



Pilgrims' Progress



The Monthly News of the People of Pilgrim Lutheran Church
Warwick, Rhode Island
February 2012

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INSIDE THIS ISSUE

FROM PASTOR KOHL	P. 1
PASTORAL ACTS	P. 2
FROM PASTOR HARRIS	P. 3
CHURCH NOTES	P. 4 - 5
SYNOD BISHOP ELECTION MEETING	P. 6
A WORD OF THANKS...	P. 7
WAS IST DAS?	P. 8
FEBRUARY READINGS	P. 9
FEBRUARY SERVERS	P. 10
FEBRUARY CALENDAR	P. 11

2012 Offering Envelopes are available in the narthex—please take yours home as soon as possible. Thank you!

March Pilgrim's Progress Deadline: Wednesday, February 15!

Please e-mail submissions to Elisabeth at both parishasst@pilgrimlutheranri.org and eremmingvergun@cox.net or place in her mailbox in the church office.
Many thanks!

Meet Your Pilgrim Family is taking this month off and will return to the March issue of the Progress.

From Pastor Kohl

"Christianity conceals within itself a germ hostile to the church." Those were words which Dietrich Bonhoeffer, a Lutheran pastor in Berlin, said to a group of high school students in 1928. Bonhoeffer was eventually put to death in April 1945, not because he was hostile to the church, but because he was involved in a plan to assassinate Adolf Hitler.

Bonhoeffer raised a point which Luther tried to make in the 1500s and others have sought to help the church to know down through the centuries: the church as an institution is always subject to evaluation or criticism. In other words, the church stands under the Gospel. The church's life is determined by and exists for the Gospel of Jesus Christ.

That truth contains a whole lot of action in it. It says that we cannot ever have the perfect church or congregation. It says that change and evaluation will always be a part of our life in the community of Jesus. It says that God is the one in charge of the church—not the pastor, not the council, not the most popular opinion of the congregation.

This is humbling. To admit that we exist for the purpose of someone else, to confess that something other than ourselves is our reason for being, is to stand in a place, not of pride, but of service to the world.

Of course, we can get off course and begin to think that the church is about us and what we like, what we find convenient. This is dangerous thinking that causes the church to become more of a club than the church. Jesus is the one who determines how we do

our ministry. Jesus is the one through the Holy Spirit who is leading us into the future.

This June at our synod assembly in Springfield, Massachusetts, we will elect a new bishop for the New England Synod. Just as a congregation needs to be aware of God's call to new life and service, so too, we need to pray for our synod as we elect a new bishop to lead us in our ministry through these six New England states (and a few congregations in upper state New York). We need to pray about how we, both as a congregation and as the synod, will be connected to the ministry of our national church, the Evangelical Lutheran Church in America (ELCA) and our worldwide ministry through the Lutheran World Federation. Prayer is what matters.

So for us, standing under the evaluation and call of the Gospel of Jesus, prayer must be essential. As a congregation, we cannot please God unless we talk with and listen for God in prayer. But we also need to listen and talk with each other to discern the gifts we have and the need we see in our communities. What does it mean to be a follower of Jesus here and now? Answering that question may bring changes to our life together; it is the risk of faithful obedience we take in being true to our faith.

In hope,

Paster Kohl



Pastoral Acts

Funerals



Carol E. Hicks Ebank
Paul F. "Chip" LaFountain
Patricia O'Sullivan
James E. Peckham
Samuel E. Robinson



WONDERING "WEATHER" OR NOT THERE'S CHURCH?

In case of emergency road conditions, the postponing of Sunday services will be announced on television Channel 10. Information will also be available on the voice mail when you call the church office.

What we have usually done is reschedule the service for the following Monday evening at 7:00 p.m. if we cannot meet on Sunday. This year we will also add a noon spoken service in the chapel on Mondays following any Sunday we need to postpone our worship.

