



Pilgrim Church



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

February 2026

24515 Rampart Boulevard

Port Charlotte, FL 33980

941-629-2633

www.pilgrimonline.org

office@pilgrimonline.org

Office Hours:

Mon - Thurs 8:00 am - 2:00 pm

Associate Pastor:

Rev. Ken Ewing

Bridge Pastor:

Rev. Merci Hotckin

Moderator:

Jessica Warne-Emard

jawarne77@gmail.com

Maintenance Technician:

Gene Burnell

Office Administrator:

Cat Foster

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Pianist: Shirley Donohue

Children's Ministry Director:

Jessica Warne-Emard

Bell Choir Director:

Russ Whittaker

Joyful Noise Learning Center

941-629-4821

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jndirector@pilgrimonline.org

Ewing's Doings

The Season of Lent

Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21

February 19 begins the Lenten Season. Ash Wednesday starts forty days of prayer, fasting and almsgiving in preparation for the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. It is a time for reflection and making sacrifices for the deepening of one's spirituality.

The Scriptures share the beginning of Jesus' ministry from different perspectives. In Mark, Jesus' first act is an exorcism. In Luke, it's a sermon back in the hometown of Nazareth. In John, it's the miraculous and abundant sign of turning water into wine. For Matthew the inaugural act of Jesus' public ministry is the Sermon on the Mount, in Chapters 5-7. Jesus sits the followers down and teaches them what it means to be a disciple. Our reading for Ash Wednesday in Matthew falls in the middle of the pedagogical (instructive) lesson and warns against religious practices done for the sake of attention and admiration. This is a wonderful teaching for the beginning of Lent as millions of Christians choose to adopt a practice to mark the Season, whether abstention from certain foods and drinks or adopting a habit that might bring one closer to God. No matter what choice, it is tempting for us to want to let others know about it, to do it to impress people, or to engage in the practice for the sake of the practice itself. The Pharisees love to show off their piety. Jesus warns us not to do the same.

Jesus reminds us that real piety is between ourselves and God, and not to show others how religious we are in life. During the Lenten Season may we take on a practice that will deepen our spiritual discipline in preparation to receive the Resurrection of Jesus Christ anew. Amen.

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

Prayer List

- Hurricane Recovery & Rebuild
- Pastor Search
- Pilgrim Church & Leaders
- Beverly Weber - hospice
- Savina Krueger - cancer
- John Krueger - health
- Joyce Faber - health
- Caregivers - peace & strength
- Bradley Stratton - health
- Jerry Watkins - health
- Betty Dicico - health
- Deidra Setser family and friends - sympathies
- Carter & family - peace and healing
- Bud Trayner - health
- Bill Epps - Solaris
- Bob McWhirter family and friends - sympathies
- Judy Michaels - health
- Mike Faber - health
- Carole Worster - peace
- Peace on Earth & Good Will to All
- Pat Wheatcroft - cancer
- Doug Terry - cancer
- Laine Nipper - health
- Kathy Phillips - hospice
- Fred & Dee Ripley - health

Celebrating Pilgrims

Birthdays

- 10 John Krueger
- 12 Jane Beaudreau
- 17 Kevin Beaver
- 18 Carol Veigel

Anniversary

- 21 John & Savinia Krueger

Did we miss your special date? Please contact the church office—by phone or email—so we can update our records. We'll be glad to make sure your special day is included!

Missions

As millions of people tune in to watch the Super Bowl, we're also tuning in to the needs of our neighbors. The Souper Bowl of Caring is about taking action



to fight hunger at the local level, ensuring that no one has to go without the food they need.

We are collecting cans of soup, get it "Soup"er Bowl, on Superbowl Sunday, February 8, for the food pantry and the little food pantry. Last year we collected 135 cans!

Help us reach our goal of 150 cans and make a difference in our community. Whether you're a sports fan or not, it's a chance to be part of something bigger. Let's make the year's Souper Bowl of Caring the most successful one yet!

After Souper Bowl Sunday we'll spend the rest of February collecting socks and underwear for the students of Deep Creek Elementary.

Apostle Build Dates are on the calendar! February 3, 8:30 a.m. Please join in this moment of blessing of the Angels in the Attic as the paper angels are attached to the attic beams. And then Save the Date, if all goes as scheduled (which it normally does) our paint day is set for March 14. Sign up at worship to give a few hours and serve this Habitat Apostles Build!

