



# Pilgrim Church



UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

## December 2019 NEWSLETTER

### ***News from the Moderator and the Search Committee***

We are excited to announce our long wait for a new pastor is almost over.

The Search Committee met on Tuesday, November 19, and selected the final candidate for our settled Pastor position. The next step in the process, according to our Church Constitution and Bylaws, is to vote on his candidacy. Voting is open only to Members and Associate Members of Pilgrim Church.

His name cannot yet be disclosed. Once elected he will then give appropriate notice to his present church.

Current plans call for a “meet and greet” on Saturday, December 14, from 2:00 pm-4:00 pm in the Community Center.

On Sunday, December 15, we will have a combined church service at 9:00 am, at which time the applicant will address our congregation and deliver the message.

**Immediately** following that service a special called meeting of our Pilgrim Congregation will occur. The sole purpose will be to vote by secret ballot, ‘Yea’ or ‘Nay’ on whether we issue a ‘call’ to this candidate to become our settled pastor.

You must be present to vote!

So, please mark your calendars for these two very important meetings!

Don Anderson  
Moderator, Search Committee Chair





## Pastor Mike's Missive

"O come, O come, Emmanuel and ransom captive Israel"

You may have noted that for the past few Sundays I have been focusing on the words of the prophet Isaiah as he voices the words of the Lord God:

*A shoot shall come out from the stump of Jesse, and a branch shall grow out of his roots. The spirit of the Lord shall rest on him, the spirit of wisdom and understanding, spirit of counsel and might, the spirit of knowledge and the fear of the Lord.* - Isaiah 11

*Here is my servant, whom I uphold, my chosen, in whom my soul delights; I have put my spirit upon him; he will bring forth justice to the nations. I am the Lord, I have called you in righteousness, I have taken you by the hand and kept you; I have given you as a covenant to the people, a light to the nations, to open the eyes that are blind, to bring out the prisoners from the dungeon, from the prison those who sit in darkness. See, the former things have come to pass, and new things I now declare; before they spring forth, I tell you of them. Sing to the Lord a new song, his praise from the end of the earth!* -Isaiah 42

These Bible verses herald *Emmanuel*:

Behold, a virgin shall bring forth a son and his name shall be *Emmanuel*/(which means "God with us."). -Isaiah 7:14

...an angel of the Lord appeared to him in a dream and said, "Joseph, son of David, do not be afraid to take Mary as your wife, for the child conceived in her is from the Holy Spirit. She will bear a son, and you are to name him Jesus, for he will save his people from their sins." All this took place to fulfill what had been spoken by the Lord through the prophet: "Behold, the virgin shall conceive and bear a son, and they shall name him *Emmanuel*,"

which means, "*God is with us.*" -Matthew 1: 20-23  
(note differences in translation from the Isaiah verse above)

*Emmanuel, Joshua, Yeshua*-Jesus' name in Aramaic, which he would have been called--/*esous* (Greek), *Iesos* (Roman), Jesus (English).

Through the prophets, God refers to Israel as "*A Light to the Nations*," in other words: His people, their religion, their God showing and enlightening *all* peoples. In the New Testament, Jesus Emmanuel is called "*The Light of the world*," an even more compelling metaphor.

As we enter Advent (Dec 1-Dec 24) and celebrate the coming of the Lord, how appropriate that he was born at the time of the winter solstice, the turning point of the year (in the northern hemisphere) when we are blessed with more light every passing day.

Jesus represents fulfillment of the "*New Covenant of Jeremiah*" in which God promised to remember our sins and iniquities no more. Upon his shoulders He assumed the sins of the world and as such --as is so eloquently addressed in the poem "Footprints in the Sand"--He will carry us when the trials and tribulations of the world weigh us down: all we have to do is ask Him, "Help me Jesus, light my path, help me carry my burdens, calm my soul."

May all of you have a blessed Christmas ("Mass of Christ") and may memories of Christmases past be in your thoughts as we enter this 2019 Advent season and may "*The Light of the World*" who God sent to save us all be with you and cast His light upon you throughout the rest of your Earthly lives.

