



Pilgrim Church



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

April 2026

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

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MAKING A CASE FOR THE RESURRECTION Ewing's Doings
John 20:1-10

Throughout our lives we face times of doubts and in response we often look for evidence to strengthen our faith. One doubt that has persisted through the centuries is doubt in the Resurrection of Jesus Christ. Because we live so many generations removed from that event, we do not have a personal experience of the Resurrection. Like many before us, we search for reasons to believe.

One way we can consider the truth of the Resurrection is through the faith and testimony of those who experienced its first signs. Read John chapter 20.

John recounts how he and Peter responded when Mary Magdalene told them that the tomb was empty. On the third day after Jesus' crucifixion, the two disciples ran to the tomb. John, arriving first, paused at the entrance and reflected on what he saw, and he believed. Peter, arriving shortly after, went straight into the tomb and carefully took in the scene before him. He too came to believe. Soon after, they returned to Jerusalem to share the Good News.

From this account, we can reflect on three signs that strengthened the disciples' faith in the Resurrection.

First, the Resurrection occurred on the third day. In biblical culture, the number three often signifies certainty and truth. Important statements or events are frequently repeated three times in Scripture as a way of confirming their truth. (Isaiah 6:3, Ezekiel 21:27, John 21:15-17)

Second, John and Peter observed the burial cloths lying in the tomb. The wrappings appeared as though Jesus had simply risen out of them. The cloth that had been around His head was folded separately. In their culture, a folded napkin carried meaning. When someone left the table but intended to return, they would fold their napkin to signal that they were coming back.

Third, the disciples would have remembered Jesus' own words to them before His death. He told them that He was going away to prepare a place for them and that He would return to bring them to be with Him. (John 14:3) This promise reflected a familiar custom in their culture. When a young man became engaged, he would leave his bride for a time while he prepared a place for her in his father's house. When everything was ready, he would return to bring her home. (Matthew 9:15)

These signs and memories strengthened the disciples' belief that Jesus had indeed risen from the dead. For them, and for us, the Resurrection is not only a moment in history but the foundation of our hope and faith.

And so we proclaim with joy: **Christ is risen! Amen.**

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
office@pilgrimonline.org

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

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

Prayer List

- Hurricane Recovery & Rebuild
- Caregivers - peace & strength
- Pastor Search
- Pilgrim Church & Leaders
- Beverly Weber - hospice
- Savina Krueger - cancer
- John Krueger - health
- Darla Johnson - hospice
- Doug Terry - cancer
- Laine Nipper - health
- Peyton Story - health
- James Fraser - health
- Nathaniel Box - military service
- Josh Fraser - salvation
- Mary Ferraro - surgery
- Jerry Waltz - health
- Cat Foster - glaucoma pressure
- Ruth Van Berkom - health
- Judy Michaels - health
- Pat Wheatcroft - cancer
- Marge Trayner - dementia
- Gert Devantier - health
- Those Who are Lost
- Peace
- Jane Selsyman - health
- Pat Smith - health
- Ben Littrell - military service

Celebrating Pilgrims

Birthdays

- | | |
|----|----------------------------------|
| 1 | Jim Scott |
| 2 | Dawn Miller |
| 4 | Vera Bennett |
| 6 | Ken Ewing Char Semon |
| 9 | Sharon Cooper Bruce Devantier |
| 11 | Don Anderson |
| 18 | Judi Wilson |
| 30 | Connie Rice |

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!

Holy Week at Pilgrim Church with Lectionary Readings



Palm / Passion Sunday

Isaiah 50:4-9a
Psalm 31:9-16
Phillippians 2:5-11
Matthew 26:14-27:66

Sunday, March 29 | 9:00 a.m. Worship

Palm / Passion Sunday is the first day of Holy Week. It is the Sunday before Easter, that commemorates Jesus Christ's triumphal entry with palms and "Hosannas" into the city of Jerusalem



Maundy Thursday

Exodus 12:1-14
Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
1 Corinthians 11:23-26
John 13:1-17, 31b-35

Thursday, April 2 | 7:00 p.m. Worship

Maundy Thursday worship is a service in remembrance of Jesus Christ's upper room institution of the Eucharist during the Last Supper. We will have Soup Dinner and Holy Communion as Pastor Ken gives a lesson on foot washing and Pastor Merci walks us through the Seder Meal. RSVP on Registration & Prayer Slip.

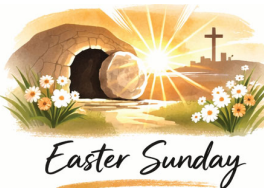


Good Friday

Isaiah 52:13-53:12
Psalm 22
Hebrews 10:16-25
John 18:1-19:42

Friday, April 3 | 12:00 Noon Worship

Good Friday is the day which Christians annually observe the commemoration of the Crucifixion of Jesus Christ.