Season In Lent

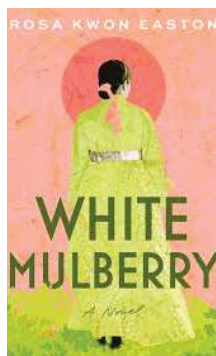
Several opportunities for you to grow closer to our Lord and Savior as you pause to reflect on Lent. Lent is a significant 40-day season of spiritual preparation, repentance, prayer, fasting, and almsgiving, leading up to Easter, commemorating Jesus's time in the wilderness before his public ministry. It begins with ashes marked on foreheads as a symbol of mortality and penance, with Sundays typically excluded from the 40-day count as "mini-Easters", and concludes with Holy Week. Watch for details on the Ash Wednesday Service, review the daily calendar for Pray - Fast - Give, and make this a special Lenten Season in your spiritual walk.

“And whenever you fast, do not look somber, like the hypocrites, for they mark their faces to show others that they are fasting. Truly I tell you, they have received their reward. But when you fast, put oil on your head and wash your face, so that your fasting may be seen not by others but by your Father who is in secret, and your Father who sees in secret will reward you. - MaThew 6:16-18

Pilgrim Women's Fellowship

February is a month filled with special events as we assemble Valentine Gift Bags for home bound members on February 5, and continue in our video course *Survey of the Bible* at our regular meeting on February 19, at 10:00 a.m. in the Library.

The next Book Club will meet on February 26, at 6:00 p.m. at the home of Judi Wilson. The selection is *White Mulberry: A Novel* by Rosa Kwan Easton. The thetoric fiction immerses us in Asian culture as we meet a young girl who moves from Korea to Japan in 1928, for new opportunities only to realize that she must pass as Japanese to survive the rising anti-Korean sentiments. The life choices she has to make remind us challenges we have faced and the universal struggles of seeking love and protecting our time-honored relationships.



All women of the church are invited to join the small group of service, discipleship, and fellowship. You will be welcomed!

Adult Bible Study

The Sunday Bible study small group continues to discuss the Gospel of Luke and review the ministry of Jesus. Proceeding verse by verse and chapter by chapter we orally read the scripture and seek to understand its content as it applies to the messages for us today. In the new year, we challenge you to “take your Bible off the shelf and carry it in your heart”.



Care Group

The Care Group plays an important role in supporting the Pilgrim Church family, the ministry offers a loving space where we share our faith journeys, pray together, listen to one another, and respond to the needs that arise among us. No concern is too small or too big—we walk alongside one another through whatever life brings.

The Care Group meets on Tuesdays from 12:00 noon to 1:30 p.m. in the church Conference Room. Come as you are and join us in a spirit of care, compassion, and community.

Joyful Noise Learning Center

Students are learning the importance of kindness, friendship, and love in February. Classrooms are creating artwork to express what they are learning and sharing the with their friends and families. Classroom Valentine's Day parties are planned and ready for parents to attend with their child for a fun-filled afternoon.

Our K-1 and VPK classrooms are focused on academic progression working towards kindergarten, first, and second grades. Mid-year assessments have been done for each level with parent conferences scheduled to share their child's academic growth. Assessments are done three times a year to monitor a student's academic progress from the start of the year until the end of the school year. Teachers and parents love these conferences as it really shows the child's growth.

Now that Early Learning falls under their jurisdiction, our VPK classrooms are also observed this month by the Department of Education. The observation looks for several key components on our FL Standards for Early Education to ensure our teachers (and school) are in compliance. We continue to do very well with all our annual observations and this year we will do the same. We are ready!

Spring pictures are scheduled for the end of the month. Boys and girls will have their pictures taken with fun spring colors and Easter/spring props. Not only are each individual student is pictured, but siblings are also able to have photos together. These are always a hit with families.

Summer Camp calendars and schedules are being finalized. We like to start the process months in advance to ensure that we are able to provide information to families early enough for them to to make plans as needed. Each summer we open the Community Center to our elementary school aged students while they are out of school. Daily crafts, games, field trips, and other fun activities are coordinated for the appropriate age group every week. We are planning to have another full summer of fun!

Joyful Noise will be closed Monday, February 16, in honor of President's Day.

Property & Grounds

The property and grounds is a team dedicated to providing a safe and welcoming environment for our church and school campus staff and visitors. We provide maintenance and repairs as needed.