GOD BLESS,  
Pastor Mike



## Pledge Cards for Next Year

We continue to welcome your pledge cards for the year 2020. These cards are essential for preparing the church budget. Extra cards are available in the Narthex.



## Altar Flowers for Next Year

Save your special date now! If you would like to place flowers on the altar, please make note of it on the bulletin board in the Narthex or by calling the church office. Dates are available for December and next year, 2020. Mark your date now! A single arrangement will cost \$25.



## Prayer Shawls

Do you have a dear friend or relative who needs the comfort and strength of a prayer shawl? Please call the church and we would be happy to share one with you.



## Symphony of Trees

Good News Club has entered a tree in the Symphony of Trees! Voting continues thru Sunday, December 8. Everyday 10:00 am-7:00 pm at First Baptist, Punta Gorda.



## Christmas 2019

**Thursday, December 5**

5:00 pm

Joyful Noise

Christmas Program & Dinner

**Sunday, December 8**

8:00 am

Cantata, "Bethlehem's Child"

**Saturday, December 14**

9:00 am—7:00 pm

Salvation Army Bell Ringing

**Sunday, December 15**

11:00 am

Christmas Caroling

**Thursday, December 19**

10:30 am

Christmas Service at South Port

**Tuesday, December 24**

6:00 pm and 8:00 pm

Christmas Eve Service

**Christmas Day**

Luke 2:9-11

An angel of the Lord appeared to them, and the glory of the Lord shone around them, and they were terrified. But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord."



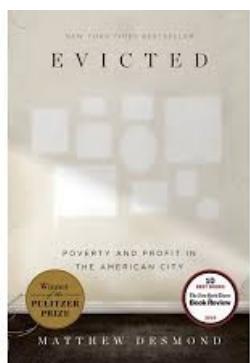
## Pilgrim Women's Fellowship

Christmas is a time for fellowship and celebration as we host a Christmas Potluck Lunch at the home of Marge Dingee. It will be held on Monday, December 2, at 11:00 am. (If you have not done so already, please call Marge at 941-766-9593 to RSVP). We will have our traditional gift exchange so bring your wrapped gift of a \$15 value.

Our daytrip to Selby Gardens is scheduled for December 12. We will carpool from the church at 9:00 am and return at 3:00 pm. Admission is \$20, and we will also eat out in Sarasota. What a great opportunity to see the lovely Christmas themed Botanical Gardens!

Save the dates of January 6 for our next regular meeting and the Regional Meeting of UCC Women that we host on Saturday, January 18.

The next Book Club will meet on January 23, when we will review *EVICTED: Poverty and Profit in the American City* by Matthew Desmond. This is a UCC-All Church Read for 2020.



Finally, a big thank you to Pilgrim women who organized, baked, and tended the Family Fun Fest Bake Sale.

## Pictures from 2019



# Keep The Lights On



We fell further behind in our pledge commitment contributions for the year. We are now behind by \$25,367. Also, the loose offerings are \$12,008 below budget. I have faith that the last two months of the year will turn this around.

We are in the middle of our 2020 budget process and continue to "navigate" the financial potholes. Next year we will hopefully have a full time pastor, which will mean a significant increase in compensation/benefits to our spending. Also, our declining active membership results in lower pledges. This combination will result in a deficit the Finance Ministry and Council will have to examine closely. Your faith commitment will be important to the process.

Vision2020 continues to have a goal to pay off the mortgage. That balance is now \$122,175. There are \$211,759 in pledges to be received before the end of the campaign. Consider making your pledge payments by December 31 and get a tax deduction this year.



The Christmas Program will be on Thursday, December 5, at 5:00 pm. Dinner with Santa will be in the Community Center immediately following the program. We are hoping that by combining the two events it will be easier for families to attend both events during this busy season. **You are invited and we hope to see YOU there!**

Cynthia Poudrette, Director of Joyful Noise

The Finance Ministry still needs members. Contact the office or Don Anderson if you have an interest in attending our meeting on the third Monday of each month.

