

## From the Desk of Pastor John

We've all heard the old saying "big things come in small packages." I'm sure some parents uttered this phrase a time or two over the last month as their children tried to figure out what was in each box under the Christmas tree. Of course, children seem to always get disappointed when they see a small box with their name on it sitting next to a very large box with labeled for their sibling. Their first thought is always something along the lines of "their gift is better than mine!" Mom or Dad have to quickly reassure them that just because their brother's or sister's gift is quite larger does not mean it is of any greater value.

In other words, snap judgments aren't always correct. Sometimes the small package under the tree is of the greatest value. In today's fast pace world, where our minds seem to be going a mile a minute

all the time, it's easy for us to make a snap judgment and deem someone as a "small package," or as a person who seems to not have much to offer. We take one look at their image (i.e. physical appearance, clothes, car, dwellings, etc.) and unconsciously base their worth on our first impressions.

Our 2022 Advent Bible study was focused on Mary, the mother of Jesus. So, naturally, I found myself thinking about her a lot over the weeks leading up to Christmas. She was a person of low status. A young girl from the not-so-favored town of Nazareth, she wouldn't have been seen as a person of importance by Jerusalem's standards. Yet, God saw more. Even though to most she would have been no more than a young, Nazarene girl of little importance, God chose her to play an

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## January 2023 Newsletter

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



## From the Desk of Pastor John continued...

important, sacred part in His plan for salvation. Despite her lowly position in society, God called her to greatness!

God's in the habit of calling the lowly or those who seem insignificant, isn't He? We read the stories of King David, the judge Gideon, Mary, and Jesus's disciples and hear of persons who seemed insignificant being called to do great things. You see, God doesn't call us based on society's standards. He calls and strengthens those who have faith in Him, no matter who they are according to social norms.

As we journey into the New Year, and a new season for Pilgrim Church, let us remember to view others through the eyes of Christ. As we embark on new ministries and are introduced to new people, let us remember to celebrate each and every person, remembering that no one is beyond God's grace, all are welcome, and no one knows who God may call to greatness next!

Happy New Year!  
Pastor John

28 God chose what is low and despised in the world, things that are not, to abolish things that are, 29 so that no one might boast in the presence of God. 30 In contrast, God is why you are in Christ Jesus, who became for us wisdom from God, and righteousness and sanctification and redemption, 31 in order that, as it is written, "Let the one who boasts, boast in the Lord." - 1 Corinthians 1:28-31

### For Study on "Insignificant"

- King David - The primary evidence for David can be found in several chapters in the books 1 and 2 Samuel
- Gideon - *Gideon's* story is found in the book of Judges, chapters 6 to 8
- Mary - We still have Advent Study books if you would like to dig deeper.
- Zacchaeus the Tax Collector - Luke 19:1-10
- Naaman's wife's maid - 2 Kings 5
- Shiphrah and Puah - Exodus 1:15-21.
- Mordecai - The book of Esther
- Balaam - Numbers 22

## Pilgrim United Church of Christ

24515 Rampart Boulevard  
Port Charlotte, FL 33980  
941-629-2633  
www.pilgrimonline.org  
office@pilgrimonline.org

Office Hours:  
Mon - Thurs, 9:30 am - 2:30 pm

*Senior Pastor:*  
Rev. John Barnette  
johndbarnette1@gmail.com

*Associate Pastor:*  
Rev. Ken Ewing  
ewing-ken@comcast.net

*Moderator:*  
Jessica Warne  
jawarne77@gmail.com

*Maintenance Technician:*  
Gene Burnell

*Office Administrator:*  
Cat Foster  
Office@pilgrimonline.org

*Organist:*  
Cheryl Huber

*Pianist:*  
Maverick Li

*Sunday School Director:*  
Jessica Warne

*Bell Choir Director:*  
Russ Whittaker

*Music Director*  
Katy Yoder  
music@pilgrimonline.org

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

*Director of Joyful Noise:*  
Cynthia Poudrette  
jndirector@pilgrimonline.org



# Pilgrim in Pictures



PBJ Sandwich Makers



Pilgrim Women's Fellowship Luncheon and Shopping at Der Dutchman, Sarasota



Pastor John's Christmas Elves, aka: Letter Folding and Stuffing Volunteers

Advent Bible Study Noon Group

Pilgrim Choir Christmas Cantata "Bethlehem's Child"



Food Pantry Christmas Dinner Baskets With Homemade Cookies





# Ministry & Outreach

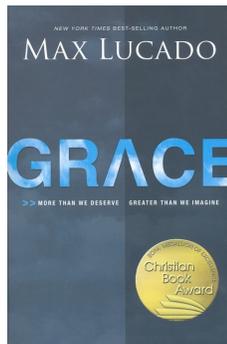
## Women's Fellowship

Women need godly fellowship. Whether a woman is a new mom who rarely sees other women, a retiree who is home alone, or something in between, women need deep, rich and lasting connections that are meaningful and challenging. Rather than the quick and superficial "hello, how do you do's" of Sunday mornings, a women's ministry gives the opportunity for deep connections. Make a commitment this year to become involved!

