



# PILGRIM FAITH UCC

9411 S. 51st Avenue, Oak Lawn, IL 60453

[www.PilgrimFaith.org](http://www.PilgrimFaith.org)

(708) 422-4200

## DECEMBER 2020

Rev. James Bowman Harris



### Pastor's Message

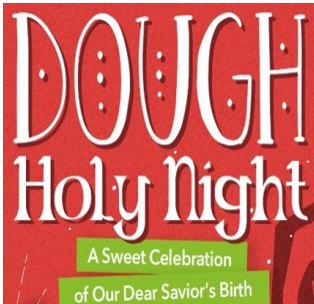
Advent, the season of waiting is here. This theme of waiting has never been more appropriate during a year like 2020. Since March, we have found ourselves waiting for an end to this global pandemic that has claimed so many innocent lives. Many of us have found ourselves again, four years later, waiting for the news surrounding an election. Waiting to see if the candidate we voted for would claim victory. After the wait, many of us cheered with delight. While many of us did not and now have entered a season of waiting to see what the next four years will bring.

With this season of waiting, we have also found ourselves in a season of change. For many of us, change is not a welcomed friend. Rather, change brings a season of worry, fear, anxiety, frustration, anger, and grief. These feelings brought on by change, will only multiply during a season of waiting. Partly because many of us do not like to wait. We grow impatient, which leads to irritability. This sense of irritability can allow so many unpleasant feelings to surface filling us up with emotions. Emotions that at times can lead us down paths that are very unpleasant to others and ourselves.

Advent traditionally is a season of waiting. Waiting on for the hope of the Christ child to appear. Waiting on the hope, forgiveness, and love that the Christ child will bring to us. Pilgrim Faith has been in a season of waiting and change for a while now. This season of wait and change has not been easy for many of you. This season of wait and change has left your church, your faith, and you in a deep sense of pain and in need of healing.

The prophet Isaiah once gave a prophecy to King Ahaz. An angel in a dream gave the same good news that calmed the anxiety of Joseph. The same prophecy, the same good news is being repeated to us here at Pilgrim Faith, "A virgin will have a baby boy, and he will be called Immanuel," which means "God is with us." In the coming of this child, Immanuel, also comes the hope of healing. The hope of a new beginning for us. The hope of putting the painful past in the past. The hope of renewal. Let this hope allow us to enter into this Advent season to find healing. In healing, let us renew our spirits with forgiveness for ourselves and for each other. In forgiveness, let us find the joy and love that is the promise that is found in the coming of a child named, Immanuel.

In the hope that Advent brings,  
Pastor James



**HERE IS A FUN GIFT FOR THE WHOLE FAMILY! ALL AGES- FROM 2-102!**

**Invite Grandma & Grandpa, cousins, & friends and SHARE those pictures!**

A fun and interactive experience designed for your family to do at home during the week of **December 13-20**, but you really can do it anytime during the month of December! Together, you'll bake a batch of Christmas cookies, and along the way, you'll hear the story of the very first Christmas! There is a step-by-step video that walks you through the entire experience. It's so simple. Register and then receive an email link with all the info!

**VISIT OUR WEBSITE TO REGISTER**

<http://pilgrimfaith.org>



## Tech Update

In today's society, worship services are a mix of in-person services and virtual services which may better meet the needs of those who desire to worship outside the walls of a traditional church. While many of Pilgrim Faith's current members love to attend church in person where they can worship together, we acknowledge that many people may be looking for alternative ways to attend worship. Virtual services can be viewed at any time of day on any day of the week. Virtual worshippers may live in the neighborhood or many miles away. By offering virtual services both during and after the pandemic, Pilgrim Faith will be reaching out to a variety of potential new members who love and want to serve God with us.

Because of the stay at home order earlier this year, Pilgrim Faith was forced to find a way to offer a virtual service weekly with a minimal amount of preparation time. We greatly appreciate the efforts of Pastor James, Don Harris, Ken Langevin, Bob Cook, Peggy McGinnis, Aidan McGinnis, Mary Weierman, Keith Stevenson, Tom Aitken and Charles Martin who have devoted many hours to bringing live worship services to our members. As you may have noticed when viewing virtual worship services from Pilgrim Faith, we have often been faced with challenges in streaming those services smoothly. Those challenges in providing high quality video and audio streaming are caused by the age and structure of our building and the lack of adequate Internet infrastructure.

Due to those infrastructure inadequacies, the technology committee is currently seeking proposals from various vendors who can provide installation of Internet and audio/visual capabilities throughout the building which will result in much better audio and visual streaming of our services. Improved internet speed and bandwidth are vital to improving the quality of the live streamed worship services. Once all technology proposals are in, the technology committee will review them and pass them on to the trustees who will review them and make a recommendation to the church council which will recommend a proposal to the congregation.

