

From the Desk of Pastor John

A blessing for the start of the Easter Season

God of grace and power,
we come rejoicing in Christ's empty tomb.
We come trusting in the good news
that tells us Christ is with us.
For the Risen Christ is living proof
that You care about our lives, O God.
The Risen Christ offers to us glimpses
of hope,
even in our tears.
As the tomb is not quiet.
It speaks. It proclaims!
It is a promise of eternal life!
Thank you, gracious and almighty God.
Amen.

April 2023 Newsletter

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



Holy Week 2023

Palm/Passion Sunday

Liturgical color: Violet or Red

April 2

Liturgy of the palms

Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29

Matthew 21:1-11

Liturgy of the Passion

Isaiah 50:4-9a

Psalm 31:9-16

Phil 2:5-11

Matthew 26:14-27:66

Worship

9:00 a.m. at the Kings Gate Clubhouse

Easter Sunday

Liturgical color: White

April 9

Liturgy

Acts 10:34-43 or Jeremiah 31:1-6

Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24

Colossians 3:1-4 or Acts 10:34-43

John 20:1-18 or Matthew 28:1-10

Worship

7:00 a.m. Sunrise Celebration under the Pilgrim Church Portico

9:00 a.m. Celebration in Word and Hymn under the Pilgrim Church Portico

Maundy Thursday

Liturgical color: White

April 6

Liturgy

Exodus 12:1-14

Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19

1 Corinthians 11:23+26

John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Worship

6:30 p.m. with remembrance of the Last Supper under the Pilgrim Church Portico

Good Friday

Liturgical color: Violet, Black or Red

April 7

Liturgy

Isaiah 52:13-53:12

Psalm 22

Hebrews 10:16-25 or Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9

John 18:1-19:42

Holy Saturday

Liturgical color: Violet, Black or None

April 8

Liturgy

Job 14:1-14 or Lamentations 3:1-9, 19-24

Psalm 31:1-4, 15-16

1 Peter 4:1-8

Matthew 27:57-66 or John 19:38-42





Love Your Neighbor

April Birthdays

2	Dawn Miller
4	Vera Bennett
6	Ken Ewing
6	Char Semon
9	Sharon Cooper
9	Bruce Devantier
10	Cheryl Huber
11	Don Anderson
11	Genny Sweetland
16	Donna Bundy
18	Judi Wilson
21	Ken Moriarty
22	Beatrice Victoria
30	Connie Rice

April Anniversaries

11 Frank & Jacque Ross

Did we miss your special date? Please call or email the office, so we may update the records.

April Ideas to Love Your Neighbors

- ◆ Pick up a Bloomin' for Good bouquet from Winn Dixie on Kings Hwy and share the spring flowers
- ◆ Invite someone to Easter worship!
- ◆ Host a tea for neighbors or small group.
- ◆ Send a card, we all love mail that isn't a bill or advertisement.
- ◆ Pray for the health, safety, and well-being of the Pilgrim Congregation.
- ◆ April 22 is Earth Day caring for our planet is loving our neighbors:
 - Use cloth napkins and rags instead of paper towels.
 - Gradually switch to LED light bulbs.
 - Grow some of your own herbs, spices, or vegetables. You can share any produce abundance!
- ◆ Make someone a get well soon card, see the prayer list for possible recipients.

Pilgrim Prayer List

Recovery after Hurricane Ian

John Hames - homebound

Lorraine O'Keefe - cancer

Bill Wolf - homebound

Savina Krueger - cancer

John Krueger - Parkinson's

Joe Beaudreau - health

Sidoney Johnston - homebound

Mike Faber - health

Fred Ripley - health

Rick McLemore - cancer

Jim Smith - health

Pat Blood - health

Cheri & Rick Perry - Alzheimer's

Zander Jones - health

Judy Michaels - health

Jim Scott - homebound

Russ Whittaker - health

Pat Wheatcroft - cancer

Pilgrim Church Congregation -
reconstruction recovery

Andrew Altman - health

Kathy Wagner - sympathy to family
and friends

Arlene Robbins - health

Mel Slater - health

Judy Fresen - cancer

Bobbie Jean Garvey - cancer

Korey Schindler - health

Grant Hill - COVID

Diane Robinson - liver transplant

Brian Robinson - gifting portion of
liver for transplant



Ministry & Outreach

Missions Report

This is our plan for mission outreach for 2023:

