



Pilgrim Church



UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

October 2026

All Saints Day

Ewing's Doings

Recently I was reflecting on the tremendous hype of Halloween. The fascination of dressing up as someone you're not. The fixation on death and being scared out of your wits. The delight in trick-or-treating to get a great amount of candy. In reflecting on the obsession with Halloween, it occurred to me that the celebration is a far cry for the initial intent of the holiday.

Halloween comes from traditional ancient Celtic festival of Samhain, where people would light bonfires and wear costumes to ward off ghosts. It was held on the eve of All Saints Day and became known as All Hallow's Eve. It was a preparation for the day of commemorating all the saints of the church both known and unknown who have attained Heaven. Initiated in the Catholic Church, it later found favor in other Christian denominations.

The Catholic Church saw All Saints Day in a somewhat narrow focus commemorating those whom the Church elevated to the status of sainthood. In other traditions which did not have elevated saints, they say all believers are saints. Which comes from the Apostle Paul who saw everyone in the faith as saints, meaning true believers in Jesus Christ as Lord and Savior.

Both traditions central focus is to remember all the saints who have gone before offering thanksgiving and honor. In the process of remembering, the celebrant is reconnected spiritually and emotionally with the saints who have passed on. All Saints Day then is a sacred day of commemoration which has faded from our days of celebrations.

My hope for those of us in the Christian faith is that we regain a focus on All Saints Day as a time to give thanks for the saints in our lives and honor their gifts left with us. **HAPPY ALL SAINTS DAY.**

Amen.

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

October Birthdays

1	Susan Anderson
4	Savinia Krueger
7	Shirley Donohue
29	Vickie Rhoe
30	Stephen Warne-Emard

Did we miss your special date? Kindly reach out to our office at your earliest convenience. You can contact us by phone or email, and we will be happy to update our records accordingly.

Lectionary Readings

The readings help remind us that both the Old and New Testaments are telling one single, coherent story: God is rescuing humanity from sin and death.

Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost

October 4, 2026 World Communion Sunday

- Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20
- Psalm 19
- Philippians 3:4b-14
- Matthew 21:33-46

Twentieth Sunday after Pentecost

October 11, 2026

- Exodus 32:1-14
- Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23
- Philippians 4:1-9
- Matthew 22:1-14

Twenty-First Sunday after Pentecost

October 18, 2026

- Exodus 33:12-23
- Psalm 99
- 1 Thessalonians 1:1-10
- Matthew 22:15-22

Twenty-Second Sunday after Pentecost

October 25, 2026

- Deuteronomy 34:1-12
- Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17
- 1 Thessalonians 2:1-8
- Matthew 22:34-46

Ideas to Love Your Neighbors

- Make a point to attend worship on Sunday, October 4. It's World Communion Sunday!
- Invite a friend to the Oktoberfest Pot luck!
- Share some pumpkin spice!
- Send a fall card to those homebound or on the church prayer list.
- Pick up items for Operation Christmas Child Shoeboxes, fill a box or find a friend and fill a box together!

Pilgrim Prayer List

May we faithfully lift one another before the Lord in prayer, trusting in His grace, mercy, and perfect will.

- Hurricane Recovery & Rebuild
- Caregivers - peace & strength
- Pastor Search
- Pilgrim Church & Leaders
- Beverly Weber - hospice
- Savina Krueger - cancer
- Marge Trayner - dementia
- Joyce Faber - health
- Jennifer Budd - cancer
- Joe Wineland - health
- Kay Krall - health
- Arlene Robbins - health
- Susan Littrell - health
- Dan Gerry - recovery
- Joshua
- Joe Gillner
- Christopher Fraser - employment
- James Fraser - health
- Pat Wheatcroft - hospice
- Betty Dicico - physical and mental health
- Josh Fraser - salvation
- Joe Null - health
- Ashley Fowler - hospital
- Janice Lewis - Harbor Health

PILGRIM CHURCH

OKTOBERFEST

Potluck

SATURDAY, OCTOBER 10 • 1 PM



BRING YOUR
FAVORITE
COVERED DISH
TO SHARE



DRINKS
PROVIDED



GOOD FOOD.
GREAT FELLOWSHIP.
STRONGER
TOGETHER.

PLEASE SIGN UP DURING SUNDAY WORSHIP
OR CONTACT THE CHURCH OFFICE TO:

🍁 SIGN UP TO ATTEND

🍁 LET US KNOW WHAT DISH YOU'LL BE BRINGING



24515 Rampart Blvd
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(941) 627-2633



www.pilgrimonline.org

Hope
happens here!