At Pilgrim Faith UCC we welcome and embrace diverse lives, loves and spiritual journeys, so that everyone can participate in and feel and share the love of Jesus Christ and the Still Speaking God. A strong Internet presence will help us reach out to those who are unable to be with us physically in the sanctuary on Sunday.



## Reverse Advent Calendar for Our Food Pantry

This year, during advent, we are asking that families help us fill a bag for the Pantry. Each day there is a different item listed to be donated to our pantry. Since we are attending worship via zoom, please drop off your items (weekly, or any other interval you would like) anytime that is convenient with the church office between 9-2pm, Monday through Friday. Another option is to arrange a contactless porch pick-up with Leece. Just call or text 708-870-8525 to arrange a time. With your help, we can help the hungry this Advent Season!

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- A large, stylized green Christmas tree graphic that serves as a background for the Reverse Advent Calendar list. The tree has a triangular shape with a pointed top and a wider base, and it is decorated with small white dots representing lights or snow.
- December 1 - Box of Cereal
  - December 2 - Box of Spaghetti
  - December 3 - Pasta Sauce  
(Can or Jar)
  - December 4 - Canned Beans
  - December 5 - Canned Fruit
  - December 6 - Canned Tuna
  - December 7 - Canned Chili
  - December 8 - Canned Pork and Beans
  - December 9 - Canned Mixed Veggies
  - December 10 - Canned Peas
  - December 11 - Chicken Noodle Soup
  - December 12 - Instant Mashed Potatoes
  - December 13 - Rice-A-Roni
  - December 14 - Tomato Soup
  - December 15 - Peanut Butter
  - December 16 - Canned Tomatoes
  - December 17 - Canned Green Beans
  - December 18 - Canned Corn
  - December 19 - Box of Macaroni and Cheese
  - December 20 - Ramen Noodles
  - December 21 - Box of Individually Packaged  
Oatmeal
  - December 22 - One Can Meal  
(Chef Boy-ar-dee)
  - December 23 - Box of Jell-O
  - December 24 - Granola Bars/Pop Tarts



## Advent is Here

Central to our traditional Advent services is the lighting of the Advent wreath on Sunday and on Christmas day. Advent candles shine brightly in the midst of darkness, symbolizing and reminding us that Jesus came as Light into our dark world. The most common Advent candle tradition involves placing four candles around a wreath of evergreens with a white candle in the center. A new candle is lit on each of the four Sundays before Christmas with the white candle lit on Christmas.

To be an active part of each worship service during Advent, members are encouraged to create their own Advent wreath at home. To do so you will need to prepare five candles in advance (one white, one pink, and three blue or purple). As the Advent wreath is lit each week in the sanctuary, it is our hope that the members of each household will light the candles in their own Advent wreath as a prayer that Emmanuel's light and love will shine brightly in our hearts, spreading hope and peace to those around us.

## Thank You For Your 2021 Pledges!

Thank you so much to those of you who completed your pledge forms and returned them to the church office. Your commitment of time and finances means everything to Pilgrim Faith. Although Pilgrim Faith's Stewardship Pledges were officially dedicated in November, it is not too late to turn in your pledge forms for 2021.

If you have not yet returned your pledge forms to the Pilgrim Faith office, please try to do so as soon as possible. If you have the pledge forms that were mailed to you, just fill them out and mail them to the church office in the self-addressed stamped envelope that was provided. If you need a pledge form, you may download a copy of the forms from [www.pilgrimfaith.org](http://www.pilgrimfaith.org). Once you have filled out the forms, you may mail them to the church office. You may also opt to scan them and email them to [office@pilgrimfaith.org](mailto:office@pilgrimfaith.org) or to Don Lagerstrom at [ipaynt67@comcast.net](mailto:ipaynt67@comcast.net). Please help Pilgrim Faith UCC serve its members, the larger community, and world by making a commitment to the church.

## Constitution Revisions

The committee working to revise the Pilgrim Faith UCC Constitution and Bylaws has been working tirelessly to bring the church Constitution (which was last revised in 1996) up-to-date. The Constitution committee began meeting weekly on Thursday evenings on October 22. Bob Cook is chairing the committee and keeping members focused on the weekly task at hand. As of November 19, the committee has completed Articles I-X of the Constitution which includes a modified vision statement and mission statement.

The committee's task for December is to tackle the revision of the church's bylaws as they pertain to staff, church officers, church council, boards, and committees. Hopefully, both the Constitution and Bylaws will be completely revised by early January so that they can be presented to the council and congregation by the time of the Annual Meeting.