### Women's Fellowship Study Group

We will meet ONE WEEK EARLY on Thursday, January 12 in the Church Conference room at 10:00 a.m. The monthly meeting will continue the study of "Grace". Though it's a continuation, even if you missed, you can slip into this study now!

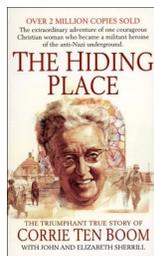
"Grace: More Than We Deserve, Greater Than We Imagine" written by Max Lucado includes a video lesson presented by Max and a discussion within the group. This bestselling book challenges the readers to not only receive grace but also to be changed by grace. Shaped by grace. Strengthened by grace. Emboldened by grace. Softened by grace. Snatched by the nape of their neck and shaken to their senses by grace.



January 12, we will cover Session 4 , Accepting the Gift of Wet Feet. Join the discussion of receiving grace and forgiveness from others and your response to it.

### Women's Fellowship Book Club

The next book we have selected for the February meeting is, "The Hiding Place" by Corrie Ten Boom. First published in 1971, this is a classic you won't. want to miss. Start reading now!



## Missions

In the aftermath of Hurricane Ian, Pilgrim suffered a financial set back. In response to this, the Mission Committee made the decision to use their end of the year available funds for a one time transfer to the Pilgrim general fund account. The mission committee will resume payments to outreach ministries in the new year. Thank you, congregation, for your understanding that we needed to make Pilgrim Church a priority in order to be around to reach out to the wider community. We honor your prayer filled input and will continue to support our partner ministries.

We were able to serve God this holiday season:



We made several Thanksgiving Day Grocery Bags for local Homebound Veterans and some of the Joyful Noise Learning Center Staff.

We had a successful Salvation Army Kettle drive. We give special thanks to our ringers: Nancy Beaver, Tony Cangilia, Bruce & Gert Devantier and Cheryl Gerry.



Finally, with your gifts we were also able to make 23 Christmas Dinner Baskets for those in need. What a joy to share with our neighbors!

In the new year, we hope to see more Pilgrims on PBJ Sandwich Makers days, (3rd Thursdays each month) and look forward to reopening the food pantry! Thank you for your continued support of Pilgrim's Missions!

# Adult Bible Study

Why should you study the Bible? Studying the Bible is such an important discipline in our Christian faith. Studying the Bible with an actual purpose gives you a better knowledge of the character of God. Studying the Bible helps you view the meaning, history, and time it was written. Studying the Bible equips you to have the knowledge to be able to share with others.

This year, join Dave & Judi Wilson after worship on Sundays for a verse by verse Bible study. A study on Ezekiel continues on January 8, it's not too late to join the group!

Learn about the prophecies regarding the destruction of Jerusalem, and the restoration to the land of Israel.

# Pilgrim Anniversary

Sunday, January 22, 1967, is a memorable historic day for Pilgrim Church. On that date at an impressive service at the Venice United Church of Christ, the West Central Associate of the Florida Conference recognized and installed the Pilgrim United Church of Christ of Port Charlotte. More than 200 delegates and friends representing the West Coast Churches from Madeira Beach to Marco Island, led by officials of the United Church attended the service. There were 23 charter members.

This year we are celebrating our 56th Anniversary with special guest, Rev. John Vertigan.

Rev. John Vertigan is the conference minister in the Florida Conference and a member of First United Church of Christ in Orlando. He began serving in this role on January 1, 2015.



Rev. John Vertigan has served as a member of the United Church of Christ Board and currently serves nationally on the Common Global Ministries Board of the United Church of Christ and the Christian Church

Disciples of Christ. This helps him join together his passion for world-wide ministry partnerships with the mission of the Florida Conference: to engage, empower, and equip local congregations to be a vital gospel witness in the communities where they live and serve. It's to those ends that John devotes his ministry.