Easter Sunday

Jeremiah 31:1-6
Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24
Acts 10:34-43
John 20:1-18

Sunday, April 5

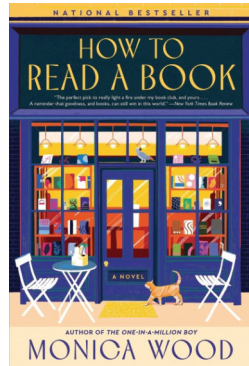
| 7:00 a.m. Sunrise Worship
| 9:00 a.m. Morning Worship

Easter celebrates the early morning Resurrection of Jesus Christ on the third day after His Crucifixion. Pilgrim Church offers a Sunrise Service on the lawn between the Sanctuary and the Goodell Room and a Morning Worship Service with Communion. Each service is different, come for both!

Pilgrim Women's Fellowship

During the month of April, the Women's Fellowship will remember our homebound Pilgrims with Easter treats. Our regular monthly meeting will be on April 23, at 10:00 a.m. in the Library. Attendees should use the Joyful Noise School entrance. We will continue the *Survey of the Bible* video series with the topic, "Places of the Old Testament." After the meeting, we will choose a nearby restaurant to enjoy a fellowship lunch together.

The next Book Club selection is the novel *How to Read a Book* by Monica Wood. Note: this book explores a book club in a women's prison and contains some offensive language. The review will take place on Thursday, April 30 at 6:00 p.m. Please watch your bulletin for the meeting location.



All women of the church are welcome to attend.

Adult Bible Study

The Adult Bible Study Small Group continues to read the Gospel of Luke, one chapter at a time. Discussion is lively as the group focuses on a detail in Jesus' ministry and does two things:

1. Connecting it to the original Old Testament prophecy that Jesus frequently recites and
2. Considering how we can apply it to our day-to-day living

These classes are fun as well as learning more about what's in God's "Love Letter" to us.

Join us any Sunday morning for the hour after worship. (There will not be a class on Easter Sunday.)



Property & Grounds

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

- Installed and plumbed the handicap sinks in the Narthex men's and women's bathrooms
- Repaired the door lock in church office
- Bolted the church safe to the file cabinet
- Installed the toilets in the woman's church entrance bathroom
- Moved the church organ and other furniture so carpet could be installed in that area
- Worked on golf cart but could not get it operational again
- Repaired a crack in the drywall in the sanctuary entrance using flexible chalk
- Monitored the installation of the cabinets and countertops in the church kitchen and bathrooms
- Replaced a light ballast in classroom
- Prepared the three-year-olds playground for a permanent concrete race track that they can safely ride their trikes on by removing the large heavy beat up rubber mats and worked with the concrete contractor to insure the finished project met our expectations.
- Repaired and aligned fence gate behind playground
- and More!

The property and grounds team will be losing one of their valued volunteers with the departure of George & Donna Yorkston. George & Donna are in the process of relocating to Maryland. George has made significant contributions to the property and grounds of Pilgrim Church over the past few years and will be missed by his colleagues Kevin Beaver, Tom Jones, Ken Rhoe and Denny Vought.

The property and grounds team could use help with the mission of keeping the campus safe and attractive to guests and staff. If you are someone who can spare a few hours a week to volunteer around the church doing property and grounds projects we would appreciate your time and talents. Our work team generally serves the church on one morning a week, usually Wednesday or Thursday morning. If this sounds like something you may be interested in, please contact the church office and check us out.

Council Report

We are getting closer and closer to worshipping in our Sanctuary! Flooring, bathrooms, and the kitchenette area are undergoing an amazing transformation. Check out the page of pictures. Chairs and partitions are the next big hurdle to get in place. Pilgrim Property and Grounds Team continues to work on items on our "Opening To-Do List".

Not everything on our list will be completed as we open, some items will have to wait as we raise funds. These items include: audio/visual components, signage on Rampart, outside parking lot lighting, parking lot improvement & repaving, tinting, and landscaping.

The Community Center hosted the Deep Creek Civic Association last month for their monthly Bingo night. They really loved the space and look forward to having another Bingo night on April 18. You are invited to attend! Ken Rhoe is cooking to provide food as a fundraiser.

Our golf cart is on the fritz. We are exploring all our options to give it a proper diagnosis before we bring it to the shop for repair. We apologize for any inconvenience this may cause.

As we continue with our reconstruction, I ask that you do NOT enter the Sanctuary without prior approval, including checking in with the office. There are still different vendors coming and going, completing work around the building. Even if you have a key and it is the weekend, you still need prior approval.

