

From the Desk of Pastor John

When I was younger, my mom's extended family always had a family reunion Christmas party. My grandmother had four siblings and all of them, plus their children and grandchildren, came together to eat and swap small gifts. Until the family grew too big, the party was held at someone's house. Even though I was small, I can vaguely remember the party being held at the house of one of my great-uncles. As my mom and grandmother love to recall, it was at one of these family reunions that I fell in love with a small mechanical Santa toy that my great-uncle had in his living room. The toy had a plastic face with rosy cheeks and a snow-white beard. He wore a simple red suit made from inexpensive fleece and held a silver bell in his right hand. Once turned on, he would walk across the floor, stopping every so often to ring the bell. At five or six years old, that small toy was amazing. Apparently, I spent most of the party playing with it, even after receiving other gifts.



Shortly after that night, my great-uncle stopped by my grandmother's house. He had with him a small gift that he wanted to give me. After seeing how much I enjoyed playing with that mechanical Santa, he had decided to head out and find one he could give me. At least, that is what he told us. My mom, however, isn't so sure that's the truth. To this day, she still wonders if the small Santa toy that my great-uncle gave me was the very one from his living room.

Even though we no longer have the family reunions and my great-uncle has passed away, I still have that Santa. He barely runs, and his beard is not as white as it once was. But every Christmas, I bring Santa out

of the box that keeps him safe and put him on display. He helps to remind me of the true meaning of Christmas.

You see, that small Santa was a gift of love. I had not asked for it, nor had I expected to get it. Yet, it brought a smile to my face, so, in love, my great-uncle gave it to me. There was no sense of obligation on my great-uncle's part, nor was there an expectation of something in return. He simply gave - and gave gladly! - without a second thought to the cost.

That's what Christmas is about. It's about a gift given out of unconditional love. It's about a God who loves humankind so much that he gave of himself, despite the cost. It's about the gift of a baby boy, born into a broken world to bring healing, joy, and fulfillment to God's beloveds.

We can get so caught up in the busyness of the season, buying gifts, decorating our homes, planning get-togethers, and attending special services that we miss the opportunity to share the love that was born to us in that lowly stable so many years ago.

One of my favorite Christmas movies is "How the Grinch Stole Christmas" (the original cartoon). At the end of the movie, after he had tried to steal Christmas only to witness the Whos in Whoville joyfully celebrating Christmas, despite being robbed, the Grinch said to himself, "Maybe Christmas doesn't come from a store. Maybe Christmas perhaps means a little bit more."

It does.

It means so much more.

It embodies unconditional love. Love born to save, restore, and bring joy. May the gift we give to each other this year be love - the unconditional love that God has freely given to us. Amen.

God Bless, Pastor John



Christmas Poinsettias

New this year... we are partnering with the Englewood Lions Club to have fresh poinsettias decorating the Pilgrim sanctuary throughout the Advent season.



Christmas Poinsettias, 12/15" tall are also offered for \$10.00 each to be purchased in memory of, honor of or to the Glory of God.

Poinsettias may be taken home or delivered to shut-ins after the Christmas Eve service.

Return this form *with payment* to the Church Office or place it in the offering box no later than Sunday, December 12.

Name _____

No. of poinsettias : _____

Dedicated to _____

Dedicated

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

Dedicated to _____

Dedicated

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

Dedicated to _____

Dedicated

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



In a recent podcast, there was a quote after the study of 3 Christmas hymns, in which Samuel Rutherford stated, "Let us be faithful and care for our own part, which is to do and suffer for Him and lay Christ's part in himself, and leave it there. Duties are ours; events are the Lord's." I find that this interface is so significant in my own spiritual growth and maturity, which is always a work in progress and an ongoing ebb and flow of personality, emotion, internal and external environment, and when fully submitted, fulfillment of God's plan and orchestration in my life. I've mentioned in past newsletters a personal development path these past few years, of which I am so blessed to say that Pilgrim Church and its congregants (all of you!) are a part.

One of the hymns I've been studying and learning about in its writing is 'Good Christian Men Rejoice,' of which I'm going to share some reflections. As more of a folk carol, it wasn't always one that was recognized and integrated across the Christian faith, but the message is so valuable and strong that it empowers us to Rejoice in the Lord and celebrate amongst each other. In times of peace, in times of war, in times of joy, in times of sorrow; the beauty of this is that Christ was born that He may die in order that we would have eternal life through our belief in Him. What a joy to celebrate each day, and throughout the year! My prayer is that it permeates through our souls through music, the Living Word, through prayer and through our communications with each other.