Prayer Shawl Ministry

1st & 3rd Tuesdays | 2:00 p.m. | Conference Room

Pilgrim Church members and friends gather to make prayer shawls each on the first and third Tuesdays every month at 2:00 p.m. That will be September 1st and 15th!

Care Group

Tuesdays | 12:00 PM – 1:30 PM | Conference Rm

Together we share support, fellowship, prayer, and caring hearts as we walk through life together.

Adult Bible Study

Sundays | 10:15 a.m. | Conference Room

Build your discipleship through Bible study. This weekly, one-hour class is currently reading and discussing Paul's letter to the church of Galatia. This letter defends the subject of justification by faith.

Bible Study meets immediately after the Sunday worship service in the Coffee Room. Bring your Bible and learn along with fellow Pilgrims.

Pilgrim Women News

Beyond the book club, service project, and fellowship meeting, we have a busy month! Pilgrim Women are active participants in the Pilgrim Church Care Group Oktoberfest Potluck as well as the Trunk or Treat activities coming up this month.

Christmas is coming! Reservations are now open for the Christmas Buffet and Party at Der Dutchman in Saratoga. The event will be held Monday, December 7, and starts promptly at 11:30 a.m. Carpools will be available. Reservations and pre-payment are required. Cost is \$28.00 per person and covers meal, room charge, and gratuity. Reservation contact is Judi Wilson.



Many thanks to all who supported Women's Sunday in September.

Join us and Let Your Light Shine with participation in the Pilgrim Women's Fellowship small group!

Pilgrim Women's Fellowship
—ACTIVITIES—

Tuesday, October 6
6:00 p.m. | Red Lobster
Book Club Dinner
Discussion of:
Dear Mrs. Bird by AJ Pearce

Friday, October 9
10:00 a.m.
School Staff Recognition
Nacho Lunch Set Up

Thursday, October 15
10:00 a.m.
Fellowship Meeting
in the Library
with Lunch at Rossini's Italian

Faith ♥ Friendship ♥ Fellowship

Property & Grounds

Thursdays | 9:00 a.m. | Office

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

This is a summary of our recent accomplishments:

Church

- Prepared the sanctuary stage area for Sunday services
- Repaired toilet near the choir room
- Removed the old pallets and trash in the narthex area
- Put up the new mirrors in the men's and women's bathrooms. The paper towel and toilet paper dispensers are on order and will be installed when available
- We are working with an individual needing to repair the deteriorating stucco pillars around the church. This work is progressing nicely and should save our church a great deal of money vs hiring the work done.
- Repaired and reinstalled a broken handicap parking sign in front of the church

Joyful Noise

- Repaired the broken gate in the school playground
- Removed all the low tree branches in the school playground as a safety measure

We have more projects and would love extra hands! Join us on Thursdays to give a few hours to Pilgrim Church!

Council Highlights

A lot has been happening behind the scenes at Pilgrim Church over the past several months. Our Ministry Teams and Council members have been working incredibly hard to accomplish many important projects and improvements. Everyone has come together with one mission in mind—Pilgrim!

The Sanctuary bathrooms have been completed, the Choir Room has been put back together, and work has begun on the exterior posts surrounding our church entrances. In addition, many smaller projects have been completed, all of which add up to a very long list of accomplishments.

As we head into the busiest time of the year, I would like to extend a special thank-you to our Property and Grounds Team. They work diligently each week to maintain and improve our campus. While we still have a ways to go, the finish line is now in sight—thanks in large part to their dedication and willingness to take on challenging tasks.

THANK YOU to our Property and Grounds Team for all that you do!

As we enter the final phases of our reconstruction and improvement efforts, we need the help of our congregation. Below is our current Top 10 list of remaining projects. If you would like to contribute toward one or more of these items, please indicate the item on your weekly offering envelope and include the amount you would like to designate toward that project.

Our Top 10 Remaining Projects:

1. Sound panels for the Sanctuary, Narthex, Coffee Room
2. Audio components for the Sanctuary
3. Visual components for the Sanctuary
4. Sound panels for the Community Center
5. Joyful Noise exterior stucco repair and painting
6. Window tinting in the Sanctuary
7. New signage at the entrance
8. Exterior lighting around the parking lot areas
9. Parking lot repaving and repainting
10. Landscaping improvements throughout the property

Thank you for your continued support, generosity, and commitment to Pilgrim Church. Together, we are making tremendous progress and building a stronger future for our church and community!

Recycle Ink Cartridges

Pilgrim Church can recycle up to 20 used ink or toner cartridges each month through Staples and receive \$2 in recycling rewards per cartridge. These rewards help offset our office supply costs.

