



Pilgrim Church
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

From the Desk of Pastor John

Welcome, 2024! I am excited to be greeting the new year: a new year, a new chapter to write! We are all filled with hope and anticipation here at Pilgrim United Church of Christ.

The year is already off to a wonderful start. We are finally back on our campus after 15 months of displacement due to Hurricane Ian! We appreciate Kings Gate's willingness to host us for Sunday worship services - for way longer than anticipated, I might add! However, there is no place like "home." Though we are not yet back in the sanctuary (more on the progress of its restoration is to come in the near future), to be back in the Community Center is, indeed, a blessing for which we are grateful.

Moreover, we are thankful for our contractor, 8:18 Renovation and Restoration, for their compassion, grace, and hard work. They have gone above and beyond to support us and partner with us to get to where we are today. Thanks to them, we were able to worship in our own space on Christmas Eve and will be able to continue gathering in our Community Center throughout the new year! They truly are a Godsend!

Pilgrim's future is filled with new possibilities, indeed! As we discussed in the first session of our Advent Bible study, we can have the audacity to hope and the freedom to dream because we know that God is "movin' and groovin'" all around us. The mere fact that we are still here as a congregation and have returned to our campus is testament to God's providence. He has opened doors, led us to the right people, and worked miracles as we have met challenges and setbacks.

"God is
faithful, by
whom you
were called into
the fellowship
of his Son,
Jesus Christ our
Lord."

1 Corinthians 1:9

(Continued on page 2)

January 2024 Newsletter

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

Pilgrim UCC certainly has a testimony of God's grace to share!

As I look back over the past 15 months, there is no denying that God has been faithful; God has shown up in the good times and during the challenging times. I can say with confidence that he will continue to show up as we move into our future.

But here's the thing: we must show up, too. We are called to be in relationship with God, and relationships cannot be one-sided. We must reciprocate in faith or we are simply taking God's love and grace for granted. In other words, we must do our part, using our gifts, talents, and resources to support and nurture this sacred community. God has knitted us together, calling us to teach and share the gospel, love our neighbor, and worship together. Answering this call is how we honor God and show our gratitude for the relationship we have with God through Christ.

Back in November, you received a letter from me discussing the financial state of Pilgrim. Many of you have responded generously, and your gifts have helped tremendously. However, we aren't yet out of the woods. Council and the Finance Committee had to make the difficult decision to deplete most of our reserves to meet the financial demands of the church. Therefore, we have many financial challenges ahead of us. Moving forward into 2024, I ask that you note the weekly financial statement printed in every Sunday bulletin, and prayerfully reflect upon giving above and beyond your normal tithing.

Church leadership and I are already dreaming of new ministries and fundraisers, as well as fellowship and outreach opportunities. None of these events are possible without volunteers. We will need individuals who can do the heavy lifting, like setting up tables for a fundraising event, as well as handle the light work, like stuffing letters into envelopes. Every gift and talent is welcome and needed. Our ministries and events cannot happen without you. So, be on the lookout for opportunities to serve! If you aren't sure where you can be of service, please reach out to me! Together, we will find a ministry in need of the gifts and talents God has given you.

God always shows up; we must show up, too.

It can seem daunting to step out in faith to serve and to give sacrificially. I get that. But, friends, let me tell you, it's worth it. When we choose to partner with God, we get to experience God's grace on a whole new level and see with our own eyes what God is doing in our church and community.

I can't wait to see how God is going to show up in 2024. I pray you show up, too, and join in!

Blessings and Happy 2024!

Pastor John

Pilgrim United Church of Christ

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Maintenance Technician:
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Office Administrator:
Cat Foster
office@pilgrimonline.org