Vs. 2, my favorite:

Good Christian Men, Rejoice
 With Heart And Soul And Voice;
 Now Ye Hear Of Endless Bliss,
 Jesus Christ Was Born For This:
 He Hath Opened Heaven's Door
 And Man Is Blessed Forever More.
 Christ Was Born For This;
 Christ Was Born For This!

For more history on this special hymn go to: <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/history-of-hymns-good-christian-friends-rejoice>

Katy Yoder, Music Director

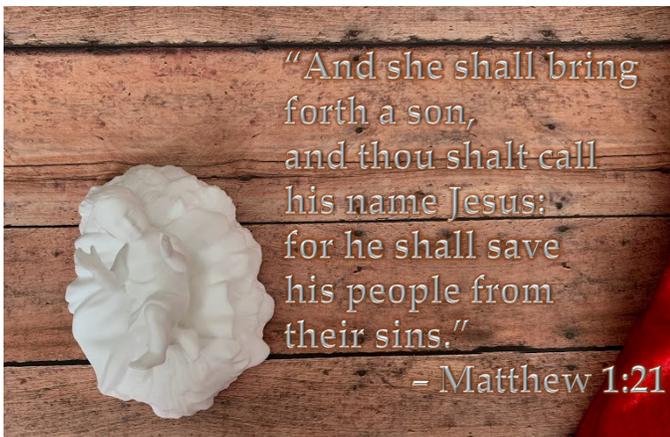


Our 2021 food drive was a huge success! After Pastor John blessed the collection with the children, 76 of our students walked approximately 100 bags full of grocery goodies to the Pilgrim Church Food Pantry.

The children have been practicing their Christmas songs and are ready to entertain everyone on Thursday, December 2, for our annual Christmas Program and Dinner with Santa. If you would like to hear their angelic voices and share in the fun, we would love to have you join us at 5:00 p.m. on December 2. A jolly man in red will be there to share in the fun!

Joyful Noise students will be sharing in the Chrismon fun. Pastor John will be sharing the meaning of Christ monograms with the children on December 6. They will be creating their own ornaments for their Chrismon tree!

Cynthia Poudrette, Director



1st Sunday of Advent Worship
Sunday, November 28, 9:00 a.m.

Advent Weekly Bible Study
Wednesdays Noon and 6:30 p.m.
Starting December 1 with Pastor John

Christmas Program and Dinner with Santa
Thursday, December 2, 5:00 p.m.

Chrismon Party
Saturday, December 4 at 10:00 a.m.
Community Center

2nd Sunday of Advent Worship
Sunday, December 5, 9:00 a.m.

Advent Weekly Bible Study
Wednesdays Noon and 6:30 p.m.
December 8 with Pastor John

Salvation Army Bell Ringing
Saturday, December 11 at Publix Peachland

3rd Sunday of Advent Worship
Sunday, December 12, 9:00 a.m.

Santas for Seniors
Items due: **Monday, December 13**
Collection Box is in the Narthex

Advent Weekly Bible Study
Wednesdays Noon and 6:30 p.m.
December 15 with Pastor John

4th Sunday of Advent Worship and
Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 19 at 9:00 a.m.

Advent Weekly Bible Study
Wednesdays Noon and 6:30 p.m.
December 22 with Pastor John

Christmas Caroling
Sunday, December 19 at 10:30 a.m.

Christmas Eve Worship
Friday, December 24, 6:30 p.m.



Pilgrim Church

UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST



Santas for Seniors

We are collecting items to fill Christmas Baskets for Seniors at Sandhill Gardens! There are 60 women and 29 men whom we are hoping to surprise with an unexpected gift.

The elves have prepared a wish list of items:

- ◆ Throw Blankets
- ◆ Slippers
- ◆ Body Lotion
- ◆ Body Wash
- ◆ Body Spray

Please purchase new items and deliver unwrapped to us no later than Monday, December 13.

We would love to include Christmas Cards for these residents! If you have cards to share, please sign 2 or 3 and leave them in the collection box.

The collection box is in the Narthex!