Back Pack Kidz	\$3,000
Children's Network	\$2,000
Homeless Coalition	\$4,000
Joyful Noise Teacher Emergency	\$1,000
Virginia B Andes	\$4,000
Wings of Shelter	\$3,000
Young Life	\$2,000

We will begin paying portions of this pledge to our local missions partners first. Throughout the year as funds are available we will send our financial support to fulfill the 2023 mission outreach plan.

Last month we recognized Back Pack Kidz ministry. If you would like to serve on this ministry, reach out to Jolene or the Church Office for more information. Jolene's contact information is available in the Church Directory or by calling the Church Office.

For April we want to highlight the work that is done at the Virginia B Andes Clinic. VBA patients come from all walks of life & economic circumstances. The VBA Volunteer Community Clinic is proud to be the health care safety net for Charlotte County. Join us on April 16 to learn more and how you can serve!

Pastor Ken, Missions Chair



Music Notes

The power of saying "thank you" is immeasurably more than what we can comprehend. Sometimes, I say thank you to my children out of the blue, and they say, "For what, Mom?" I answer, "For being you." I need to say it more and am sure that when I do, God Smiles.

When I think about the Cross and what Christ has done for me, those words could never be enough or fully capture what He did, who He is, and who I am now because of Him. I hope that I never stop saying thank you to my Saviour and to love others in gratitude and remembrance of Him.



I see the beauty in relationships that have blossomed in our Choir from doing life together and each day that passes, we are here for each other through life's ups and downs. We are not only a group of singers, but a growing band of worshippers. Come join us for singing, fellowship, laughter, tears, and prayers. We'd love to have you with us!

Choir Rehearsal is on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m. We learn about the hymns for the coming Sunday and prepare for special music. If you have any interest in being part of the choir we would love for you to join us. The more voices we have create a fuller sound, even seasonally, you are welcomed! The more hearts in the rehearsal, the more fellowship and fun for those serving in this ministry.

Easter Sunday we are leading a Celebration in Word and Hymn with several songs. We look forward to sharing this time with you!

May we all rejoice with thankful hearts this season and every day that follows, Katy

Joyful Noise Learning Center

Thank you! Pilgrim generously supported Joyful Noise Learning Center with Pastor John's Reach Across America Book Drive. You gave over \$1,100 so we may freshen up our libraries with new, fun, inspiring, books to share with our students. When the books come in we'll be sure to share photos!

April is National Child Abuse Prevention Month. It is a time which we highlight the importance of families and communities working together to prevent child abuse and neglect. The Federal Child Abuse Prevention and Treatment Act defined child abuse and neglect as, at a minimum, "any recent act or failure to act on the part of a parent or caretaker which results in death, serious physical or emotional harm, sexual abuse or exploitation, or an act or failure to act which presents an imminent risk of serious harm"

Child abuse isn't just about bruises. While physical abuse is shocking due to the marks it leaves, not all signs of child abuse are as obvious. Ignoring a child's needs, putting them in unsupervised, dangerous situations, exposing them to sexual situations, or making them feel worthless or stupid are also forms of child abuse and neglect—and they can leave deep, lasting scars on the next generation.

If you suspect a child is suffering from abuse or neglect, it's so important to speak out. By catching the problem early, both the child and the abuser can get the help they need.

Help and additional information is available at my office at the Joyful Noise Learning Center and at Pilgrim Church.

The first week of April we'll highlight this recognition amongst our staff and parents with special t-shirts, flyers and pinwheels!