Organist:
Cheryl Huber

Pianist:
Maverick Li

Children's Ministry Director:
Jessica Warne

Bell Choir Director:
Russ Whittaker

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

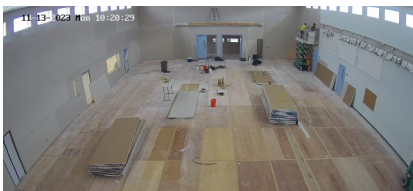
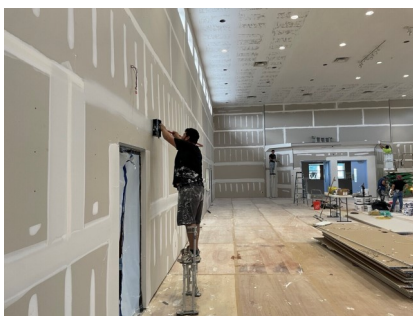
Director of Joyful Noise:
Cynthia Poudrette
jndirector@pilgrimonline.org

Business

Annual Meeting

Ministry area reports will be due January 17 for the Annual Report.
The Annual meeting will be held immediately following worship on Sunday, January 28.

Transformation of the Community Center Interior



"Whatever you do, work heartily, as for the Lord and not for men, knowing that from the Lord you will receive the inheritance as your reward. You are serving the Lord Christ."
Colossians 3:23-24

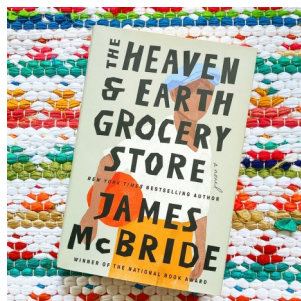
Ministry & Outreach

Women's Fellowship

This small group started December with a day trip to the Myakka Elephant Ranch which was an amazing encounter with two 50 year old Asian elephants named Carol and Patty, weighing 7,645 and 7,190 lbs. respectively. Then the Fellowship shared a tasty Amish lunch at Der Dutchman including a wacky gift exchange. We ended the Christmas season by delivering gift bags and cookies to 8 homebound church members. This group focuses on fellowship, new experiences, and serving needs of Pilgrim Church

Mark January 18 at 10:00 a.m. for our next regular meeting. Continuing with the theme of Seasons of our Lives, we will focus on the decade of ages 40-50. We will also discuss Chapter 4 of Rick Warren's book *"Created to Dream: the Six Phases God Uses to Grow Faith"*. We meet in the Church Library (between the school and the Community Center) and go out for lunch at a local restaurant. All women are welcome to join us.

The next Book club will be at 6:00 p.m. on February 5, at the home of Betsy Field. The book to be reviewed is *"The Heaven and Earth Grocery Store"* by James McBride.



Prayer Partners

Weekly prayer meetings continue by phone at 10:00 a.m. on Wednesdays. To join us call Jacque at 941-258-2597.

Missions

Everyone interested in the Missions and Outreach of Pilgrim Church are invited Monday, January 8, at 7:00 p.m. to our meeting in the Conference Room.

Christmas Food Baskets

We disbursed 40 Christmas Food Baskets including cookies and pancake mix to our teachers and homebound Veterans. Thank you to Tony and Sharon for leading this special ministry of Pilgrim Church!

Habitat for Humanity

We did not have the Apostle Build with Habitat for Humanity this year because of Hurricane Ian. We will be a part of the Apostle in 2024 for \$5000. We will be doing painting in March. The children of Joyful Noise are currently working on making angles for the Angels in the Attic. A representative will be present January 21 for our Moment for Mission.

Year in Review

We were able with a limited budget to make our projected commitments. We supported the following partners with amount shown.

- Back Back Kids - \$3000
- Virginia B. Andes Clinic - \$4000
- Homeless Coalition - \$4000
- Wings of Shelter - \$3000
- Young Life - \$2000
- Children's Network of Southwest Florida - \$2000
- Joyful Noise Teacher Emergency Fund - \$1000

We had the following partners share for a moment for mission on Sunday worship in 2023: Back Pack Kids, Homeless Coalition, Virginia B. Andes Clinic, Young Life, and Children's Network.

Respectfully Submitted, Pastor Ken

Music Ministry

The music program has continued to be active in the Palace Theater at King's Gate, but we are all anxious to get back to the Pilgrim campus. Maverick and Cheryl continue to alternate Sundays, helping both choir and congregation to worship through music. The congregation is singing enthusiastically. The choir is the largest it's been in Cheryl's 3 years with the church. 15 singers have sung in the choir on one or more Sundays recently. A new keyboard stand was purchased, making it easier to set up for services. Many choir members and their families met at Parkside Assisted Living on Dec. 13, singing carols with the residents and later sharing a potluck supper. Thank you, Donna Yorkston, for setting that up.