Be sure to join us for worship on this special Sunday.

# Joyful Noise Learning Center

Joyful Noise ended 2022 with all of our classrooms having amazing Christmas celebrations rejoicing in the birth of Jesus.

We were blessed with Christmas goodies from Pilgrim Council with a coffee bar and from parents who brought in various meal trays from sandwiches to donuts and other sweets to give thanks to the Joyful Noise staff.

We begin 2023 with mid-year assessments. All four VPK classrooms (ages four-five) and our two three yr olds classrooms will have formal assessments completed. We will have Parent-Teacher Conferences following the assessments. These assessments are the most important of the year as they show us the growth children have achieved since the school year began. The assessments also provide opportunities for specific areas of improvement for each child.

Our Mr. Gene will continue the monthly rotation of painting each classroom by seeing to the VPK "Pond" classroom. Mr. Gene keeps our school neat and shiny by painting a different classroom each month. This also keeps us in regulation with DCF by not having any peeling paint in our school.

Cynthia Poudrette  
Director



## Ministry & Outreach

continued

### Music Notes

*The light of thy countenance O Lord, is signed upon us: thou hast given gladness in my heart. - Psalm 4:6*

Happy New Year to All!

What a wonderful Christmas season we had and now as we enter into a time of reflection and planning, it is good to know the presence of our Lord is with us at Pilgrim. Our choir is growing and His light radiates more deeply among us as we grow in faith together with mercy, grace, truth and love.

Join us as choir rehearsals resume 6:30 p.m. on January 4 in the Church Conference Room, for weekly rehearsals and be part of our worship!



I look forward with anticipation to a year of Jubilee. One of rich blessings, fullness of joy and insight into God's word as we dwell in Him and abide this year and always.

Many blessings to each of you and blessed hope for today and into eternal glory. Thank you for your prayers, kindness, friendship to myself and my family.

In Christ, Katy

### Hands and Feet of Christ

We have two at large council positions and a bookkeeping position for monthly reconciliation that we need to fill for the 2023 year.

Please prayerfully consider serving. We need you. For more information reach out to a member of the Nominations Committee: Judi Wilson, Karen Ahlgrim, and Dionne Jones.

### Hurricane Recovery

First, with gifts from the Pilgrim Congregation we have been able to financially assist many of those who have come to our door for help in the aftermath of Hurricane Ian.

Next, all the debris is gone from Rampart Boulevard and Pilgrim Church!

Finally, for our campus we are making progress. It's all behind the scenes, but it's forward momentum.

- Roofing materials have been ordered!
- Carpet has been ordered for the Sanctuary!
- Loss of Income Forensics Accountants are reviewing a stack of requested reports to reimburse our accounts for the weeks closed and closed afterschool program that resulted from Ian damage.
- We have an audio engineer reviewing the Proposed Restorable Sound Booth Audio Equipment list from the insurance company.

### Prayer Ministry

Prayer meetings have continued weekly by conference call. We would love to have you join us. We are connect on Wednesdays at 10:00 a.m. Just call Jacque Ross and she will merge your calls.

We start with a devotion, then list our praises, thanks and requests. We also have conversational prayer discussing updates on people's progress and needs. We share books on prayer such as Derek Prince's "Shaping History through Prayer and Fasting".

Won't you join us for the new year?

# Scouting

The Boy Scouts and the Cub Scouts have had a busy December.

Both the Pack and Troop went to Broke Back Dog event the first weekend of the month. The Arrow of Light Cub Scouts (5th graders) competed and brought back 4 Ribbons (2 First / 2 Second place). The Troop had two patrols that competed and the Toto's brought back 2 Ribbons and the Flying Monkeys took home 1 Ribbon. The theme was Wizard of Dogz.



On the 10th the Cubs had their Rain Gutter Regatta. They made and decorated their own boats and raced. They had a lot of fun.

On the 17th - 10 boys from the Troop came out to the Pilgrim Church cleanup. They helped remove debris off the basketball court and around the property. Eagle Scout, TJ also climbed a tree to remove a broken limb stuck in the tree.



The 19th the Troop held a Court of Honor (award ceremony) and Christmas Party, along with an ugliest outfit competition.



On the 20th the Pack had their awards ceremony along with their Christmas Pajama Party.