The Church needs a new Assistant Treasurer. This is an elected position and has important functions to maintain the proper level of internal control. Please consider this opportunity to serve.

Paul Whittaker

## MONTHLY FINANCIAL SNAPSHOT

<u>General Fund</u>	<u>October</u>	<u>Annual</u>
	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>
Pledge Offerings	\$159,627	\$225,000
Loose Offerings	\$ 19,187	\$ 37,500

### Missions

Pledges	\$38,220	\$ 54,200
Mission Payouts	\$30,807	\$ 54,200

Mortgage Balance      \$122,175

### 2020Vision

Campaign Pledges	\$ 769,549
Total Cash Receipts	<u>557,790</u>
Balance of Pledges due	<u>\$ 211,759</u>



Pilgrim church's Salvation Army Bell Ringing will be on Saturday December 14, from 9:00 am until 7:00 pm at the Publix on Peachland BLVD. You may sign up on the schedule in the Narthex or by calling the Church Office. There are one hour time slots.



December 1 – Help me use my gifts from God to live a life of significance.  
December 8 – Invite the Prince of Peace into your life to reign this Christmas.  
December 15- Celebrate Christmas knowing that God loves you, is with you, and for you.  
December 22 – Thank the Lord for coming in the flesh to save you.  
December 29 - Help me to be proactive in my prayers as I enter a new decade 2020.



Christmas Poinsettias are available this year for \$9.00. You may indicate a purchase in memory of, honor of or to the Glory of God.

Poinsettias may be picked up after the Christmas Eve service.

Return this form with payment to the Church office or place it in the offering plate by December 10.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

No. of poinsettias : \_\_\_\_\_

Dedicated to \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Dedicated                                 | <input type="radio"/> Red   |
| <input type="radio"/> in Memory of        | <input type="radio"/> White |
| <input type="radio"/> In Honor of         | <input type="radio"/> Pink  |
| <input type="radio"/> To the Glory of God |                             |
| <br>                                      |                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Deliver to Shut-In  |                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Will pick up        |                             |

Dedicated to \_\_\_\_\_

- |   |                             |
|---|-----------------------------|
| Dedicated                                 | <input type="radio"/> Red   |
| <input type="radio"/> in Memory of        | <input type="radio"/> White |
| <input type="radio"/> In Honor of         | <input type="radio"/> Pink  |
| <input type="radio"/> To the Glory of God |                             |
| <br>                                      |                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Deliver to Shut-In  |                             |
| <input type="radio"/> Will pick up        |                             |



Meals cost \$5 for adults and \$2 for children. All meals are accompanied by salad, bread, drink and dessert. This ministry depends on ample volunteers to prep, cook, and clean up afterwards. Stop by the kitchen and find a way to get involved! Doors open at 6:00 pm.

12/4: Meatloaf, Mashed Potatoes with Gravy, Vegetable

12/11: Spaghetti with Meatballs



Pastor Ken's Wednesday night Bible study in December will focus on the Advent and Christmas stories. Please gather in the Library at 6:30 pm for the first three Wednesdays in December.



## 2020 Apostles Build

The Apostles Build with Habitat for Humanity is a ministry with 12 churches to build a home. It is a partnership ministry with the churches, Habitat, and home owner. Pilgrim Church is one of the churches participating in the 2020 Apostles Build. We are pleased to inform the congregation of this years future homeowner: Dawn Skelton, a single mother with two sons. She has been an outstanding Christian teacher for over fifteen years. The last five years Dawn has been with our very own Joyful Noise Learning Center. We hope to introduce her to the whole congregation on Sunday, December 15.

The 2020 Apostle Build will kick off with the slab blessing on Friday, January 10, at 9:00 am. The location of this years build is: 18105 Vanderbilt AVE, Port Charlotte, FL 33948.

Pilgrim Church's painting day will be Saturday, March 7. We will let the congregation know later the time and how to sign up. A t-shirt will be given to each participant. We look forward to partnering with Dawn, other churches, and habitat in this important ministry, providing a home for Dawn Skelton and her two sons.