April also brings Easter parties and special lessons on just what Easter is really all about: Jesus loves you!

Cynthia Poudrette, Director

PBJ Sandwich Makers

200 Individually Wrapped PBJs
Thursday, April 20
9:15 a.m.
in the Conference Room

Join us and fellowship with Pilgrims as you prepare sandwiches that feed the homeless. Donations of jam are appreciated.

Little Free Pantry

Whether in need for food or a need to give, mini pantries help feed neighbors. A Little Free Pantry was built as an Eagle Scout Project by Andrew Anderson of Troop 37. Andrew was a student at Joyful Noise Learning Center! He calls them Faith Boxes because he has faith that people will only take what they need and others will give generously.



Adult Bible Study

Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

Join us on Sunday mornings immediately after the worship service. There is NO study on Easter Sunday. The study of Ezekiel will continue and conclude this month. Content includes the rebuilding of the temple in Jerusalem and a plan for the restoration of God's kingdom. Many comparisons can be made about this rebuilding and the second coming of Christ described in Revelation chapters 21-22. Join us to build your knowledge and discipleship.

Winter Residents

As you prepare to travel away for the Summer, please be sure the Church Office has your address with estimated dates of return and contact information. This will allow any mail outs to reach you in a timely manner.

While you are apart from us, know we keep you in our prayers and hope you have meaningful visits with your family and friends who don't live in paradise. (;

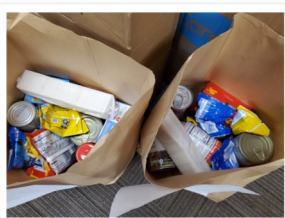
Ministry & Outreach cont.

Pilgrim in Pictures



PBJ Sandwich Makers, 200 sandwiches individually wrapped for the homeless in Charlotte County.

Lent Bible Study with Pastor John, the Noon Attendees.



Pilgrim Food Pantry continues to serve the teachers at Joyful Noise and Veterans.



Spring is here! Flowers are in bloom and we have a killdeer mama bird with her nest on the Pilgrim Campus!



Choir Rehearsal!

Scouting

Since the last newsletter the Cub Scouts had their Pinewood Derby and we had 100% participation. The Cubbies and their families had a lot of fun.

The Boy Scouts are busy preparing for Summer Camp.



Our big fundraiser that everyone is excited and waiting for is our Pasta Dinner. It will be on April 1, 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. While we are not able to have this annual dinner at Pilgrim Church Community Center, we were very lucky to have the Mason's Lodge on the corner of Airport and Taylor Road to invite us to use their building. Dinner is \$15 dollars, and the Boy Scouts will be your servers. We will, also, have the Gift Basket Penny Social so bring some cash to purchase \$1 tickets and try to win. This fundraiser will help the boys pay for transportation to summer camp which is in Tennessee.

Boy Scout Neale passed his Eagle Board of Review so the Troop has a new Eagle Scout! We have nine Scouts at Life Rank working towards their Eagle Rank!

- March 4th the Boy Scouts did a roadside cleanup at Luther Road and filled six large garbage bags including some pool cage metal.
- March 10-12th - Eagle Scout TJ attended the Order of the Arrow Spring Fellowship at Camp Miles.
- March 12th, the Boy Scouts had a cleanup at the Mason's Lodge.
- March 15th, the Boy Scouts were at William R. Gaines Jr. Veterans Memorial Park for the Beirut Peacekeepers Memorial Tower Groundbreaking.
- March 16-20th was the Spring Break trip to Fort Clinch State Park north of Jacksonville.



Donna Graves,
Scout Representative

Bloomin' 4 Good

For the entire month of April, *Pilgrim Church Food Pantry* will receive \$1 donation from every \$12.99 Bloomin' 4 Good bouquet with the red circle sticker sold at Winn-Dixie's Kings Hwy, Port Charlotte location.

The Winn-Dixie Bloomin' 4 Good Program is an easy way for you to support our food pantry. Every month, Winn-Dixie selects a hunger organization to benefit from the sales of Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquets.

