means we are only 20% to our goal.

Regular Worship Services resume 9/13. We need your support - please sign up today! We will also provide paper and pencil sign-ups on the 13th.

Thank you for all you do for Pilgrim Church!

Dear Pilgrim Church Congregation -

You'll notice that this year will be filled with new and exciting changes. You'll see that our Church School has changed. Our music program has expanded. And Reverend Lauren has even planned some surprises during Sunday worship!

But some things will never change:

- We will always need friendly faces to greet each and every one of us as we enter the church on Sunday morning.
- We will always need a liturgist to guide us through our time together in worship.
- We will always need flowers for our altar
- We will always need a host to help us share coffee, food and friendship after worship.

And we will always need **YOU** to make these things happen!

There is no "right way" to volunteer. Some of us prefer to do everything all on one day several times a year. They will sign up to greet, be a liturgist and host coffee hour on the same day. Others prefer to do one activity multiple times throughout the year (e.g., host Coffee Hour every other month). You decide what works best for you.

Did we mention that there is no experience necessary? Instructions are available for three opportunities and there is always someone available on Sundays to help answer any questions you may have. Sign-ups for Greeters, Liturgists and Coffee Hour Hosts will be available online through SignUp Genius using the link provided in this email. Please note that altar flower donations are being handled offline so please contact Beth Kurth (hughzhoney@gmail.com) or Diane Blair (admin@pilgrimcongregational.org) directly.

Again, if you prefer paper and pencil sign-up for any of these opportunities, we'll have that available too on the 13th.

Thank you for being such an important part of the Pilgrim Church community.

Warmly,

Worship and Music Committee and Vitality Committee

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP!](#)





A CALL FOR ALTAR FLOWERS

Each week, a member of the congregation supplies altar flowers for Sunday's church service. This year, our church secretary, Diane Blair, will be keeping the list of donors and making arrangements with the florist for the delivery of the flowers, giving Ruth Hickox-Litchfield, who has performed this task for many years, a much-deserved rest.

Please let Diane (admin@pilgrimcongregational.org) know if you would like to give the flowers and what date you prefer. Many people choose a date that is a special time of celebration or remembrance. Alternatively, you can speak to Beth Kurth at coffee hour or email her (hughzhoney@gmail.com) and she will pass the information along to Diane. The flowers will be delivered to the church by Wilson's. The donors may take the flowers after church, or if they prefer, the flowers can be left to be delivered to someone who cannot attend the service by the Care Committee. You can let Diane or Beth know whether you are taking or leaving the flowers, and what the dedication of the flowers should be.

The cost of the flowers this year is a very reasonable \$40. To pay for them, make a check out to Pilgrim Church with "altar flowers" on the memo line, and either put it in the offering plate or mail it to the church. Giving flowers is a wonderful way to contribute to the beauty of our church service.



REMINDER: SAVE THE DATE!

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 20

The annual Pilgrim Church BBQ will be on Sunday, September 20 following the Service of Blessing. We hope you are planning on joining in the fun!

To access the calendar for Pilgrim Church, please click [here](#). Thank you.

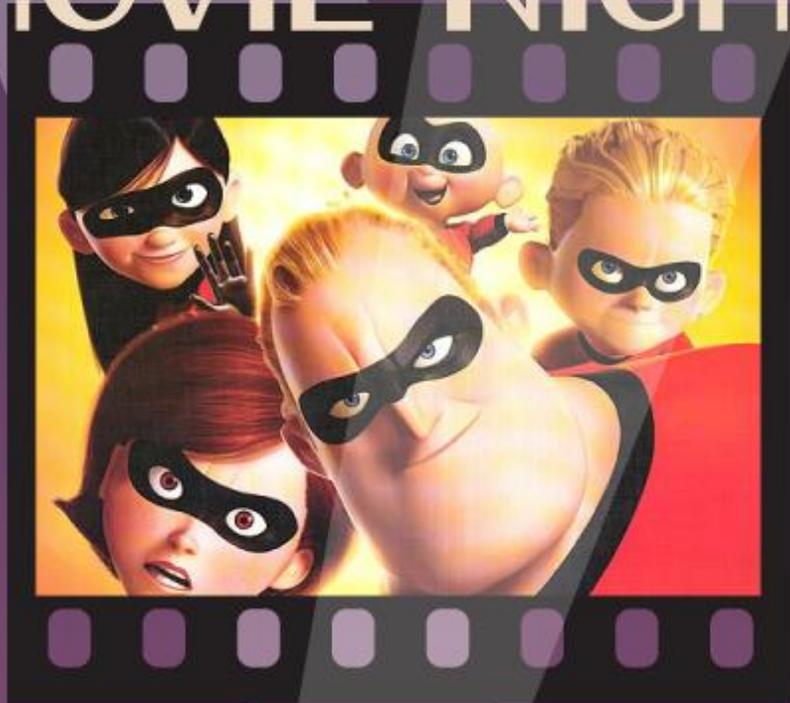


REMINDER: Regular Office Hours resume on **Tuesday, September 8.**

DEADLINE FOR PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Please note that the deadline for the October issue of Pilgrim's Progress will be **September 25.** Thank you!

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT



**FRIDAY
SEPTEMBER 18
7:00 PM**

Front Lawn — Pilgrim Church
55 Coolidge Ave., Lexington

**SHOWING:
The Incredibles**

Free popcorn
& beverages
Bring a blanket
or a chair.

HOSTED BY
PILGRIM
Congregational Church