SAVE THE DATE: Big Announcement - February 11th - Fish & Chips Lunch will return. This will be a drive-up event since the Community Center is not available yet. It will be from 11:30 a.m.-1:30 p.m. Tickets will be \$15 each. I will have tickets at the Church office January 9. If you have any questions regarding the Fish & Chips lunch, please call me at 941-268-3448 and leave a message. For anyone that was there last year, we will not be doing the basket drawings until the Pasta Dinner in April.

Donna Graves, Scout Representative

# Why Ministry & Outreach

The Commissioning of the Disciples

Matthew 28:16-20

**16 Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them.**

**17 When they saw Him, they worshiped Him, but they doubted.**

**18 And Jesus came and said to them,**

***“All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me.***

**19 GO therefore and MAKE disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit**

**20 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you.**

**And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age.”**





## Business News

## Council Highlights

- Pilgrim's Annual Meeting will be held January 29<sup>th</sup>, following the Sunday Worship Service. Council invites everyone to join together as we reflect on the past year, look towards the future, and present all the formal church business.
- All key carriers – please continue to follow our safety protocols during our reconstruction. **At this time, only authorized work personnel are allowed in the construction areas due to safety concerns.** There are numerous projects happening in the different areas within both buildings. If you do not have authorization from the Church Office – do NOT go into those buildings. (Thank you.)
- We moved our Sunday worship services across the street to Kings Gate Golf Club for the month of December. An anonymous church member voiced that they would like to pay the room rental fee for the month of December, especially as our weather has been very unpredictable this past month. (Thank you!) We will continue to worship in the Kings Gate space for January.
- As we started worshipping outside, then across the street, we were having to transport a piano to and from. This was very challenging at times, as it is very heavy and hard to maneuver. Again, an anonymous church member saw a solution and gave funds to purchase a much lighter and easier to move keyboard. Council approved the purchase. (Thank you!)
- Council sent our mower to A-Z Mower for repair. In the meantime, a big shout out to Ken Rhoe. He brought his ride-on lawn mower to take care of the front lawn, without hesitation. He made sure the grounds looked great. (THANK YOU!)
- We had a large group of church volunteers and Boy Scouts come out for our December campus yard clean up. What a rewarding experience we all had. Everyone came together and cleaned up the back parking lot area, the front/side area of the church offices, and began weeding the Memorial Garden area. We had snacks and water and really enjoyed being with one another and take care of the campus we have been entrusted with. THANK YOU!
- If you have ever wondered what goes on at a Council Meeting, come check one out! They are always open for you to attend. Your voice matters to Council and myself. I encourage any of you, if there is an issue or grievance to please reach out to a member of Council (or myself). I am always happy to answer any questions, or get an answer to you. If it needs more research, we will add it to our agenda for the next Council Meeting for further discussion. These meetings are a great way to be part of the ministry that is happening at Pilgrim Church.

### Save the dates:

- The next Council Meeting will be 7:00 p.m. in the Conference Room on Tuesday, January 17.
- The Annual Meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, January 29.

Jessica Emard-Warne, Moderator

# Annual Meeting

Ministry area reports will be due **January 10** for the Annual Report.

The Annual meeting will be held following worship on Sunday, January 29.

## The Finances: Your Contributions

End of the year means Annual Meeting and Budget time, even here at Pilgrim Church. Since last we talked we took major damage from Hurricane Ian.

Now the good news:

- Joyful Noise Learning Center was able to open quickly and continues to operate as a successful mission of Pilgrim Church.
- Due to astute planning with "Vision 2020" we have our hurricane deductible in the bank. *Unfortunately we will probably need every penny of the \$240,000 we have set aside.*
- We found a temporary space to worship over at Kings Gate Clubhouse while repairs to the church proper and the Community Center are completed.
- Our attendance is growing!
- Grants and other donations have been received from those outside Pilgrim who have learned of our damage.
- Pilgrim weathered another storm! The good Lord has been watching over us.

At the Annual Meeting the 2023 Budget will be on the table to be reviewed and you will elect your next General Council members

For the budget, Pilgrim is counting on you. Please prayerfully discern and complete your pledge cards. If you misplaced your pledge card, please contact the church office.

Don Anderson  
Chair, Finance Ministry

## Giving Envelopes

There has been a delay in giving envelopes for 2023. As soon as they are available they will arrive in your mailboxes for the quarter.

If you do not have an envelope # but would like to receive the envelopes please contact the office.

# Property Committee

We are so grateful for the multitude of hands who responded to the December work day for the grounds and Memorial Garden.

Pilgrim's Property Committee will meet on Thursday, January 12 at 6:30 p.m. in the Conference Room. All interested in the property and maintenance of the Pilgrim campus are invited.