Since the Program launched in October 2021, over \$150,000 has been donated to more than 1,000 hunger organizations. 98 bouquets have been sold during our dedicated months, that's \$98 to our Food Pantry Program!

Brighten someone's day while giving back locally! Purchasing a Bloomin' 4 Good Bouquet at the Kings Hwy Winn-Dixie in April, will help our organization serve our community better.



Women's Fellowship

The Pilgrim Women's Fellowship meets again on Thursday morning, April 20, at 10:00 a.m. in the Library. (You must use the Joyful Noise School Entrance).

Our discussion will be a summary of the GRACE video series of Max Lucado. In this session on Sufficient and Sustaining Grace we will learn of the assurances of God's power to support and move us forward during times of hardship and challenge. Just like the ones Pilgrim Church is facing as we recover first from COVID -19 and then from Hurricane Ian. All women of the church need to join us and become a part of the conversation. After the meeting the group will share lunch at a local restaurant together.

Mission of the Month Virginia B Andes Clinic

For those who are uninsured and within 200% of the poverty level, the community clinic is available.

- Free medical care office visit.
- Free diagnostic screening.
- Free limited specialty services
- Free OTC and Rx Medications.
- Free diagnostic tools, including blood pressure and blood sugar monitors, strips, lancets.
- Free nebulizers.
- Free vaccinations.

Join us April 16 for a special presentation. Or for more information: www.volunteercare.org or on Facebook: Virginia B Andes Volunteer Community Clinic.

Prayer Partners

Prayer is conversation with God. Are you on speaking terms with Him?

The Bible exhorts us to "pray at all times with thanksgiving" (Philippians 4:6). As we complete the season of Lent we should be vigilant to pray thanking God for the gift of His only son who opened the gates of heaven to us.

Thank God in advance for the answers to all your requests. He is working to release those blessings even before we ask.

Let us continue to ask in humility for His wisdom, discernment and guidance as we lead up to the great celebration of His Resurrection.

Join us on Wednesday mornings at 10:00 a.m. for prayer? Call Jacque Ross (941-258-2597) and she will include you by conference call.

And Jesus came and said to them, "All authority in heaven and on earth has been given to me. 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 and teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded you. And remember, I am with you always, to the end of the age." *Matthew 28: 18-20*



Business News

Council Highlights from the Moderator

Things are still moving along with the restoration process, though it may not look like it. Work is set to begin in early April! (Our patience will be rewarded once we are back at home. Safe, snug, and DRY.)

We have had door to door driving service over at Kings Gate for our Sunday Worship Service. You can now hop on a golf cart from your car to the front of the lobby for service. This curtesy is provided by our volunteers, Dean Fritz & Sandee Ewing. (Thank you!)

Relighting Pilgrim will be an expensive project to fund as we move forward with our restoration. We will more than likely complete this in stages. Our Properties and Grounds Committee have started the first stage of the project by walking the property and repairing/salvaging what they can and planning out what is still needed with the costs associated. They are continuing their research by bringing consulting with lighting experts and electricians to ensure our wiring is efficient.

Joyful Noise has cancelled its summer camp program this year. We cannot ensure that the Community Center would be ready in time. A delay of this decision would leave a very short time frame for parents to find childcare if ours could not open.

After a meeting with our Insurance Liaison, we have learned that our insurance premiums and deductibles will increase with our next policy. We will start building back our reserves for this and discuss further fundraising options as restoration continues.

Finance Committee will continue to tweak our budget this next month for the new quarter, including the summer program cancellation. Discussions continue looking at different avenues of bringing in revenue – via fundraisers, craft shows, yard sales, etc. – but everything is on hold until we have restored buildings.

We continue to follow safety protocols during our reconstruction. Please do NOT enter any of the construction areas unless you have prior authorization. Your safety and our workers' safety are very important. (Thank you.)