ASH WEDNESDAY IS FEBRUARY 22, 2012

Ash Wednesday falls on **February 22** this year. Be sure to mark your calendar, and plan to join the Pilgrim community for worship and to receive ashes at 12:00 noon or 7:00 p.m. that day. Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent.



FROM PASTOR HARRIS

Dear Friends of Christ,

As most of you know, over the past couple of months I've had the opportunity to go to my mother's house and see my siblings and their families. A highlight at these times is The Dinner. We are fortunate. My mother's table is large enough to seat me, my brother and sister, their spouses, five nieces and nephews (ranging in age from 2 to 10), my mother, and one of her friends. There is no kids' table. It can get a bit chaotic. It certainly gets a little loud. Bravely, my mother puts out the good china, and stemware and silver is on the table. Add poppers to Christmas dinner and there can be mayhem. Things do get spilled, although I must admit that my fuzzy hands are the biggest culprit. I do not know how my sister keeps it together—if she gets to eat more than two bites without interruption, it is a genuine miracle. Sometimes there is crying. I love those dinners. We get to be family.

It amazes me to see the patience and love of my family as we gather for this important time of being together. It is fun to reflect on previous years. How old we were, how old the children were. We learn how to do it by doing it. We help each other out. Family members offer to serve portions to me, just as the younger kids are served. Sometimes the younger ones do not like the food, and of course some are asking to leave the table constantly, or just crying (that is what two year olds sometimes do). One starts realizing that some of the younger ones like potatoes as much as the older ones. Pleases and thank yous are in evidence. Everyone knows that Grandma (my mother) prays the prayer. I get to see my little brother and little sister be awesome parents.

For me, church has been like this. I grew up going to Sunday School right after church. No kids' table. I am sure it was not easy. My father was an airline pilot, so this meant at least half the Sundays it was my mother and the three of us kids. We had infrequent communion (first, third, and fifth Sundays). There was no children's message. Sermons were regularly twenty minutes or more. Without a doubt, I had no idea what was going on for a long time (one might still make that argument).

Over time, that changed, just like the participants at family dinners. Church worship taught me how to sing. It taught me how to pray. I began to hear some of the same stories read in church that I learned in Sunday School. On Communion Sundays, I got to go up for a blessing, finally sharing the bread and wine in eighth grade. Thankfully, that age barrier has changed. It would have been awesome to receive communion at an earlier age! I could even listen to the sermon. But I was a part of the work of the church, the liturgy. I learned how to worship by doing it. I am fortunate that I grew up being at church on Sundays for as long as I can remember. If I had not, I do not think I would be a pastor today.

The God revealed through Jesus loves children. Loves us all, in fact. One of my touchstone bible passages is the end of the eighth chapter of Romans. Nothing can separate us from God's love in Jesus. Not peril, nor nakedness, nor sword, not heights nor depths, nor powers. I am convinced age cannot separate us either. Not old age, nor youth, not drooling, nor yelling, nor confusion, not mental faculties, not disease, or non-functioning bodies. Nothing.

God's peace and blessings be unto you,

Pastor Harris



Are you thinking of dedicating
Altar Flowers
in honor or memory of loved ones?

The following upcoming dates are available:

February 5th
February 26th
March 4th
March 18th
March 25th

Simply make your request by filling out an Altar Flower envelope and placing it in the offering plate or in the Altar Guild mailbox in the church office.

Thank you!

Is God Calling You to Serve as a Eucharistic Minister?

Sharing communion with people who are homebound or in the hospital is an important part of the ministry of Pilgrim Church. It is a way of reminding ourselves on a Sunday morning that the church is bigger than just us who gather. It is also a reminder to people who cannot get to worship that they are not forgotten.

If you would like to serve Jesus and his church in this way, please let the Pastors or Gayle Sangster know. Here are some gifts you will need: time and the ability to listen to and care about others. It's that simple! We will set up a time for training for carrying out this ministry.