The following is a summary of our accomplishments for the past month:

- Reinforced the floor and ramp in the Sanctuary to address the sponginess in those areas
- Installed a light sensor to turn the lights on the sign and flag at the Rampart entrance eliminating the need for the timer
- Coordinated the installation of the new hurricane windows in Joyful Noise classrooms over the Christmas and New Years holidays
- Replaced light bulbs in church conference room with brighter more efficient LED lights
- Installed the HVAC vent covers in the areas of the church where they were removed during demolition
- Started the process of installing the toilets and sinks in the church bathrooms
- Started repairing the damage to the hardwood steps in the Sanctuary
- Put new banners up for Joyful Noise on Rampart
- Installed new doorstops at Joyful Noise
- Looked into leaking sink

FOR GOD
SO LOVED THE
WORLD THAT HE GAVE
HIS ONLY
BEGOTTEN
SON SO
THAT WHOEVER
BELIEVES IN HIM
SHALL NOT PERISH
BUT HAVE ETERNAL
LIFE

JOHN 3:16

Council Report

Work in the Sanctuary continues to move forward. We are thankful to those vendors and contractors that have taken the time out of their busy schedules to fit us in as they are able so we do not have to wait for months.

This is a list of items that have been completed:

- Electric has been restored with upgrades made as needed for LED
- Acoustic ceiling frame and tiles along with the insulation has been completed in the entry narthex and restrooms
- Carpeting, as well as the laminate for the kitchen area, has been ordered to match what we already had as close as we could based on their samples
- Chairs will be ordered to arrive close to the time frame after carpeting is completed
- Acoustic sound paneling cannot be installed until after the carpet and chairs are in place as they will significantly change the sound balance of the room
- There are many big-ticket items that will need to be completed once we are back in our Sanctuary. These items are not needed to be completed right away, but eventually will need the attention to be completed:
 - Reflective window tint (for security)
 - Audio and visual components (computers and projectors)
 - Pilgrim Church sign
 - Outside light fixtures in parking lots
 - Resurfacing the parking lot
 - Landscaping the campus



There are many opportunities to help Pilgrim Church. Please reach out to the church office to see where your gift of time and talent can be matched.

The next Council Meeting is set in the Church Library for February 24, at 6:30 p.m. You are invited to attend and learn more about the business of Pilgrim Church.

Learn & Grow

the Steadfast Love: Psalm 136

- ¹ O give thanks to the LORD, for He is good,
for His steadfast love endures forever.
- ² O give thanks to the God of gods,
for His steadfast love endures forever.
- ³ O give thanks to the Lord of lords,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁴ who alone does great wonders,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁵ who by understanding made the heavens,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁶ who spread out the earth on the waters,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁷ who made the great lights,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁸ the sun to rule over the day,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ⁹ the moon and stars to rule over the night,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁰ who struck Egypt through their firstborn,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹¹ and brought Israel out from among them,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹² with a strong hand and an outstretched arm,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹³ who divided the Red Sea in two,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁴ and made Israel pass through the midst of it,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁵ but overthrew Pharaoh and his army in the Red Sea,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁶ who led His people through the wilderness,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁷ who struck down great kings,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁸ and killed famous kings,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ¹⁹ Sihon, king of the Amorites,
for His steadfast love endures forever;
- ²⁰ and Og, king of Bashan,
for His steadfast love endures forever;

²¹ and gave their land as a heritage,
for His steadfast love endures forever;

²² a heritage to His servant Israel,
for His steadfast love endures forever.

²³ It is He who remembered us in our low estate,
for His steadfast love endures forever;

²⁴ and rescued us from our foes,
for His steadfast love endures forever;

²⁵ who gives food to all flesh,
for His steadfast love endures forever.

²⁶ O give thanks to the God of heaven,
for His steadfast love endures forever.

Practice lectio divina (divine reading) by carefully reading aloud the first part of every verse, reflecting on every phrase. The verses of Psalm 136 offer concrete examples from history in which the Lord showed the enduring love.

Read the passage again. Respond by saying what the full text is telling you. What questions does it suggest? What details speak to you? What memories does it bring to mind? What do you find in your heart when you hear these words?

If you wish, look up the full report of each of those examples in the books of Genesis, Exodus, Joshua, and Judges. Then try to identify personally with as many of the instances of the Lord's enduring love that the verses suggest to you.

Read the passage again. Is God giving you a particular message? Is God calling you to a certain action? Offer yourself to God in prayer, if you feel called to do so. Can you identify any of the Lord's great wonders that awed you? That comforted you?

Can you name a time in your life when the Lord led you through the desert?

As you mull over each verse and each example of God's love, repeat the psalm's refrain again and again. What do you think is the most fitting response to God for His enduring love?

How can you, your family, and your community thank God for the enduring love?

Eternal God, I offer my heart thankfully for Your enduring love in my life. Forgive my faulty memory. Bless me with better memories of your love. In Jesus' name, Amen.