Several congregation members have come to different Council members, including myself recently. They have brought items of questions and concerns. We are always happy to answer any questions, or get an answer to you (via e-mail or phone call). If it needs more research, we will add it to our agenda for the next Council meeting for further discussion.

If you have ever wondered what goes on at a Council meeting, come check one out! They are always open to attend. Your voice matters to Council and myself. These meetings are a great way to be part of the ministry that is happening at Pilgrim Church.

Jessica Warne-Emard, Moderator

Ways you can be part:

- ♥ Pray for reconstruction: insurance red tape, workers, contractor planning.
- ♥ Join a committee and share your experiences. ♥ Volunteer on our Work Days.
- ♥ Give financial support. ♥ Share ideas on fundraising. ♥ Pray often.

Sunday

Monday

Tuesday

Wednesday

Thursday

Friday

Saturday

						1 9:00am Work Day 5:00pm BSA Troop 351 Pasta Dinner
2 Palm/Passion Sunday 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	3 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm AA - Women	4	5 12:00pm Lent Bible Study 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal 6:30pm Lent Bible Study	6 Maundy Thursday 6:30pm Worship	7 Good Friday Office/JN Closed	8 Holy Saturday
9 Easter 7:00am Sunrise Worship 9:00am Worship	10 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm Missions Mtg 7:00pm AA - Women	11	12 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	13 6:30pm Buildings & Grounds Ministry	14	15
16 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	17 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 6:30pm Finance Committee Mtg 7:00pm AA - Women	18	19 Newsletter Article Deadline 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	20 9:15am PBJ Sandwich Makers 10:00am Pilgrim Women's Fellowship	21	22
23 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	24 4:30pm Handbell Rehearsal 7:00pm AA - Women	25 7:00pm Council Mtg	26 6:30pm Choir Rehearsal	27	28	29
30 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	<div>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</div> <div>Joyful Noise Learning Center 941-629-4821, www.joyfulnoisec.org</div>					



The Statement of Faith of the United Church of Christ is what is known as a creed. A creed (from the Latin *credo*, which means "I believe") is a formal statement of essential beliefs that serve as the foundation of our faith.

When spoken communally within a service of worship, it is a proclamation before God of what we hold to be true as a community of faith and as individuals disciples. Moreover, it unites us together by expressing our shared faith. We recite the Statement of Faith as a prayer. It is an offering to each other and to God.

Not only are we making a public declaration of our personal faith, we are linking ourselves together with our denominational brothers and sisters with Christ, and other Christian brothers and sisters around the world who share our beliefs. Therefore, we are joining together to commit to living the tenet's of the creed in the presence of God and as a community in worship.

Give thanks to the Lord and proclaim

His greatness. Let the whole world know what He has done.

Sing to Him; yes, sing His

praises. Tell everyone about

His wonderful deeds. Exult in

His holy name; rejoice, you who

worship the Lord. *Search for the*

***Lord* and for His strength;**

continually seek Him.

-Psalm 105:1-4

All members of the United Church of Christ are called to minister to others and to participate as equals in the common worship of God, each with direct access to the mercies of God through personal prayer and devotion.

For those who asked for copies and for those who may have missed the inserts in worship for March. Here's material about Pilgrim Church and Worship.

United Church of Christ Statement of Faith

We believe in You, O God, Eternal Spirit,
God of our Savior Jesus Christ and our God,
and to Your deeds we testify:

You call the worlds into being,
create persons in Your own image,
and set before each one the ways of life
and death.

You seek in holy love to save all people from
aimlessness and sin.

You judge people and nations by Your righteous
will declared through prophets and
apostles.

In Jesus Christ, the man of Nazareth, our
crucified and risen Savior,
You have come to us
and shared our common lot,
conquering sin and death
and reconciling the world to Yourself.

You bestow upon us Your Holy Spirit,
creating and renewing the church of Jesus
Christ, binding in covenant faithful people of
all ages, tongues, and races.