Do you have used cartridges at home or work? Bring them in! We collect them and make a monthly delivery to Staples.

Thank you for supporting our efforts to save money and care for the environment!

Narcotics Anonymous

Thursdays | 7:00 p.m. | Library

Narcotics Anonymous (NA) is a fellowship of men and women for whom drugs had become a major problem. We are recovering addicts who meet regularly to support one another in staying clean. All are welcome. You are not alone.

Take Off Pounds Sensibly

Fridays | 9:00 a.m. | Conference Room

It's not a diet, It's a lifestyle . For a lifetime. With TOPS Club, you're throwing yourself a lifeline. Join us for the support, accountability and connections that you need on your journey to better health. All are welcome. You are not alone.

Calendars

Do you received calendars in the mail that you don't need? We will be happy to collect those and share with Pilgrims who may need a calendar. Any extra calendars we will share with our Joyful Noise Learning Center as the photos are excellent for art projects.

Blessing of Pets

San Antonio Church | Saturday, October 3 | 11:00 a.m.

Pilgrim Church has been invited to join the Annual Blessing of the Pets at our neighboring church.

In honor of Saint Francis of Assisi, the patron saint of animals, everyone is invited to bring their beloved pets for a special blessing. All pets are welcome! Pets must be kept on a leash or safely secured in a carrier.

If you have lost a beloved pet, you are welcome to bring a photograph for the remembrance. Each pet will also receive a small St. Francis of Assisi prayer card.

Come celebrate the joy our pets bring to our lives and give thanks for all of God's creatures. We hope members of the Pilgrim Church family will join this special gathering!



Joyful Noise Learning Center

Community Outreach and Back-to-School Event

For the first time, Joyful Noise participated in the Mom Era - Back to School Event in North Port in August. We purchased a booth and had the opportunity to introduce Joyful Noise, our programs, and our mission to many families in the community. The event provided an excellent opportunity to connect with prospective families, network with other family-friendly businesses, and increase awareness of Joyful Noise within the surrounding community. Several of our own Joyful Noise families also stopped by to show their support, which made the event especially meaningful. We also honored the memory of our beloved Ms. Bert by handing out lollipops to children and families, continuing a tradition that she once shared with our students. Based on the success of this event, we look forward to exploring additional community events where Joyful Noise can build relationships, promote our programs, and remain actively involved in the community.

Home Depot Community Outreach Partnership

One of the most valuable connections made through the Back-to-School Event was with Home Depot Community Outreach. During the event, I had the opportunity to discuss Joyful Noise's need for assistance with our school grounds and playground areas. Because Joyful Noise is both a nonprofit organization and a school, we met the qualifications for their community outreach program. After exchanging information, I met with representatives twice to discuss our needs and identify areas where their support could make the greatest impact. Our initial project will focus on improving the front area of the school and enhancing our overall curb appeal, creating a more welcoming entrance for our children and families. The grant proposal has been completed and submitted, and we are currently awaiting approval. If approved, Home Depot Community Outreach would like to begin the work quickly. This partnership has the potential to make a meaningful difference in the appearance of our campus while providing valuable resources and support to Joyful Noise.

Joyful Noise School Van

Another exciting development is the addition of a new school van for our before- and after-care program. Our current bus has been aging and has become increasingly expensive to maintain and operate, particularly with the rising cost of fuel. We were blessed to receive an anonymous donation toward the down payment on a newer vehicle, allowing us to begin the search for a more reliable and cost-effective option. After evaluating numerous makes and models across several counties in Florida, we selected a 2024 Ford Transit XLT with only 36 miles on it. Although the new van is smaller than our current bus, it offers several important advantages. It is easier to drive, more manageable to maintain, and significantly more fuel-efficient. The newer vehicle also provides a clean, modern appearance and is a practical investment for the continued operation of our before- and after-care program. We are extremely grateful for the generosity that made this purchase possible and for the opportunity to provide our program with a safer, more efficient, and dependable vehicle.



Upcoming Events

Trunk-or-Treat

Wednesday, October 28th | 5:00–7:00 p.m.

We will once again host a Trunk-or-Treat event for our Joyful Noise families. We would love to have members of Pilgrim Church participate and help make the evening a special experience for our children and families. Anyone interested in participating may sign up in the Church or School Office.

Annual Halloween Character Parade

Friday, October 30th | 9:30 a.m.

Our annual Halloween Character Parade is also approaching. We are currently collecting candy to distribute to our students during the parade. If you are able to donate, we kindly ask that all candy be PEANUT-FREE due to student allergies and safety concerns.

Missions

The Missions Committee next meeting is October 12. Everyone is invited to attend to learn more about the outreach of Pilgrim Church!