A Wealth of Information on the Page of a Hymnal

Have you ever looked at a page in the hymnal and wondered about the meaning of all those bits around the edges? Let's see if things can be made clearer. This article will use Hymn 477, "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus", as an example.

General terms:

A Hymn is, technically, just the words.

The music is called the Hymntune.

In the case of our example, both Hymn 477 and Hymn 481 in our hymnal, use the hymn (words) "Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus", but they use 2 different hymntunes. In the opposite case, 2 hymns may use the same hymntune. You may know that "My Country 'Tis of Thee" and "God Save Our King" have the same music.

Now let's look at Hymn 477.

At the top of the page, above the hymn number, is the category, Life in Christ. All of the hymns in this category are grouped together. This makes it easier to find hymns for a particular service theme.

Under the title, you will often find a scripture reference relating to the hymn.

Under the hymn, you will see the author of the text and the composer of the music, as well as copyright information if it is still in effect.

At the bottom right is the name of the Hymntune. These names are helpful when musicians are looking for music based on the tune, rather than the words. In this case, the Tune name is Webb.

Under the tune name are some numbers. They show the number of syllables in each line of the first verse of the hymn. This is useful to a musician looking for an alternate tune for a particular hymn. If the number of syllables for 2 hymns match, they can usually be sung to each other's tunes. This allows more variety in worship.

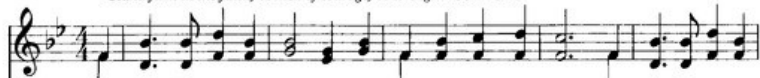
That's enough information for one time. On another occasion, we will look at the indexes in our hymnal and all they can show us.

Cheryl Huber, Organist

LIFE IN CHRIST

477 Stand Up, Stand Up for Jesus

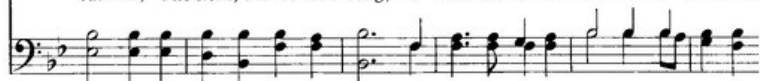
Stand firm in the faith; be men of courage; be strong. 1 Cor. 16:13



- 1. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, Ye sol - diers of the cross, Lift high His roy - al
- 2. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, The trum - pet call o - bey; Forth to the might - y
- 3. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, Stand in His strength a - lone; The arm of flesh will
- 4. Stand up, stand up for Je - sus, The strife will not be long; This day the noise of



ban - ner, It must not suf - fer loss; From vic - tory un - to vic - tory His ar - my
con - flict In this His glo - rious day, Ye that are men, now serve Him A - gainst un -
fail you—Ye dare not trust your own; Put on the gos - pel ar - mor, Each piece put
bat - tle, The next, the vic - tor's song; To him who o - ver - com - eth A crown of



shall He lead, Till ev - ery foe is van - quished And Christ is Lord in - deed.
num - bered foes; Let cour - age rise with dan - ger, And strength to strength oppose.
on with prayer; Where du - ty calls, or dan - ger, Be nev - er want - ing there.
life shall be; He with the King of glo - ry Shall reign e - ter - nal - ly.



TEXT: George Duffield, Jr.
MUSIC: George J. Webb
Alternate tune: GEIBEL at No. 481

WEBB
7.6.7.6.D.



Ministry & Outreach cont.

Joyful Noise Learning Center

Joyful Noise Learning Center ended the year with the bubbling excitement of children preparing for baby Jesus. Gifts were made, parties were held, and staff participated in a Secret Santa exchange. All teachers and staff welcome the Christmas Break (noon December 22–January 1) to enjoy the Savior's birth with their families and recharge their batteries for the New Year.

When we return on January 2, we will welcome four new families to the Center! All staff will be off and running with mid-year assessments for all children ages 3-5. Assessments will be followed up with Parent-Teacher Conferences to discuss the results. This midyear review is the most important. Assessments and conferences show growth that has been made and shed light on any children who are not progressing as much as expected. We will use these conference with parents to prepare a plan together that will enrich each child's development.