You call us into Your church
to accept the cost and joy of discipleship,
to be Your servants in the service of others,
to proclaim the gospel to all the world
and resist the powers of evil,

to share in Christ's baptism and eat at His
table, to join Him in His passion and victory.

You promise to all who trust You
forgiveness of sins and fullness of grace,
courage in the struggle for justice and
peace, Your presence in trial and rejoicing,
and eternal life in Your realm which has no
end.

Blessing and honor, glory and power be unto
You. Amen.

Introduction to Worship: Why We Do What We Do

The Lectionary, Liturgy and the Christian Calendar

The lectionary is a pre-selected collection of scriptural readings from the Bible designed to be used for worship and study. The liturgical year in a 3-year cycle that includes a reading from the Old Testament, a Psalm, a reading from the Epistles, and a Gospel reading. The Old Testament Readings are on a rotation of the story of the Patriarchs and the Exodus in Year A, the monarchical narratives in Year B, and readings from the Prophets in Year C. The gospel reading rotation is from one of the synoptic gospels: Year A: Matthew, Year B: Mark, Year C: Luke.

Liturgical Seasons and Colors

The colors of the lectionary are representative of the Liturgical seasons of western Christianity. These seasons are Advent, Christmas, Ordinary Time (Time After Epiphany), Lent, Easter, Pentecost and Ordinary Time (Time After Pentecost). The liturgical year begins with Advent.

Each season is represented by a color:

- Advent: Violet or Blue
- Christmas: White
- Epiphany: Green
- Lent: Violet or Blue
- Easter: White
- Pentecost: Red
- Ordinary Time after Pentecost: Green

What Designates the Seasons

The Christian calendar, aka liturgical calendar, is an annual schedule that commemorates certain days and seasons related to the history of salvation. The seasons in liturgical calendar are Advent, Christmas, Epiphany and the Time after Epiphany, Lent, Easter, Pentecost and the Time after Pentecost.

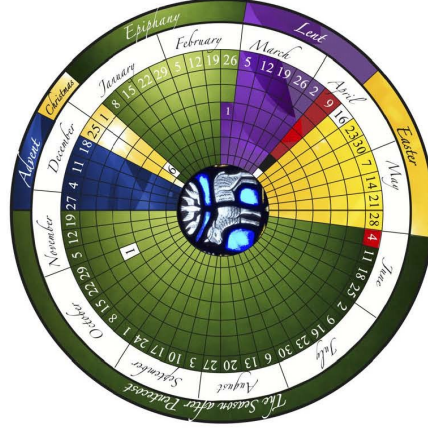
The start of a new year, begins on the first Sunday of Advent Sunday, four Sundays before Christmas Day. Since Christmas has been set to December 25, the first day of Advent changes slightly each year.

Epiphany is also known as Three Kings' Day, 12 days after Christmas. In most Protestant churches, Epiphany is usually celebrated on the Sunday closest to January 6.

Lent is a season of forty days, not counting Sundays, which begins on Ash Wednesday and ends on Holy Saturday.

Easter Sunday is the holiest day on the Christian calendar. Scripture records the death and resurrection of Jesus occurring around the time of the Jewish Passover. Passover continues to be celebrated on the first full moon following the vernal equinox, when the Sun crosses the equator going north. In 325 CE, the Council of Nicaea established that Easter would be held on the first Sunday after Passover. For this reason, Easter can fall from March 22 through April 25.

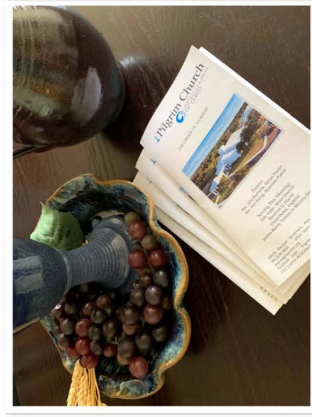
Pentecost Sunday is a commemoration and celebration of the official birthday of the Christian church, marked by the receiving of the Holy Spirit by the early believers (Acts 2:1-4). Pentecost Sunday is observed on the seventh Sunday after Easter.