Chris Litton Accepts Call to Two- Point Parish in Maryland

Greetings Pilgrim Family,

As some of you may now know, on Sunday, January 15, I led worship and preached a call sermon at Israel's Creek Parish. This is what is called a two-point parish (two congregations that share a pastor). After the services, both congregations voted on whether to call me as their pastor.

They both voted to call me and I have accepted the call. This means that I will start as their pastor on February 1, 2012. These congregations are not far from our home so we will not have to relocate. I will not be ordained until later—the date, place, and time has not been determined. I will let you all know as soon as I am notified of this information.

There have been times when it felt like this was not going to happen. This is the time that I have called in prayer "my desert time." Through all of this and throughout my seminary education, you have been so supportive of me and my call.

I have appreciated all the support that you have given me through financial assistance, prayer, caring, emotional support, and guidance. I cannot thank you all enough and give thanks to God for you for walking with me through this process. May God continue to bless your ministry.

Yours in Christ,

Chris Litton

Prom Dresses Needed!

Elizabeth Harrington, a student at Wagner College, is collecting gently used prom style dresses (long and short) for a community service project she is running through **March 11, 2012**.

If you have a dress or dresses you would like to donate, please place a label "dress donation" on the item(s) and hang them in the coat closet closest to the ramp entrance at church. Thank you very much!

Thank You!

Dear People of Pilgrim Church:

Thank you for all the great cookies and glögg and cards and the generous gift you shared with my family and me at Christmas. Your kindness is always appreciated. I count you among signs of God's grace in my life. May God's blessings and peace be with you through 2012 as we continue our journey in Christ's service.

With prayers,

Pastor Kohl

Dear fellow Pilgrim People,

Thank you so much for the many cards and gifts you showered upon me this Christmas, both individually and collectively. Your generosity and love is really quite something. It was really quite wonderful to celebrate the birth of our Savior with you once again ten years later.

Thank you and God's blessing,

Pastor Rob Harris

Thank you all so much, my Pilgrim Friends, for the blessings of all of your beautiful gifts, delicious goodies, cards, and well-wishes for me and my family at Christmastime. I look forward to and am so grateful for another year of ministry with you here at Pilgrim! May 2012 bring you much joy and many blessings.

God's grace and peace to you all,

Elisabeth

ANNA'S PLACE

Food Pantry



If you are interested in restarting Anna's Place, our food pantry at Pilgrim Church, please meet with me on **Monday, February 13 at 7:00 p.m.** This will involve a major commitment from someone or a small group of people to coordinate this ministry. We will have the guidance and prayers of Jim who has helped in this ministry in the past. Please let me know if you are interested in being part of this.

With thanks,
Pastor Kohl

Resume and Interview Coaching Seminar on Saturday 2/11/12

Pilgrim Lutheran will host a resume and interview coaching skill building seminar on Saturday, February 11, 2012 from 9:30 a.m. to 1:00 p.m. This seminar is **free** and open to the public.

Joyce L'Heureux, M.A. (*Rhetoric*), Director of Human Resources at ULTRA Scientific, Communication and Persuasion Adjunct Lecturer at the University of Rhode Island and News Correspondent for the Pawtucket Times will give an hour and a half group seminar followed by one-on-one resume assessment and personal coaching to build interview skills.

Please contact the church office at 401-739-2937 to register for this seminar.

Meeting to Prepare for the Election of a Bishop



Sunday, February 12, 2012

**Greater Rhode Island Conference Meeting of the New
England Synod, ELCA**

**Gloria Dei Church in Providence
3:30-5:30 PM**

The purpose of this conference meeting is to broaden the conversation begun at the congregational level about the New England Synod and its new Bishop. In addition to all rostered leaders, congregations are urged to send those who have been or may be interested in serving as Voting Members to the June Synod Assembly to this meeting. The meeting is open to all.

There are two parts to the meeting, the first being a Bible study of passages related to leadership. The second will be to consider the four questions contained on the congregational DVD. (This can be viewed on Pilgrim's web page.) All attending will be asked to sit with people from other congregations so that "Synod" can be experienced during the process.