PRAY FAST GIVE

Lent, the season of the Christian Year that is typically observed as a time of simple living, prayer and fasting leading up to Easter, begins on Ash Wednesday. Will you take time this Lenten Season to spend time in self-examination and reflection as modeled by Jesus in Mathew 4:1-11 where He prayed and fasted for 40 days before beginning the ministry.

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|--------|--|--------|---|
| 18-Feb | Pray for the lost sheep. | 18-Mar | Fast from sweets. Pick up some jam for PBJ Ministry. |
| 19-Feb | Pray for the school staff. | 19-Mar | Send a card to someone on the prayer list. |
| 20-Feb | Fast from social media. | 20-Mar | Pray for the children in Foster Care. |
| 21-Feb | Pray for those weary. Donate time to a Habitat build or other mission project. | 21-Mar | Don't complain. Tell someone you love them. |
| 22-Feb | Pray for Pilgrim volunteers. | 22-Mar | Do something to help the Earth. Plan something for Earth Day, April 22, in gratitude for the gift from God. |
| 23-Feb | Spend an hour in silence. | 23-Mar | Pray for the scared, for the abused, for the neglected. |
| 24-Feb | Pray for the homeless/jobless. | 24-Mar | Fast from music. Allow the silence to be filled by God. |
| 25-Feb | Pray for Pilgrim Church family and future. | 25-Mar | Share a joke. |
| 26-Feb | Fast from jealousy. Offer compassion to a stranger. | 26-Mar | Pray for the world leaders. |
| 27-Feb | Pray for the sick and their medical teams. | 27-Mar | Drink only water today, avoid sodas. |
| 28-Feb | Pray for your relationship with Jesus. | 28-Mar | Love your neighbor. |
| 01-Mar | Fast from gossip. Send a text with a Bible verse. | 29-Mar | Pray for your best friend. |
| 02-Mar | Pray for the caregivers. | 30-Mar | Go last in line. |
| 03-Mar | Fast from grudges and be reconciled. | 31-Mar | Direct others to have a turn first. |
| 04-Mar | Fast from junk food. Donate to the Little Food Pantry. | 01-Apr | Pray for the lonely. Speak to a stranger. |
| 05-Mar | Pray for the depressed. | 02-Apr | Say only kind words. Offer a sincere compliment. |
| 06-Mar | Fast from snacking between meals. | 03-Apr | Write a kind note to someone. |
| 07-Mar | Fast from screen time. | 04-Apr | Pray for first responders. |
| 08-Mar | Pray for the hungry. | 05-Apr | Easter Sunday: Share the Good News, Jesus Christ is ALIVE! |
| 09-Mar | Fast from TV. Offer an hour to assist in your neighborhood or community. | | |
| 10-Mar | Fast from shopping. | | |
| 11-Mar | Pray for the imprisoned. | | |
| 12-Mar | Eat a simple meal today. | | |
| 13-Mar | Donate a book. | | |
| 14-Mar | Pray for the persecuted. | | |
| 15-Mar | Fast from procrastination. | | |
| 16-Mar | Donate one item of clothing. | | |
| 17-Mar | Pray for Pastor Ken and Pastor Merci. | | |



For I
know
the plans
I have for you
declares the LORD
Plans to prosper you
and to
NOT
HARM
YOU
Plans to
give you
HOPE
and a
FUTURE

JEREMIAH

29:11

February 2026

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:00am Children's Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	2	3 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	4	5 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm NA	6 9:00am TOPS	7 9:00am Worship Set Up
8 Souper Bowl Sunday (soup cans due) 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:00am Children's Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	9 6:30pm Missions Meeting	10 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group	11	12 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm NA	13 9:00am TOPS	14 Valentine's Day 9:00am Worship Set Up
15 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:00am Children's Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	16 Ministry Reports due for Council Meeting	17 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Robert McWhirter Celebration of Life Service 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting	18 Ash Wednesday Newsletter Article Deadline	19 9:30am Bulletin Team 10:00am Pilgrim Women 7:00pm NA	20 9:00am TOPS	21 9:00am Worship Set Up
22 8:00am Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Worship 9:00am Children's Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study	23	24 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 6:30pm Council Meeting	25	26 12:00pm Bulletin Team 6:00pm Pilgrim Women's Fellowship Book Club 7:00pm NA	27 9:00am TOPS	28 9:00am Worship Set Up 5:00pm DCCA Bingo Night



O give thanks to the Lord, for the is good, for His steadfast love endures forever.