Order of Worship

"O come, let us sing to the Lord; let us make a joyful noise to the rock of our salvation! Let us come into his presence with thanksgiving; let us make a joyful noise to him with songs of praise! O come, let us worship and bow down; let us kneel before the Lord, our Maker!"

Psalms 95:1-2, 6



Worship is at the center of Christian life. It is a time when we gather to honor, praise, and thank God. During a typical worship service, there is time for reflection and repentance, praise, and thanksgiving. There is also time included for silence and listening, as we engage the scriptures to hear God's still-speaking voice. Our worship service can be broken down into four sections: praise and worship, thanksgiving, listening, and sending. Sometimes there is a fifth section: communion. What follows is an outline and description of our Order of Worship.



Section 1: Worship

Prelude

The Prelude marks the beginning of worship. It is a time of spiritual preparation. Instrumental music during this time is meditative, encouraging worshipers to pray silently in order to focus on and open their hearts to God, who is present through the Holy Spirit.

Call to Worship

The Call to Worship is a spoken invitation to worship, and serves to remind us of our charge to worship God and God alone. It is often a responsive reading, allowing the congregation to respond and acknowledge their call to and participation in worship.

Opening Prayer or Invocation

The Opening Prayer is also known as an invocation. It is a prayer through which God's Spirit is formally invited to be present and to let its presence be known during our time of worship. We ask that the Holy Spirit bless our sacred time of worship and guide us to ensure that our worship remains God-focused and pleasing to God. The opening prayer may also serve as a prayer of confession as we prepare to enter worship with pure intentions and a clean heart.

Opening Hymn

The Opening Hymn is one of praise and celebration. Usually, this hymn is energetic, with its focus being on acknowledging and proclaiming the glory of God. The congregation joins together in singing as one voice, one body.

Section 2: Thanksgiving

Blessing of Tithes and Gifts

During this time our tithes and gifts are brought before the Lord. Scripture calls us to give back a portion of what God has given us, reminding us that everything belongs to God. In the same vein, our tithes are tokens of our gratitude for God's blessings. Tithing also constitutes participation in the ministry of the gospel; all tithes and gifts go to support the ministry of Christ's church.

Section 3: Listening

Scripture Readings

During this part of worship, scriptures from the Old Testament, Gospels, and Epistles/New Testament (letters and the book of Revelation) are read. Through these sacred stories and teachings, God continues to reveal Himself and to teach us. Therefore, we are to listen intently as the scripture is read to hear God's still-speaking voice.

Choir Anthem

The anthem is a song of worship, praise, or reflection that is inspired by scripture. Its purpose is to enhance our understanding of the day's scriptures, especially the scripture on which the pastor will preach.

Statement of Faith

The purpose of the Statement of Faith is not to exclude and isolate true believers, but rather to provide a common ground of truth which serves as the basis of communal worship, fellowship and service to Christ as one spiritual body and family in the local church. Also, it serves as a public declaration of faith for individual worshipers and for the community of faith.

Hymn

Like all hymns, this one is a song of praise. However, this particular hymn, which follows the scripture readings, usually ties in with the scripture on which the pastor will preach to help reiterate the message of the sermon.

Sermon

This is the Pastor's message for the week. The goal of the sermon is to connect the message from scripture with our lives today in meaningful ways. Sermons are not taken lightly. There is much prayer and study that goes into preparing the message. The pastor delivers the sermon with humility, trusting that the Holy Spirit's voice will speak through his/her words.

Moment of Reflection

This time allows us to prayerfully reflect on the words spoken in the sermon before the worship proceeds.

Prayers of the People and The Lord's Prayer

The prayers of the people is when we join together to pray for each other, our neighbors, and others around the world. The pastor begins the prayer and then holds a moment of silence so that we may lift up silent prayers, praying for those on our prayer list and those we carry with us in our hearts. The pastor then concludes the prayer, asking the congregation to join in on reciting The Lord's Prayer at the very end.