### Car Magnets

We have Pilgrim United Church of Christ "Keep Christ in Christmas" magnets available in the Church Office for \$5 each.

These are strong enough to be used on your vehicle and any where else you wish to share the message.

Save the Date of Sunday, December 15, when the next Tithe Offering will be distributed to Outreach Ministries of Pilgrim Church.

This gift will be comprised of the tithes from 2020 giving for the months of August, September, October, and November.

Additionally, there will be a pay down on the principal of the mortgage on the Joyful Noise Education Building. Be sure you are present as we experience God's blessings on Pilgrim to do "much, much more than we could think or dream of."

**2020**  
**VISION**  
His Mission. Our Focus.



In October we served 86 families, 218 adults and 85 children. Our total expense for October was \$501.24.

In November we had one very rewarding pantry day . We served 61 families which included 150 adults and 81 children. In addition, to the usual items, we distributed 86 Thanksgiving baskets to families in need. Total expenses for November, which included normal distribution items, Thanksgiving Fixin's items and Turkey certificates came to a total of \$1,871.41.

We give thanks for Boy Scout Troop 351 and our area residents for the items collected with Scouting for Food. Also, we want to thank all the volunteers who helped sort and put away the food items. Many hands made light work.

On Friday, November 15, the Joyful Noise students and staff brought food for our pantry. It was wonderful seeing the children bringing their food, placing it on the table and marching through the coffee room. Thank you Joyful Noise parents, students and staff for all the food donated and again we thank the volunteers that helped separate the food, put it away and make the "Fixin's Bags".

At this time of gratitude we would like to express a huge thank you to our Food Pantry volunteers, without their dedication there would not be a Pilgrim Food Pantry. And a **HUGE THANK YOU** to our Pilgrim Church family who offered monetary and food donations throughout the year.

It has been a rewarding but hard year for us as we carry on the work of Karen & Dave Rosser. They had everything down to a science and they are truly missed. Thank you for your continued support. There is a need for the Food Pantry in

our community and being a Missions Outreach, we will continue to put forth our efforts.

For a treat in December, the Food Pantry team would like to add a sweet treat to the usual items dispersed. Please donate cake mixes to be shared at the December 16, Food Pantry.

The Lemon Bay Sunrise Rotary club will be packing meals for hungry students. This program is the 3rd annual Holidays Without Hunger Food Packing Event to prepare over 200,000 meals for hungry children in our county. The Back Pack Kids will benefit from the program along with our Food Pantry.

God

Bless

You,





**Pilgrim Church**  
A Congregation of  
The United Church of Christ  
24515 Rampart Boulevard,  
Port Charlotte, FL 33980  
941-629-2633  
[www.pilgrimonline.org](http://www.pilgrimonline.org)  
[office@pilgrimonline.org](mailto:office@pilgrimonline.org)

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9 am - 2 pm

**"To Help People KNOW Christ Personally and GROW in Their Faith."**  
Worship, Fellowship, Discipleship,  
Ministry and Evangelism

Rev. Michael Robinson, Interim Pastor & Teacher  
Rev. Ken Ewing, Associate Pastor  
All Members, Ministers  
Russ Whittaker, Administrator & Bell Choir Director  
Darryl Johnson, Choir Director  
Mona Johnson, Organist  
Patrick & Marilyn Randall, Worship Leaders  
Jessica Warne, Sunday School Director  
Doug Yokom, Maintenance  
Cat Foster, Administrative Assistant

**Joyful Noise Learning Center**  
941-629-4821, [www.joyfulnoiselc.org](http://www.joyfulnoiselc.org)

Cynthia Poudrette, Director of Joyful Noise

Full Contemporary Services are available to view online at:  
<https://vimeo.com/channels/pilgrimonline>

#### SOCIAL MEDIA

Follow our Facebook Page! Search "Pilgrim Church of Port Charlotte" and be part of our online community during the week.