We took it easy over the summer but we did continue to keep our little food pantry stocked daily and we introduced you to CARE and Gideons International.

Feeding the Hungry

In addition to what people drop off, Tony shops weekly for our box. Also, he responds to weekly food requests from local veterans and some of our staff at JN who could use the assistance. If you are donating, please remember:

- Canned or dry/non-perishable items only
- Choose items that won't be affected by rising temperatures

The Sandwich Makers continue to meet monthly. We use 18 loaves of bread to make 200 sandwiches. That we then pass on to local ministry partners to feed the homeless and hungry. Get involved! Join us for an hour on Thursday, October 22, 9:15 a.m. to assemble sandwiches .

In September we held a Moment for Mission discovering the latest news from our partner, Back Pack Kidz. We donated \$1,000 to this worthwhile cause.



Spreading the message of Jesus

We are now kicking off Operation Christmas Child. In 2025, 58 Shoeboxes were filled and prayed over! All our boxes were tracked, and it was reported that they went to "a sensitive country in West Africa" and Madagascar.

An Operation Christmas Child shoebox includes a wow item, school supplies, personal care items, and accessories or other fun items, all new and unused.

You should also include a personal note and photo to personalize the gift. Remember to review the prohibited items list.

Steps to filling an Operation Christmas Child Shoebox. Use a shoebox: A standard cardboard wrapped in bright Christmas paper or plastic shoebox is ideal. We have empty boxes available.

1. Determine Recipient: Decide if the gift is for a boy or a girl and choose an age category: 2-4, 5-9, or 10-14.
2. Pack Full: Fill the box with a variety of gifts, aiming to pack it full to maximize the contents.
3. Personalize: Add your personal note and a photo to make the gift special for the child.
4. Pray: for the shoebox gifts to be a tool for sharing the Gospel and God's love with children, their families, and communities around the world.

Our goal for 2026 is 50 boxes!

Due date is November 15!

Pilgrim Church is covering the shipping charges of \$10 and will be tracking these boxes!

A "WOW" Item

- Small backpack or purse
- Doll
- Soccer ball and pump
- Stuffed animal
- Craft kit
- Large toy truck

Personal Care Items

- Toothbrush
- Washcloth
- Flashlight and batteries

Clothing

- Flip-flops or shoes
- Sunglasses, Hat
- Winter cap, scarf, gloves

School Supplies

- Pencils, Colored pencils, sharpener, and erasers
- Notebooks, Index cards
- Drawstring bag

Toys

- Small ball
- Puzzles, Games
- Coloring books or pads
- LEGO® sets

DO NOT INCLUDE

- Soap
- Food, candy, or gum
- Toothpaste
- Used / damaged items
- Scary/war-related items, including camouflage
- Seeds or organic matter
- Liquids
- Medication
- Breakable items
- Matches, fire starters, or aerosols
- Knives, saws, or razor blades



Into the Amazon

with Shoebox Gifts and the Gospel

In the jungles of Peru about 100 miles from the closest town, Operation Christmas Child hosted the first of many outreach events for the children of a community rife with alcohol abuse and ancestor worship. Known as the Chapra, this ethnic group lives isolated from the outside world.

Chapra boys and girls riveted their attention on the colorful posters Samaritan's Purse had brought on the weeklong journey upriver to illustrate the Gospel of Jesus Christ—a message that had only recently reached their region. The team surprised each child with their own shoebox full of toys and other fun items as well as *The Greatest Gift* Gospel booklet—the first printed resource in their language.

A Chapra father and son, Masorashi and Moises, had recently learned about Jesus Christ through a missionary. Giving their hearts to the Lord, they wanted the 31 Chapra communities around them to have that same life-changing hope. Masorashi began pastoring, but his message started to multiply exponentially when Operation Christmas Child helped him produce a Gospel resource in his own language!

One Chapra mother said the Gospel booklet helped her daughter, Kati, share the Good News with others. “She tells her friends about Jesus,” the mother said.

In less than a week, Operation Christmas Child hosted 15 events in 12 Chapra communities.

As a result, 1,058 children received a shoebox gift and a copy of *The Greatest Gift* in their own language. Follow-up discipleship lessons for the boys and girls are now being held in these communities.

“Having the opportunity to have the booklet *The Greatest Gift* translated into their language is something that is incredible,” said a missionary partner of Operation Christmas Child who helped with the translation. “It’s something that will transcend generations.”



For more of the Chapra story, scan
or visit samaritanpurse.org/occ-peru



Sunflowers are more than vibrant, cheerful flowers. Though the Bible never mentions sunflowers by name, their remarkable response to light still teaches us in the lesson its behavior illustrates.