We look forward to serving our families and community in the upcoming year, our 20th year! "Since 2004, Joyful Noise Learning Center has been a ministry of Pilgrim Church. We believe childhood is precious. In a world where children are often forced to grow up too soon we offer a community of gentleness and safety where Christian values of kindness, honesty, and respect of God and others are taught with loving care."

Cynthia Poudrette, Director Joyful Noise

Al Anon

Tuesdays 10:00 a.m.
Pilgrim Church Conference Room

- Do you worry about how much someone drinks?
- Do you feel that if the drinker cared about you, he or she would stop drinking to please you?
- Are you afraid to upset someone for fear it will set off a drinking bout?
- Are holidays and gatherings spoiled because of drinking?
- Have you considered calling the police for help in fear of abuse?
- Do you search for hidden alcohol?
- Do you feel there is no one who understands your problems?

If you have answered "Yes" to any of these questions, Al-Anon may be able to help. Know someone who could use this support? Share this meeting opportunity with them!

Pilgrim Directory

Pictorial Directories need photos! We can continue to use your photo from the 2019 Directory or you may submit a new photo. You may drop off a photo at the Church Office or you may email a current photo to the Church Office at office@pilgrimonline.org. Please send by January 10.

We hope to have updated Directories available at the Annual Meeting. The updated Directory will make it easy for you to love on your Pilgrim family!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Usually 1st & 3rd Tuesdays, 2:00 p.m.
January 16, 2024

Prayer shawls are available and ready to be shared! Talk to Pastor John or the Church Office to pick up a prayer shawl to give to someone to whom it would be a blessing.

Mark your calendars: Pilgrim members and friends gather to make prayer shawls each month on the first Tuesday and third Tuesday at 2:00 p.m. (No meeting January 2)

Inexperienced? We'll teach you! Already crochet or knit, come fellowship! Visit to learn more about this ministry!

Can't attend but want to participate? Patterns and even prayer shawl prayer guides are available in the Church Office and on the welcome table.

Adult Bible Study

Sundays at 10:15 a.m.

Sunday morning Bible discussions resume on January 14 immediately after morning worship. This small group will meet in the Church Library. Our study will be on 2nd Corinthians which especially emphasizes Jesus Christ as **our sufficiency** in life's challenges.

Printer Ink Cartridges

Pilgrim Church may recycle up to 20 used cartridges per month of any used ink or toner cartridge and receive \$2 back in recycling rewards per cartridge. We collect your used ink cartridges and deliver them monthly to Staples for our credit.

"Then Jesus told his disciples, 'If any wish to come after me, let them deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For those who want to save their life will lose it, and those who lose their life for my sake will find it.'" Matthew 16:24-25

Calendars

Do you need a new calendar to note activities at your Pilgrim Church, schedule doctor appointments and mark special days? We have extras to share.

Any calendars remaining on January 10 we'll give to Joyful Noise Learning Center. The colorful large photos are excellent for art projects.

PBJ Sandwich Makers

Goal 200 sandwiches for the homeless.

Gather Thursday, January 18, at 9:15 a.m. in Room 4 of the Community Center! Return to pre-lan sandwich making space to fellowship with Pilgrim friends as you prepare the ultimate comfort food sandwiches that feed the hungry.

NA Meeting

Narcotics Anonymous

Thursdays 7:00 p.m.
Held in the Pilgrim Church Library

NA is a nonprofit fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to help each other stay clean. There is only one requirement for membership, the desire to stop using. There are no strings attached to NA. We have no initiation fees or dues, no pledges to sign, no promises to make to anyone. Anyone may join us regardless of age, race, sexual identity, creed, religion, or lack of religion. The newcomer is the most important person at any meeting, because we can only keep what we have by giving it away. We have learned from our group experience that those who keep coming to our meetings regularly stay clean.