#### GIVE YOUR GIFT ONLINE

Step by step instructions are available in the Narthex and on our website.



4	Betsy Field
	Winston Harper
5	Sandy Wheatcroft
6	Rande Kelly
9	Bradley Dean
11	Omelda Hibbert
12	Elaine Pregowski
14	Steve Schrock
17	Rose Drechsler
19	Avery Huff
	Fred Santiago
22	Ruth Brown
	Julie Griffin
23	Carol Fischle
	Roger Jepsen
25	Janice Moore
	Linda Dawn Bredfeldt
27	Carl Silva
28	John Arens
29	John Hames

# December 2019 at Pilgrim Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 Communion Sunday 8:00am Traditional Worship 9:15am Bible Study 10:00am Contemporary Worship	2 11:00am Pilgrim Women Christmas Potluck 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm AA Meeting - Women 7:00pm BSA Scout Troop Meeting	3 10:00am Prayer Group 10:00am Band setup/Rehearsal 11:00am Staff Meeting 7:00pm BSA Cub Pack Meeting	4 10:00am Al Anon 6:00pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal 6:00pm Dinner 6:30pm Bible Study with Ken Ewing 6:30pm Depression & Grief Support Group 6:30pm Kids Bible Craft	5 10:00am Overeaters Anonymouse 10:00am Beaders Group 5:00pm JN Christmas Program & Dinner with Santa	6	7 10:00am Praise Team Practice 1:30pm Cantata Dress Rehearsal (You are invited)
8 8:00am Traditional Worship Christmas Cantata 9:15am Bible Study 10:00am Contemporary Worship	9 Last Day to order Poinsettias 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm Mission Ministry 7:00pm AA Meeting - Women 7:00pm BSA Scout Troop Meeting	10 10:00am Band setup/Rehearsal 10:00am Prayer Group 11:00am Staff Meeting 7:00pm BSA Cub Pack Meeting	11 10:00am Al Anon 10:30am EM Bible Study 6:00pm Dinner 6:00pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Bible Study with Ken Ewing 6:30pm Depression & Grief Support Group 6:30pm Kids Bible Craft	12 9:00am Stephen Ministry 9:00am Pilgrim Women to Selby Gardens 10:00am Overeaters Anonymouse 10:00am Beaders Group	13	14 9:00am Salvation Army Bell Ringing 10:00am Praise Team Practice 2:00pm Pastor Nominee Meet & Greet
15 2020 Vision Tithe Gift 9:00am Joint Service 11:00am Christmas Caroling	16 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:30pm Finance Meeting 7:00pm AA Meeting - Women 7:00pm BSA Scout Troop Meeting	17 10:00am Band setup/Rehearsal 10:00am Prayer Group 11:00am Staff Meeting 7:00pm Council Meeting (Tentative) 7:00pm BSA Cub Pack Meeting	18 Newsletter Articles Due 10:00am Al Anon 6:00pm Traditional Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Kids Bible Craft 6:30pm Bible Study with Ken Ewing 6:30pm Depression & Grief Support Group	19 10:00am Poinsettias 10:00am Beaders Group 10:00am Overeaters Anonymouse 10:30am Worship and JN at Southport 10:30am Sandwich Makers	20 4:30pm Serving Homeless Coalition	21 10:00am Praise Team Practice
22 Mission Moment: Habitat For Humanity 8:00am Traditional Worship 9:15am Bible Study 10:00am Contemporary Worship	23 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm AA Meeting - Women	24 Christmas Eve Office Closed 6:00pm Worship Service 8:00pm Worship Service	25 Christmas Day Office Closed 10:00am Al Anon	26 10:00am Overeaters Anonymouse 10:00am Beaders Group	27	28 10:00am Praise Team Practice
29 8:00am Traditional Worship 9:15am Diaconate 9:15am Bible Study 10:00am Contemporary Worship	30 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm AA Meeting - Women	31 Office Closed				

**“Glory to God in highest heaven, and peace on earth to those with whom God is pleased.” -Luke2:14**