Chrismon Party Christ-Monogram

Saturday, December 4
10:00 a.m.

Community Center

Come together for a time
of fellowship and creativity!

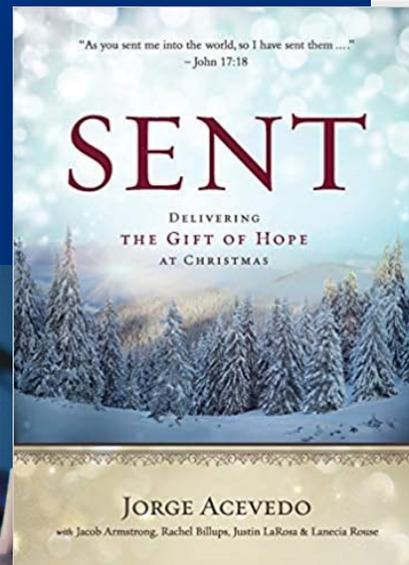
We'll have the supplies
to create Chrismons!

All craft skill levels welcome!

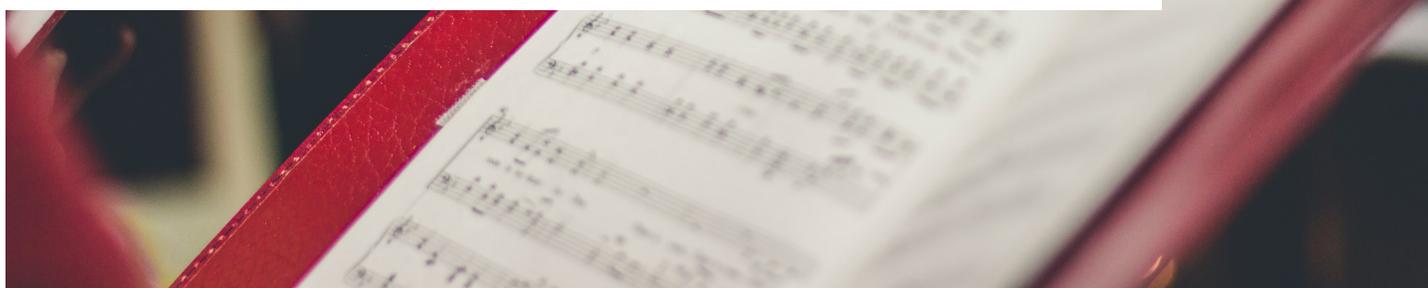
Advent Weekly Bible Study

Starting December 1 with Pastor John

Become the hands and feet of Christ this Christmas. *"As you sent me into the world, so I have sent them."* —John 17:18. God sent Christ at Christmas. In turn, Christ sends us into the world to be His hands and feet, head and heart. Wednesdays at Noon and 6:30 p.m.!



Christmas Cantata
Sunday, December 19 at 9:00 a.m.



From the Moderator

*“There is a time, turn, turn, turn
There is a season turn, turn, turn
And a time to every purpose under heaven”
(Pete Seeger adopted from Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8)*

We are now at the end of almost two years under COVID 19. It truly has been a time to weep. Also a time when mankind rose to the challenge and created a solution. It shows that all things are possible with the Lord.

So as we approach the Holiday Season, let us celebrate and remember. Let us celebrate that if we are fortunate enough to read this...we survived. We may be somewhat tattered and torn, but we are still here. Let us also remember those whom we lost. Remember the good times, the stories and the gatherings. Remember them all!

Most of all, let us truly remember those who are in need. Let us give of ourselves in time and treasure to make sure that everyone has a fair chance at living a good life. There should not be hungry people, everyone should have adequate shelter, and that everyone has an equal chance for an education. Let's not build walls but create opportunity. Let's continue to be the nation the people of the world admire with envy.

All the best, from Susan and myself this Christmas Season.

See you on Sundays.