Hope Happens at Pilgrim. We are a small but mighty church. God has brought us this far and is calling on us to complete the mission! Pilgrim Strong!

Joyful Noise Learning Center Report

Several teachers participated in a Saturday training sponsored by the Early Coalition for Music and Movement in the classroom. The special guest had us singing and moving, sharing ideas on ways we can bring music into the classroom in different ways to help strengthen skills. This was a great morning of learning and networking with other early childcare specialists throughout Charlotte, Desoto, and Manatee counties.

Every teacher completed the yearly CPR / First Aid Training. This annual training is required by DCF. Our presenter put on a great program and we had a lot of fun getting together, learning, and asking questions while refreshing our CPR / First Aid skills.

Teachers and Staff also completed a Lock-down and Disaster Training. This training included different scenarios that required using an existing policy in place – critique and discuss it, then create a stronger, improved disaster plan.

The annual CLASS observation from ELC has been completed. This observation looks at the interactions amongst teachers and students (questions they ask and discussions they have), teachers interacting with each other (what is said, tone), teachers being prepared (lesson plans, materials, books, etc), and teaching the students (not just giving them the information, but asking them questions to think about and discuss). We received our highest score ever: 5.74 out of 7! Our classrooms continue to learn and improve. I am so proud of our teachers and their continued work that they put into our students and families day after day!

The school was treated to a special visit from our local and state Early Coalition board members. We walked the entire campus discussing each age group, classrooms, playgrounds, teachers, students, materials, and future goals and outcomes. These guests loved our campus and loved visiting every room! We discussed future ideas and projects that are in the works on their end, that we would love to be involved with as a school.

VPK and K/1 are starting to think about the May graduation. This will be our first all VPK classes in one graduation since before Covid! We will be decorating, including a balloon arch. We have big ideas and thoughts for the space and eager to have something great! Families are really looking forward to this and we really want it to be special for them, the teachers, and the students.

THE CALL

Vernon Bud Trayner

One day, Pastor Matthew called me and asked me to meet him at Pilgrim Church and to bring my guitar. One of the parishioners had called and asked him to go to the rehab center where his wife was and that she wasn't doing too well and could Pastor Matthew come visit.

When we arrived at the rehab center there was chaos in the room. There were a couple of family members and they were on their cell phones talking with other family members throughout the country. They were shouting at Mom trying to get her attention. You could see she was clearly agitated and restless.

Soon Pastor Matthew started talking with her, praying and quoting scripture. Her full attention was on him and she began to calm down. He turned to me and I started playing and singing the hymn "In the garden". She stared directly at me, paying attention and fully focused on the lovely hymn. Matthew said a few more encouraging words for her and the family. He again turned to me and I felt compelled to ask all the family members if they would join me in singing Jesus loves me to their

mom and they all joined in. By this time the ambience in the room had totally changed.

As we were leaving I looked at her, she had rolled onto her side with her hands folded together in a prayer position under her cheek, her eyes closed and she had the most beautiful peaceful angelic smile. It was so lovely, she looked like an angel! I looked at Matthew and said I believe we are looking at God! I asked if he had felt a presence in the room in which he replied yes .

A couple of weeks later I was setting up the altar to begin the music for the contemporary service when that same parishioner approached me to thank me for coming to the rehab and how much it meant to he and his family. He went on to say that he and his family had never had encounters with God like that before and the experience had a profound effect on him and his family. I felt like a deer in the headlights as he went on to say that there was a woman across the hall who had been in a coma and that she woke up singing hymns.

I will never forget this experience. I answered the call and God did the rest. The woman passed away and so did her husband a short time after that. What an experience! So glad I showed up!

Caring for the Caregiver

Tuesday, April 7 | 12:00 noon - 1:00 p.m.

This important discussion is open to all, bring a friend.

Caring for the caregiver involves preventing burnout through proactive self-care, seeking support, and setting boundaries. Essential strategies include taking regular breaks, maintaining personal health through exercise and nutrition, and accepting help from family or professional resources. During this presentation, you will have the opportunity to explore self-care strategies, connect with others and learn about resources that could make the caregiving journey a bit lighter.

Guest Speaker: Christopher Parent - Community Partner Specialist

Learn & Grow

We had our season of praying, fasting, giving. Now what? What do we do now that Easter's over?

The church calendar (liturgical year) is a cyclical, annual journey that retells the story of Jesus, moving through seasons of anticipation, celebration, and reflection. It is organized around two major cycles—Christmas (Advent-Epiphany) and Easter (Lent-Pentecost)—interspersed with "Ordinary Time" for growth.

April brings the season of Easter, celebrating for 50 days the joyous celebration of the Resurrection: The 40 days following the Resurrection (marked by Jesus' appearances) and the following 10 days leading to Pentecost.