As young sunflowers turn toward the sun, their behavior can remind us of important truths about our relationship with God: connection with Christ, spiritual growth, trust when the way is unclear, and hope in times of darkness.

Seek the Light

We were made with a similar reflex toward Jesus, “the Light of the World.” But unlike the sunflower, our reflex doesn’t work automatically; it has to be tended, or it fades. Busyness, distraction, and the noise of daily life quietly crowd out that “instinct”, until we realize we’ve been running on our own light for weeks without noticing we’d turned away from His.

"In Him was life, and that life was the light of all mankind. The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness has not overcome it." - John 1:4-5

Trust the Path

Turning toward the light isn’t a one-time decision for a sunflower - it’s a constant correction. As the sun arcs across the sky, the plant keeps adjusting, sometimes by only a few degrees an hour, to stay aligned with it. What served the plant at sunrise no longer works by midday; the sunflower has to keep responding.

Faith works the same way. The posture that got us started rarely carries us all the way through. Growth asks for small, repeated corrections - a willingness to hear guidance we didn’t expect, and to adjust when we realize we’ve drifted, even slightly, from where the light actually is.

"Do not conform to the pattern of this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind."

- Romans 12:2

3. Stay Open to Growth

A sunflower has no eyes, no way of knowing where the sun will be an hour from now. It simply responds to what it senses in the moment and turns. It doesn’t

need to understand solar mechanics to benefit from the sun’s warmth and energy.

We rarely have the full picture either. We can’t see how today’s circumstances connect to next year’s, or why a door closed when we hoped it would open. Trust, in that sense, isn’t the absence of confusion - it’s continuing to turn toward the light even while confused.

"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness, but will have the light of life." - (Jesus in John 8:12)

4. Hold on to Hope

Every evening, after sunset, young sunflowers turn from west toward the east - toward where the sun will rise again. They don’t wait for morning to reorient. They anticipate it, positioning themselves for a light that hasn’t arrived yet.

That’s a striking picture of hope. Not hope as a vague feeling that things might improve, but hope as a posture - turning toward what we know is coming, even while it’s still dark. We all move through seasons that feel like sunset: grief, uncertainty, waiting. The sunflower doesn’t deny the darkness; it simply refuses to face away from where the light will return.

"But for you who fear my name, the sun of righteousness shall rise with healing in its wings."

- Malachi 4:2

●**Turn:** Let your first instinct be toward Jesus, the Light of the World.

●**Adjust:** Growth means realigning yourself as circumstances change, not staying fixed in place.

●**Trust:** Follow the light even without seeing where it leads.

●**Hope:** When darkness appears, in a hard moment or event season of life, take hope, and turn toward where you expect the light to appear: a better future, and eternal life beyond this one.

The young sunflower plant

teaches us four important lessons
about the Christian life:

Seek the light

Just as the sunflower
turns toward the sun,
we seek God's light
in our daily lives.



Psalm 27:1

Stay open to growth

Like the young plant
reaching upward,
we stay open to learn,
grow, and become
more like Jesus.



2 Peter 3:18

Trust the path

Even when we can't see
the final bloom, we trust
that God is guiding us
every step of the way.



Proverbs 3:5-6

Hold on to hope

The young sunflower
reminds us that brighter
days are ahead. We hold on
to the hope God gives us.



Romans 15:13

Grow in Faith
♡



October 2026

Sunday Monday Tuesday Wednesday Thursday Friday Saturday

Every Sunday 8:00am Choir Rehearsal 9:00am Children's Worship 9:00am Worship 10:15am Adult Bible Study				1 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous	2 9:00am TOPS	3
4 World Communion Sunday	5	6 12:00pm Care Group 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry	7	8 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous	9 9:00am TOPS	10 1:00pm Oktoberfest Potluck
11	12 6:30pm Missions Meeting	13 12:00pm Care Group	14	15 9:30pm Bulletin Team 10:00am Pilgrim Women 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous	16 9:00am TOPS	17
18	19 Ministry Reports due for Council Meeting	20 12:00pm Care Group 2:00pm Prayer Shawl Ministry 6:30pm Finance Committee Meeting	21 Newsletter Article Deadline	22 9:15am PBJ Sandwich Makers 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous	23 9:00am TOPS	24
25	26	27 12:00pm Care Group 6:30pm Council Meeting	28 5:00pm Joyful Noise Trunk or Treat	29 12:00pm Bulletin Team 7:00pm Narcotics Anonymous	30 9:00am TOPS 9:30am Joyful Noise Character Parade	31