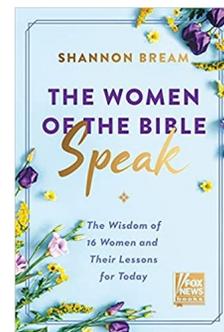
*“To everything there is a season,
and a time to every purpose under the heaven:
A time to be born, and a time to die;
a time to plant, a time to reap what is planted;
A time to kill, and a time to heal;
a time to break down, and a time to build up;
A time to weep, and a time to laugh;
a time to mourn, and a time to dance;
A time to cast away stones,
and a time to gather stones together;
A time to embrace,
and a time to refrain from embracing;
A time to gain which is to get, and a time to lose;
a time to keep, and a time to cast away;
A time to rend, and a time to sew;
a time to keep silence, and a time to speak;
A time of love, and a time of hate;
a time of war, and a time of peace.” -Ecclesiastes 3: 1-8*

Don Anderson, Moderator

Pilgrim Women

There will be no Bible study in December, The group will share a Holiday lunch trip to der Dutchman in Sarasota on **December 2**. Reservations required so you must contact Judi at 941-380-0877 immediately to be added to the reservation.

Ladies, start your New Year with a blessing. Join us on **Thursday, January 6** at 10:00 a.m. in the Coffee Room adjacent to the Sanctuary. January's Bible study will feature "Deborah and Jael: Women of Valor" from Shannon Bream's current best seller, *The Women of the Bible Speak*. In preparation, please read Judges Chapters 4 & 5 and be sure to bring your Bible to the study.



Questions about this Small Group can be directed to Judi Wilson, 941-380-0877.

Bells Bells Bells

YES!!!! Your very own Pilgrim Handbells are back and getting ready to ring to the greater glory of God! (The ringers have missed playing for such a long time!) We have started rehearsals for the Christmas season, but it is not too late to join us. We rehearse on Mondays at 4:30 p.m. in the Sanctuary. If you are interested in becoming part of the handbell choir, please come and join us.

Our first performance will be on Sunday, December 19, during the church service. We will also be playing on Christmas Eve.

The handbells add such a wonderful dimension to the worship service, and we know how much you, as a congregation, appreciate hearing them. See you on December 19!!

Russ Whittaker, Handbells Director

Missions

Food Pantry



Thank you Boy Scouts and Deep Creek Neighbors! For eight hours on Saturday, November 13 over 3,000 lbs of food was collected for the Pilgrim Food Pantry! Three Thousand! To put that much food into perspective...that's equivalent to a small SUV or a bison!

Thank you Pilgrim Church! Because of your generosity the Pilgrim Food Pantry Team filled 78 bags of groceries for preparing traditional Thanksgiving Meals this year!



We continue to be ever grateful for the serving hearts of our volunteers who faithful give so much of their time and energy to stock our food pantry and fill the orders with big cheerful hearts.

The Food Pantry is open Mondays 10:00–11:30 a.m.
Food Pantry will be closed on December 27.

Food Pantry Collection List

canned soup
saltine crackers
beef stew
canned pasta
canned tomatoes
canned green beans
canned pork n beans
canned chili
canned carrots
canned corn
canned mixed veggies
assorted canned beans
canned peas
canned fruit
ramen noodles
spaghetti sauce

dry pasta (assorted)
mac 'n cheese
mashed potatoes
canned potatoes
rice & dry beans
dry cereal
instant grits
oatmeal
pancake mix
syrup
peanut butter
jelly
snacks
canned tuna
toilet paper
paper towels

Homeless Coalition

A call for help! Volunteers are the backbone of the Homeless Coalition and more are needed to serve! Amazing volunteers assist with everything from tutoring, cooking, serving, helping at our Re-Sale Shop, cleaning, stocking the pantry, answering a lot of telephone calls, typing, copying and the list goes on. There is so much more work to do; please consider volunteering and YOU will make a difference.

For information on how to be involved, contact Coordinator Meghan at: (941) 627-4313, Ext. 134 or Meghan.Himelein@cchomelesscoalition.org

"For I was hungry and you gave me food, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you welcomed me"

- Matthew 25:35



Volunteer to be part of the
Red Kettle Campaign

Saturday, December 11
Publix Peachland Plaza
1 Hour Shifts

Please sign up
in the Narthex.



Random
CHRISTMAS
KINDNESS

BINGO

Compliment a stranger.	Treat someone to coffee or tea.	Donate clothing.	Hold a door for someone.	Leave coins in a vending machine.
Call a friend.	Visit with an elderly person.	FEED THE BIRDS	Leave a treat for the mail carrier.	Say "Thank You" to someone who made a difference.
Do a favor for someone.	Take a neighbor a meal.	Let someone know you appreciate them.	RECYCLE!	Donate a gently used toy.
Donate a gift to a family in need.	Clean up someone else's mess.	Call/text a random compliment.	Be a good listener.	VOLUNTEER!
Allow someone to help you.	Pick up litter.	Say "Hi" to 3 strangers.	Shop small or refer a small business.	Leave a generous tip.