Love Your Neighbor

January Birthdays

6	Donna Yorkston
9	Joe Gillner
17	Dave O'Keefe
17	Sharon Sweeney
18	Gert Devantier
19	Jonathan Warne-Emard
22	Tom Jones

January Anniversaries

3	Russ & Judy Whittaker
28	Don & Susan Anderson

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

January Ideas to Love Your Neighbors

- ◆ Smile.
- ◆ Write thank you notes for Christmas presents.
- ◆ Give a care package.
- ◆ Let someone go ahead of you.
- ◆ Only say nice words to yourself, it will spread.
- ◆ Send a text with a compliment.
- ◆ Make eye contact, especially with those in a wheelchair or stroller.
- ◆ Slavery and Human Trafficking Prevention Month, pray for our mission partner, Wings of Shelter.

Pilgrim Prayer List

Hurricane Recovery Ian/Idalia
Savina Krueger - cancer
John Krueger - Parkinson's
Lorraine O'Keefe - cancer
Russ Whittaker - health
Sidoney Johnston - homebound
Bill Wolf - Sandhill
Fred Ripley - PC Rehab
Bert Scott - homebound

Peg Farber - health
Jody Phillips - cancer
Jacque Ross - health
Martin & Margie Heckler - spirit and cancer
Carter & family - peace and Holy guidance, mercy
Kathy Risley - health
Frank Ross - health

Gayle Bratton - health
Ken Rhoe - health
Vickie Rhoe - health
Pat Wheatcroft - cancer
Barb Gardner - health
Barb & Don - health
Rob Fisher - health
Joe Beaudreau - health
Danny Wineland - health

Pilgrim in Pictures



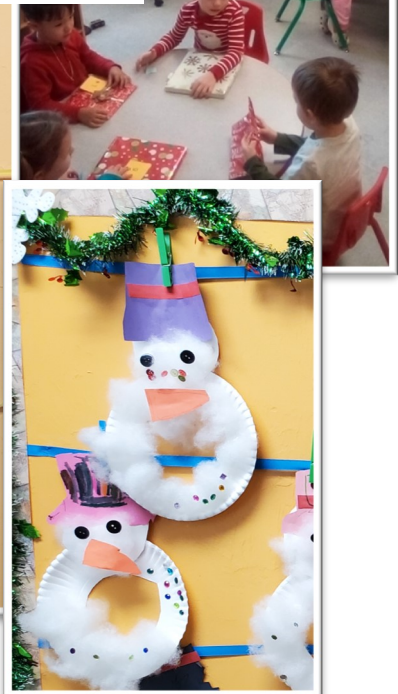
Parkside Assisted Living Facility Carol Sing



Joyful Noise Learning Center
Parties, Book Exchange and Crafts



Pilgrim Women's Fellowship
Myakka Elephant Encounter



Christmas Basket
building and delivery!



Salvation Army Bell Ringing at
Publix Peachland!

Learn and Grow

Word Find

O	G	O	D	P	S	H	I	S	A	R	O	F
G	L	O	R	Y	M	E	F	O	R	E	M	Y
O	S	L	P	M	L	A	M	P	P	N	I	N
D	T	S	R	A	L	V	M	A	P	E	S	C
M	E	W	O	R	K	E	A	T	L	W	M	R
S	A	O	C	L	M	N	T	H	E	T	S	E
P	D	R	L	P	S	S	H	E	O	O	A	A
I	F	D	A	R	E	N	E	W	F	E	E	T
R	A	L	I	G	H	T	M	Y	O	U	R	E
I	S	L	M	P	S	H	E	A	R	T	A	A
T	T	A	N	D	D	E	C	L	A	R	E	N
P	M	H	A	N	D	S	K	I	E	S	S	D
A	W	I	T	H	I	N	L	P	U	R	E	M

Your word is a lamp to my feet and a light for my path. (Ps 119:105) The	heavens declare the glory of God; the skies proclaim the work of his hands. (Ps 19:1) Create	in me a pure heart, O God, and renew a steadfast spirit within me. (Ps 51:10)
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Wait for the LORD; be strong and take heart and wait for the LORD. - Psalm 27:14

January Trivia

Psalms is one of the most encouraging books of the Bible with its emphasis on prayer, thanksgiving, and worship. Psalms is one of, if not the, richest collection of prayers, hymns and poems, including every human emotion possible — anger, frustration, fear, loneliness and sadness to bliss, joy, elation, wonder, gratitude, and everything in between. How well do you know this book?