Jesus' death on the cross and resurrection does not save the human race. What it does do is provide the MEANS by which the human race can be saved. When Jesus is hanging on the cross and He shouts out, "It is finished," (John 19:30) WHAT is finished? Everything that needs to be done so that all might be saved.

"For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." - John 3:16

"Whoever believes in Him" this brings us to the Great Commission.

Now the eleven disciples went to Galilee, to the mountain to which Jesus had directed them. When they saw him, they worshiped him, but they doubted. 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 28:16-20

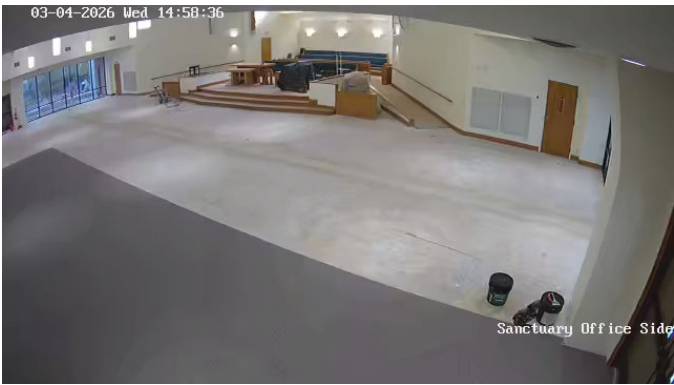
And so, now what?

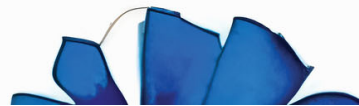
Steps to Live Out the Great Commission:

- Go and Make Disciples: Actively share the gospel with people in your daily life, including neighbors, co-workers, friends, and family.
- Pray and Give: Support missionaries and missions efforts financially to send others to unreached areas. Once a month make some PBJs or volunteer to serve in the Food Pantry.
- Use Your Gifts: Utilize your unique talents and skills to serve others and introduce them to Jesus. Comfortable on ladders? Share with others that you can change light bulbs. Make a great casserole? Place single servings in storage containers and share with a neighbor or someone who is recovering from an illness.
- Baptize and Teach: Encourage new believers in their faith and teach them to follow Jesus's commandments. Join the Sunday Bible Study group or Pilgrim Women's Fellowship to deepen your knowledge so you are comfortable sharing.
- Be Missional Locally: Recognize that SWFL, your workplace, social club, neighborhood, is a mission field, and you are placed there to make a difference. Smile at the cashier, tell your nurse about your favorite hymn.
- Build Relationships: Invest time in deep, authentic relationships with people in your community to share the Gospel. Try the Care Group, start a conversation with someone you don't know at Worship.
- Leverage Technology: Use social media to share Bible verses, reflections, or online church services to reach people. Share Pilgrim Church FaceBook posts. Pick a different Bible verse to share once a week.
- Adopt a Global Vision: Pray for and support efforts to reach different nations, while also considering learning another language to broaden your reach. Watch for sales for Operation Christmas Child shoeboxes.

Pilgrim Church in Pictures

Sanctuary Rebuild March 2026 Progress





April 2026

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

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|---|---|---|---|--|--|--|
| | | | 1 | 2 <i>Maundy Thursday</i> 12:00pm Bulletin Team 6:30pm Maundy Thursday Worship 7:00pm NA | 3 <i>Good Friday</i> Joyful Noise Closed 9:00am TOPS 12:00pm Good Friday Worship | 4 9:00am Worship Set Up |
| 5 <i>Easter Sunday</i> 7:00am Easter Sunrise Worship 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Easter Morning Worship 9:00am Children's Worship | 6 | 7 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 12:00pm "Caring for the Caregiver" 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry | 8 | 9 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm NA | 10 9:00am TOPS | 11 9:00am Worship Set Up |
| 12 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Worship 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study | 13 6:30pm Missions Meeting | 14 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 6:30pm Council Rebiuld Meeting | 15 Newsletter Article Deadline | 16 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm NA | 17 9:00am TOPS | 18 9:00am Worship Set Up 5:00pm DCCA Bingo |
| 19 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Worship 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study | 20 Ministry Reports due for Council Meeting | 21 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Finance Committee | 22 <i>Earth Day</i> | 23 9:15am PBJ Sandwich Makers 10:00am Pilgrim Women 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm NA | 24 9:00am TOPS | 25 9:00am Worship Set Up |
| 26 8:00am Fellowship Breakfast 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Worship 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study | 27 | 28 10:00am Al-Anon 12:00pm Care Group 6:30pm Council Meeting | 29 | 30 12:00pm Bulletin Team 6:00pm Women's Book Club 7:00pm NA | | |