24515 Rampart Boulevard
 Port Charlotte, FL 33980
 941-629-2633

www.pilgrimonline.org
 office@pilgrimonline.org

Office Hours: Monday - Thursday, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

Joyful Noise Learning Center
 941-629-4821, www.joyfulnoiselc.org

“To Help People KNOW Christ
 Personally and GROW in Their Faith.”

Rev. John Barnette, Senior Pastor
 Rev. Ken Ewing, Associate Pastor
 All Members, Ministers
 Gene Burnell, Maintenance Technician
 Cat Foster, Office Administrator
 Cheryl Huber, Organist
 Cynthia Poudrette, Director of Joyful Noise
 Jessica Warne, Sunday School Director
 Russ Whittaker, Bell Choir Director
 Katy Yoder, Music Director



Did we miss a birthday? Please call or email the office, so we may update the records.

4

Betsy Field
 Winston Harper

5

Cathy Barnette
 Sandy Wheatcroft

6

Rande Kelly

12

Elaine Pregowski

14

Steve Schrock

19

Fred Santiago

21

Lucia Zuro-Dargis

22

Julie Griffin

23

Carol Fischle

25

Jan Moore

27

Linda Dawn Bredfeldt

29

John Hames



Bill Wolf

Melvin Keller

Savina Krueger

Ann Biski

John Krueger

Hoerl Family

Gloria Kurbanali

Zander Jones

Jim Wright

Mary McCoy

Adrian Roche

Cheri Perry

Louise Timchak

Michael Garofola

Sidoney Johnston

Jim Smith

Diane Cremonini

Ken Rankin

Joe Beaudreau

Keven Russell

Richard McLemore

Rieley Jones

Mary Rose Binski

Nancy Johnson

Lorraine O'Keefe

No matter who you are, or where you are on life's journey, you are welcome here!

December 2021 Pilgrim Church

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 9:00am JN Christmas Program Rehearsal 10:00am Prayer Group 12:00pm Advent Bible Study 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Advent Bible Study	2 JN Closes at Noon 9:30am Pilgrim Women Fellowship Holiday Lunch Trip 10:00am OA 5:00pm JN Christmas Program and Dinner with Santa 6:00pm JN Board Meeting	3 6:30pm Rhode Island Club	4 10:00am Chrismon Party
5 2nd Sunday of Advent 9:00am Worship 10:15am Wilson Small Group	6 Santas for Seniors begins 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm BSA Troop Meeting 7:00pm AA - Women	7 7:00pm BSA Den Meeting	8 10:00am Prayer Group 12:00pm Advent Bible Study 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Advent Bible Study	9 10:00am OA	10	11 Salvation Army Red Kettle Campaign
12 3rd Sunday of Advent Poinsettia Orders Due 9:00am Worship 10:15am Wilson Small Group	13 Santas for Seniors collection ends 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm Missions Meeting 7:00pm AA - Women 7:00pm BSA Troop Meeting	14 7:00pm BSA Den Meeting	15 Newsletter Article Deadline 10:00am Prayer Group 12:00pm Advent Bible Study 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Advent Bible Study	16 10:00am OA 10:30am PBJ Sandwich Makers 6:00pm BSA Committee Meeting	17 4:15pm Serving at The Homeless Coalition	18 BSA Holiday Party
19 4th Sunday of Advent 9:00am Worship & Cantata 10:15am Wilson Small Group 10:30am Christmas Caroling	20 10:00am Food Pantry 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:30pm Finance Meeting 7:00pm BSA Troop Meeting 7:00pm AA - Women	21	22 10:00am Prayer Group 12:00pm Advent Bible Study 6:30pm Advent Bible Study 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	23 10:00am OA	24 Christmas Eve JN Closed	25 Christmas
26 9:00am Worship 10:15am Wilson Small Group	27 JN Closed 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm AA - Women	28 JN Closed 7:00pm Council Meeting	29 JN Closed 10:00am Prayer Group 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	30 JN Closed 10:00am OA	31 New Years Eve JN Closed 4:15pm Serving at The Homeless Coalition	