Section 4: Communion

Communion

This sacrament is observed on the first Sunday of every month and on special occasions. Communion is open, all are welcome to Christ's table. However, it is not mandatory to partake.

Communion is a shared meal that Christ's commands us to observe. We share the cup and the bread as a reminder of the new covenant made through the body and blood of Jesus Christ, given to us for the forgiveness of sin. We find the recollection of Jesus' last meal and his command to observe it "in remembrance of me" recorded in all four Gospels.

Section 5: Sending

Closing Hymn

The closing hymn is traditionally one of commissioning. It reminds us of our call to be disciples - to go and proclaim the gospel through our words and actions. This hymn may also reiterate the message of the scripture and sermon.

Benediction

A benediction is a blessing. On behalf of God, the pastor blesses the people in accordance to God's promises found in scripture. Having engaged with God through worship, we leave knowing we are deeply loved by God!

Postlude

The postlude is instrumental music played while you leave the worship space. It is usually upbeat and celebratory. While it is being played, the Pastor is at the door of the worship space to greeting folks as they leave to serve the Lord...

The Sacraments

The Preamble to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ: *"In accordance with the teaching of our Lord and the practice prevailing among evangelical Christians, the United Church of Christ recognizes two sacraments: Baptism and the Lord's Supper or Holy Communion."*

Sacraments are ritual actions in worship which were instituted by Jesus and recorded in scripture. In the sacraments of baptism and communion we ask the Holy Spirit to use water, bread, and wine to make visible the grace, forgiveness, and presence of God in Christ.

Baptism

The sacrament of baptism has been said to be "a visual representation of an inner event." It signifies one's faith in Jesus as the crucified and risen savior. Through baptism, one communicates their acknowledgment that they have been buried and resurrected with Christ, putting to death their old self to walk with Christ in newness of life (Romans 6:3-4). In other words, one's baptism symbolizes the gift of new life in Christ and acceptance of that gift.

Baptism also symbolizes a believer's incorporation into Christ's church. It demonstrates one's desire to learn and grow as a disciple of Christ and to be in communion with other brothers and sisters in Christ. It conveys a commitment to share one's gifts and talents with the Body of Christ in order to proclaim the gospel and serve others in Christ's name.

As the United Church of Christ's Common Book of Worship states, "Through baptism, Christians are brought into union with Christ, with each other and with the church of every time and place."

Please see Pastor John if you have not been baptized and would like to learn more.

COMMUNION

The sacrament of Communion is full of meaning and symbolism. In breaking the bread and pouring the cup, we first and foremost remember the crucifixion of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ. It is through Jesus's sacrifice that we have been reconciled to God and welcomed into relationship with God. During the recognition of Holy Communion, a believer is to reflect on their propensity to sin and God's unmerited, overwhelming grace. Communion also encourages one to respond to God's sacrificial love by picking up their own cross and following Christ in humble service (Matthew 16:24), loving others as Christ has loved us.

Moreover, this sacrament is a communal event. We come to Christ's table together. *By sharing the bread and the cup, participants are reminded of their belonging to the body of Christ. We are then challenged to reflect upon Jesus' prayer for His disciples to be one (John 17:21), as Christ is one with God and the Holy Spirit, to work together towards building Christ's kingdom here and now.*

Communion at Pilgrim Church is celebrated on the first Sunday of each month and on special liturgical calendar dates.

The invitation to receive Communion is extended to all seeking God's grace to proceed to Christ's table. We serve communion by intinction. This is the practice of partly dipping the consecrated bread, into the consecrated grape juice. We use grape juice, instead of wine, so all may partake. Prefilled cups with wafer are available if you are not comfortable with intinction. Gluten free prefilled cups are also available. If you are unable to come forward during communion, but wish to receive the elements, please stay in your seat and we'll come to you.