The agenda for the meeting is posted on the office bulletin board for those who wish to look at the passages before the meeting or for those who cannot attend and who may wish to forward their thoughts to the Ad Hoc Committee via the New England Synod office.

A sign-up sheet is also posted on the bulletin board if you are interested in attending this important meeting. Please speak to Pastor Kohl or Pastor Harris should you have any questions or require further information.

A Word of...



...from the Sendlings

Miriam and I were deeply touched by the kind words and wonderful notes we received at the Christmas program this year. We thank the congregation for those memories and we thank the Nelsons for being the official historians of the Church School. The Nelson girls, along with Mom, were always there to help and who could ever forget their Dad, Arthur, who was the carpenter I never could be for the Sunday School. He always had a smile for me.

We could never begin to list the teachers, many of whom taught the entire time we spent as Superintendents, but they were the work ethic which never faltered. I could never forget the members of each and every Senior class. Those teens and young adults provided the inspiration and physical energy the Sunday School needed. Frankly, in thinking back all those years, I can't recall one child or teenager or young adult who I would not be proud to work beside.

Here is my personal favorite true story which I offer as a memory of the faithful nature of the children of our Church School:

It was the day of a Christmas program, many years ago. It was snowing hard and Miriam and I, along with all the teachers, were worried about attendance. Two sisters, (who will remain unnamed due to my poor memory), ages six and eight, were not there at 3:30. The program started at 4:00. Miriam was trying to figure out who could fit in their costumes. One was Mary and one was an Angel, so their parts were crucial.

Then, at 3:55, they came running into Luther Hall! Their little party shoes were caked with snow, their cheeks were red as Rudolph's nose, and they were so concerned that they might be too late. Their Mom's car had broken down at Hoxie four corners. In those days, it was still safe on Warwick Ave. for children to walk, so their Mom told them to "run as fast as they could" to Church. They made it on time and gave Miriam and me the most special memory of unspoiled love and true Christian fellowship that we could ever imagine.

Thank you all for the thoughts and kind words and wonderful memories.

Bob & Miriam

Was ist das? **The Light of Epiphany**

Winter is a season in which we particularly appreciate light. For the light that we had in abundance during the summer months gradually diminishes until December 21—the winter solstice and the shortest day of the year. Having once basked in summer's sunshine, the increased darkness of winter, and the more indirect angle of the sun's rays upon the earth, bring to us cold and even frigid temperatures. We bundle up, turn up the heat, and hibernate inside, even as we think about those less fortunate than ourselves—who have no homes and huddle on street corners to keep warm. And diminished light and heat also set the stage for a common type of depression known as SAD (Seasonal Affective Disorder), from which millions in the north suffer year after year.

But there is another kind of darkness that is not so seasonal. It is the darkness within our minds, our psyches, our spirits, that keeps us from seeing the Light—God's light, even when it is right there before us. It is our own brokenness and focus on self that gets in our way and causes us to turn to gods of our own making. It is into this darkness that Jesus—God incarnate, word made flesh, light of the world—comes to be with all people. The light that lit up that small holy birth scene in Bethlehem has now become widely manifest during the season that the church calls Epiphany. The light leads us with the foreign Magi to the Christ child. It brings us to the Jordan and Jesus' baptism, where he is revealed as God's son. And it leads us to the wedding feast and miracle at Cana, where Jesus turned water into wine.

Now, darkness was no small thing for the people of Bible days. There were no electric lights you could turn on to place things back in the light. And as we know, in the darkness imaginations can often go wild, anxieties can increase, and senses other than sight can be heightened. We sometimes hear sounds, see movements, and feel things that simply aren't there. We say to our kids as a term of bedtime endearment, "Sleep tight, don't let the bed bugs bite", but that may actually be a real fear for them, and maybe for us, too. You remember that even one of the ten plagues that God sent upon Egypt was the plague of darkness. Darkness has been plaguing people's imaginations and lives for centuries. Into this darkened, often scary world came God's word made flesh in Jesus the Christ. The Gospel of John tells us that this Word came as a light shining in the darkness and that importantly it was a light that the darkness was not able to put out. There cannot even be any electrical power failures that will be able to affect Jesus as the light of the world.