## T-Shirts

Our PilgrimSTRONG T-shirts are available in the church office and after worship. We are asking for a \$15 donation per shirt.

Everyone is encouraged to wear their PilgrimSTRONG shirt on Sunday, January 22, Pilgrim's 56th Anniversary.



## A Taste of Pilgrim

Pilgrim Cookbooks are available! For 150+ recipes, a \$15 donation is requested. You can pick up your first edition copy in the Church Office during office hours or after Worship on Sundays.

To whet your appetite...

**Butter Pound Cake** submitted by Rita Yob

- 1 C Butter
- ¼ C Liquid Shortening
- 3 C Sugar
- 5 Eggs
- 3 C Flour
- 1 t Baking Powder
- 1 C Milk
- 1 t Vanilla

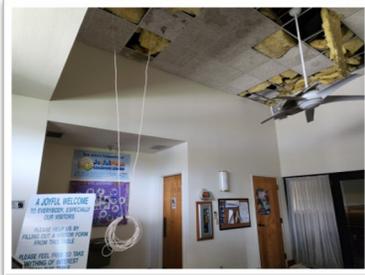
Preheat oven to 300°F. Cream butter, shortening and sugar. Add remaining ingredients. Bake for 1 ½ hour.



# PilgrimSTRONG



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No visible changes have taken place. We continue to run machines to dry out space as we wait for roofing and other materials as well as trained workers to complete the various project.

Before Hurricane Ian

After Hurricane Ian

Before Yard Work Day

After Yard Work Day



More  
Work  
Day  
Photos  
  
Thank  
you!





## Love Your Neighbor

### Pilgrim Prayer List

Gene Rice - stroke  
Joe Beaudreau - health  
Jim Smith - health  
Sidoney Johnston - homebound  
Recovery after Hurricane Ian  
Rick McLemore - cancer  
Fred Ripley - health  
Carroll Eastman - health  
Genny Sweetland - health  
Pat Wheatcroft - cancer  
John Hames - PC Rehab  
Lorraine O'Keefe - cancer  
Bill Wolf - homebound  
Savina Krueger - cancer  
John Krueger - Parkinson's  
Ria Voigt - health  
Zander Jones - health  
Jody Phillips - cancer  
Judy Michaels - health  
Noah - health  
Ashlyne - grief  
Mel Slater - health  
Peace on Earth  
Barb Ross - health  
Janice Lewis - health  
Louise Wright - cancer  
Peg Faber - health  
Josh & Janet - strength  
Pat Smith family in the loss of her brother Jim Bryne  
Elaine Pregowski - health  
Kathy Wagner - cancer  
Sarah Pasierb - health  
Michael - cancer  
Noah - cancer  
Michayla - health

### January Birthdays

9	Joe Gillner
11	Kay Neilley
17	Dave O'Keefe
17	Sharon Sweeney
18	Gert Devantier
19	Jonathan Warne-Emard
20	Olive Prince
22	Tom Jones

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

### January Anniversaries

3	Russ & Judy Whittaker
18	Steve & Reyne Schrock
24	Paula & Mark Gallant
28	Don & Susan Anderson

### Ideas to Love Your Neighbors

- Love your neighbor: pray for them
- Love your neighbor: put together a neighborhood watch program to look out for each other
- Love your neighbor: don't listen to gossip
- Love your neighbor: donate items you do not need
- Love your neighbor: give a gift card to someone who needs it
- Love your neighbor: send them a note, just because
- Love your neighbor: offer a shoulder to cry on
- Love your neighbor: wave and say hello



24515 Rampart Boulevard  
 Port Charlotte, FL 33980  
 941-629-2633  
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## January 2023

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 New Year's Day 9:00am Worship	2 Church Office/JN Closed 7:00pm AA - Women	3	4 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	5	6 Epiphany	7
8 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	9 7:00pm AA - Women	10	11 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	12 10:00am Pilgrim Women's Fellowship 6:30pm Property Committee Meeting	13	14
15 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	16 Church Office/JN Closed Martin Luther King, Jr. Day 7:00pm AA - Women	17 7:00pm Council Meeting	18 Newsletter Article Deadline 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	19 9:15am PBJ Sandwich Makers	20	21
22 Pilgrim Church Charter signed 1967 9:00am Worship	23 7:00pm AA - Women	24	25 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	26	27	28
29 9:00am Worship 10:00am Annual Meeting	30 7:00pm AA - Women	31				