1. The Book of Psalms is the third longest Book of the Bible with ____ different Psalms in the collection (30,147 words). *The first is Jeremiah (33,002) and the second is Genesis (32,046).
2. With the discovery of the Dead Sea Scrolls in the years ____, copies of the Psalms with the author's names were included, but 48 of the remaining Psalms are still unknown in authorship.
3. In addition to David, there are at least 6 other authors who've contributed to the Book of Psalms.
4. Fifteen of the Psalms (120-134) are designated "A Song of Ascents," and were sung by Jewish pilgrims as they made their way up to
5. The key word in the Psalms is "praise" which appears ____ times
6. The word "____" appears 71 times throughout the Psalms. The most recognized meaning of this Hebrew word is "forever." It is often interpreted as an instruction calling for a break in the singing of the Psalm, or to pause and calmly think about what you have read.
7. Psalm ____ is the shortest psalm with only 2 verses, and Psalm ____ is the longest with 176!

1. 150 2. between 1947 and 1956 3. Moses (Psalm 90), King Solomon (Psalms 72 and 127), Asaph (12 Psalms), the "sons of Korah" (11 Psalms), and Ethan the Ezrahite (Psalm 89) 4. Jerusalem for the annual feasts 5. 211 6. Selah 7. 117, 119

Lectionary Readings

In preparation for Worship read ahead and ponder! Just note, while Pastor John typically follows the lectionary, there are times the Spirit moves him to cover different passages in his Sunday sermons.

Advent Year B	First reading	Psalm	Second reading	Gospel
<u>Epiphany of the Lord</u> January 6, 2024	Isaiah 60:1-6	Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14	Ephesians 3:1-12	Matthew 2:1-12
<u>First Sunday after the Epiphany</u> Baptism of the Lord January 7, 2024	Genesis 1:1-5	Psalm 29	Acts 19:1-7	Mark 1:4-11
<u>Second Sunday after the Epiphany</u> January 14, 2024	1 Samuel 3:1-10, (11-20)	Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	John 1:43-51
<u>Third Sunday after the Epiphany</u> January 21, 2024	Jonah 3:1-5, 10	Psalm 62:5-12	1 Corinthians 7:29-31	Mark 1:14-20
<u>Fourth Sunday after the Epiphany</u> January 28, 2024	Deuteronomy 18:15-20	Psalm 111	1 Corinthians 8:1-13	Mark 1:21-28

New Year Reflections

The beginning of a new year can be exciting, overwhelming and bittersweet. It's important to take time to pause and reflect. Use these journaling prompts to cultivate a deeper faith in 2024.

- * Write down four blessings you are grateful for from 2023.
- * Describe a moment in 2023 when you felt God's presence.
- * Read and write about how to apply Psalm 46:10.
- * Journal about a recent answered prayer.
- * List four qualities of God that you are grateful for and why.
- * Read Romans 8:28 and journal about a recent time you witnessed God's faithfulness in your life.
- * List four people that you are grateful for and write a prayer or blessing for each.
- * Write a letter to your future self, sharing hopes and dreams for your faith journey.
- * Reflect on the qualities of Jesus that inspire you.
- * Journal about a recent interaction that challenged you to live our your faith more boldly.
- * Write a prayer of surrender, giving all your worries and fears to God.
- * Reflect on a Bible verse that recently inspired you. Write it down and explain its impact on your faith.
- * Write a letter to God expressing your hopes, dreams and intentions for the new year.

Psalm 37 Goals for the New Year

1. Do not worry, fret (vs 1)
2. Do good (vs 3 & 27 – Listed twice!)
3. Delight in the Lord (vs 4 & 23 – Twice again)
4. Commit your way to the Lord (vs 5)
5. Be still before the Lord (vs 7)
6. Avoid being angry (vs 8)
7. Be meek (vs 11)
8. Enjoy peace and prosperity (vs 11)
9. Be content with what I have (vs 16)
10. Be blameless (vs 18)
11. Give generously (vs 21)
12. Speak wisely and just (vs 30)
13. Hope in the Lord (vs 34)
14. Seek peace (vs 37)



January 2024

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