Light and darkness have been important religious themes down through the centuries. There have been many religions that have looked at light itself with its bright and shining rays as divine and worthy of being worshipped. The light of Jesus, however, is not divine in itself, but rather is able to reveal Jesus' identity as the incarnate Son of God—as the one who gives life and allows us to see God's truth even in the darkest of places. And so the focus of the season of Epiphany for us is one of seeing Jesus as he is revealed in our own lives, as well as a providing a time and a theme for making him known to all the nations. Epiphany is a time for mission and evangelism—for the spreading of the gospel news of new life and light in Christ. And central for us in the message of Epiphany is that we be Christ's lights in the world—beginning to bring to fulfillment what the congregational representative holding that lit baptismal candle said on our behalf: "Let your life so shine before others that they might see your good works and glorify your Father who is in heaven."

Karin Kohl

Sunday Readings – February 2012

February 5 – Fifth Sunday after the Epiphany

Isaiah 40:21-32

God's perspective and ours is not the same. Being God's people means seeking to be conformed to God's way of seeing the world.

1 Corinthians 9:16-23

Paul reminds the Church in Corinth that the gospel is the most important thing in the life of the church. All things must be shaped by the gospel among God's people.

Mark 1:29-39

Jesus does something that we might think not very wise. After winning popularity for his healing of people who were sick, he announces that he will move on to other towns. Walking away from success is not in the play books of business and corporations, but that is exactly what Jesus does. Like him, the church is called not to focus on "successes" but rather to continue faithful ministry for the sake of the world.

February 12 – Sixth Sunday after the Epiphany

2 Kings 5:1-14

Leprosy is a common theme in the readings this Sunday. Naaman, the leader of the Syrian army, is cured of this disease through the directions of Elisha. In practical terms, this means that Naaman is able to live among others once again.

1 Corinthians 9:24-27

Living something other than our own wishes or prejudices is an essential identification of the followers of Jesus.

Mark 1:40-45

Jesus cleanses a leper restoring him to the community from which he came. This is what Jesus does: he builds community by healing and forgiving.

February 19 – The Transfiguration of Our Lord

2 Kings 2:1-12

Elijah's ministry ends and Elisha's ministry begins.

2 Corinthians 4:3-6

Paul reminds his readers that the center of ministry in the church is not the people who do the ministry but the one in whose name the ministry is done, Jesus.

Mark 9:2-9

As at his baptism, Jesus is once again declared to be the beloved of God. This time in a vision of Jesus' heavenly glory and splendor shared with three of the disciples Jesus has called. Mark connects this vision to the death and resurrection of Jesus as a reminder to us that the cross was an essential part of Jesus being God's beloved.

February 26 – First Sunday in Lent

Genesis 9:8-17

This is the ending of the flood story with Noah. Here God makes promises about the future, about a coming new relationship with the human family.

1 Peter 3:18-22

Jesus' suffering provides our assurance before God. All Jesus won is given to us in baptism, an act that shapes our lives around faith and trust in God.

Mark 1:9-15

We cannot know God's power and presence without struggle. Jesus willingly enters into a period of testing in the wilderness both to discern God's will as well as to strengthen his commitment to God's path of service rather than power as a way of redemption.

SERVING in FEBRUARY 2012

GREETERS

February 5	Bonnie Abols
February 12	Bruce & Elaine Belvin
February 19	Deborah Vilardi
February 26	Pam Himebaugh

READERS

February 5	Roy Wagner
February 12	Joanne Lozy
February 19	Sylvia Collins
February 26	Bill Brinson

ALTAR GUILD

February 5	Lisa Harrington Debbie Perri
February 12	Mary Brinson Pam Himebaugh
February 19	Jennifer Cardillo Pat Frazier Marion Kullberg
February 26	Jo-Anne Doyle Muriel Linden Linda Phillips

CONFIRMATION DINNERS

Tuesday Evenings

February 7	Cryan & Phillips Families
February 14	No meal Service/Fellowship
February 21	No class - school vacation
February 28	Diane & Jason White

ASSISTING MINISTERS

February 5	Karin Kohl
February 12	Mark Cheney
February 19	<i>Needed...please sign up!</i>
February 26	John Carlson

EUCCHARISTIC MINISTERS

Eucharistic Ministers are needed for the month of February. Please sign up on the sheet posted on the office bulletin board, or speak to Pastor Kohl, Pastor Harris, or Gayle Sangster for more information.

USHERS

February 5	Elaine Belvin Bill Dugan Pam Himebaugh
February 12	Dave Heden John Merrill Deb Vilardi
February 19	Joanne Lozy John Gunning Roy Wager
February 26	Jo-Anne Doyle Ron Fish Linda Hughes

COMMUNION ASSISTANTS

February 5	Stephanie Johnson Paula Metivier Alyssa Morales <i>One additional Communion Assistant is needed...please sign up!</i>
February 12	Karin Kohl <i>Three additional Communion Assistants are needed...please sign up!</i>
February 19	Bill Dugan Joyce L'Heureux <i>Two additional Communion Assistants are needed...please sign up!</i>
February 26	Tina Carlson Karin Kohl

ALTAR FLOWERS

February 5	Elisabeth Remming Vergun
February 12	The Brinson Family
February 19	Millie Johnson & Family
February 26	Available

ACOLYTES

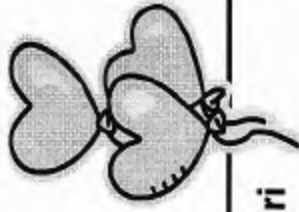
February 5	Matt Sangster
February 12	Sarah Lowell
February 19	Madison Almonte Alexis Olson
February 26	Stephen Johnson



February 2012

Pilgrim Lutheran Church

1817 Warwick Avenue Warwick, Rhode Island 02889 (401) 739-2937

www.pilgrimlutheranri.org



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
 5 Epiphany 5 8:00 Holy Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Holy Communion Installation of Council	Church Office Hours: Tuesday through Friday 9:30 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.	6 9:30 Pastors' Pericope 1:00 Shawl Ministry 6:30 Confirmation — The Covenant with Abraham 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	1 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	2 The Presentation of Our Lord 9 7:00 Worship, Music & ARTS	3 PASTOR'S DAY OFF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous 10 PASTOR'S DAY OFF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	4 9:00—1:00 Resume Workshop
12 Epiphany 6 8:00 Holy Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Holy Communion	13 7:00 Food Pantry Meeting 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	14 VALENTINES DAY  9:30 Pastors' Pericope 6:30 Confirmation — Service/Fellowship	15 Pilgrims' Progress Deadline 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	16 7:00 Congregation Council Meeting	17 PASTOR'S DAY OFF 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	18
19 Transfiguration of Our Lord 8:00 Holy Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Holy Communion	20 PRESIDENTS' DAY CHURCH OFFICE CLOSED 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	21 9:30 Pastors' Pericope 1:00 Shawl Ministry <i>No Confirmation</i> <i>School Vacation</i>	22 ASH WEDNESDAY 12:00 Holy Communion 7:00 Holy Communion	23	24 PASTOR'S DAY OFF <i>St. Matthias, Apostle</i> 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	25
26 First Sunday in Lent 8:00 Holy Communion 9:00 Sunday School 10:00 Holy Communion	27 7:00 Narcotics Anonymous	28 9:30 Pastors' Pericope 6:30 Confirmation — The Covenant with Moses	29 7:00 Choir Rehearsal	