## Remember Our Homebound

**MARY BREHM**  
BRIDGEVIEW HEALTHCARE  
8100 S. HARLEM AVE.  
BRIDGEVIEW, IL 60455

**GRACE PLUHAR**  
8824 S. 55TH CT.  
OAK LAWN, IL 60453

**ADA HOOK**  
404 ROOT ST.  
NEW LENOX, IL 60451

**RUTH HOOK**  
APERION CARE  
9401 S. RIDGELAND  
OAK LAWN, IL 60453

**DOLORES TREZISE**  
15133 ROYAL GEORGIAN RD.  
ORLAND PARK, IL 60462

**MILDRED HOUSE**  
CLARENDALE OF MOKENA  
#2221  
21536 S. WOLF RD.  
MOKENA, IL 60448





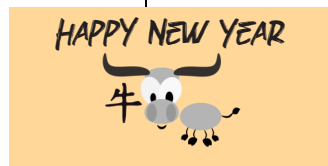

**DONNA TWICHELL**  
10032 HARNEW RD. EAST  
OAK LAWN, IL 60453

**DARLENE WANK**  
10942 S. OAK AVE  
CHICAGO RIDGE, IL 60415





# December 2020

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
		1	2	3 CE Board 7:00  Constitution Meeting 7:00	4	5
6 Virtual Worship 10:00AM  <b>Book Club</b> 7:00	7 <b>GIFT CARD ORDERS DUE</b>	8 Trustee Mtg. 7:00  Girls Scouts 6:00	9 Deacon 7:00  Scouts 6:00	10 Constitution Meeting 7:00	11	12 
13 10:00 AM Virtual Worship <b>Confirmation</b>	14 Mission Board 7:00	15 Girls Scouts 6:00	16 Council Mtg. 7:00pm  Scouts 6:00	17 Constitution Meeting 7:00	18	19
20 10:00 AM Virtual Worship	21 Newsletter Articles Due	22 <b>Virtual Blue Christmas Service 7:00</b>	23	24 Virtual Christmas Eve Service 7:00 	25 	26
27 10:00 AM Virtual Worship	28	29	30	31 		



To hear worship by phone, the dial in number is +1 312 626 6799 in the Chicago area.

## Confirmation on December 13

In the fall of 2019 seven of our high school students from Pilgrim Faith began their journey toward confirmation. They participated in confirmation classes, completed written assignments, and worked with their mentors. Unfortunately, just as they were finishing up their last months of instruction, the pandemic hit, and it became impossible to hold an in-person service of confirmation in May. The confirmands were determined to be confirmed together publicly in front of the congregation, so the confirmation ceremony was postponed until the end of 2020. The confirmands are now scheduled to be confirmed on Sunday, December 13, 2020. With COVID cases increasing it is still impossible to hold a full in-person service that day, so the confirmation service will be virtual after all. All members of the congregation, however, are invited to witness the confirmation service virtually via Zoom or Facebook Live. Please plan to attend the virtual service on December 13 to welcome these great young people into membership at Pilgrim Faith and offer your congratulations via the Chat and Comments online!



### Christmas Eve Service



On **December 24** Pilgrim Faith will hold only one Christmas Eve service. The virtual Christmas Eve service will be held at 7 pm. During the service, the congregation will participate in the traditional lighting of the Advent wreath and singing of *Silent Night* with the lighting of individual candles. Please prepare your candles in advance and plan to join us on Christmas Eve as we celebrate Jesus' birth.



### STEWARDSHIP FUNDS Year To Date Giving

#### OPERATING

Received: \$117,188.80

Spent: \$112,237.57

#### MISSION

Received: \$11,807.32

Spent: \$0.00

#### CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Pledges \$356,100.00

Donations Rcv'd \$362,493.75

### Blue Christmas Service December 22

While the Christmas season is for many a time of great joy and celebration, it is not that way for all. Many people experience a deep feeling of sadness during the holiday season due to grief, unfulfilled dreams, broken relationships, a sense of loss, financial burdens and other stresses of daily life. For people in this state of mind, celebrating the Christmas holiday just does not seem right. Acknowledging the challenge of the Christmas season for many people, this year Pilgrim Faith will hold a service of lament called Blue Christmas on Tuesday, December 22 at **7 p.m.**

The Blue Christmas service will be a quiet, candlelight service of prayer and reflection. 2020 has been filled with challenges for many. If those burdens weigh heavily on you during this Christmas season, we hope you will join us for our first Blue Christmas via Zoom on Tuesday, December 22.





## The Mission Board has hung our stockings!

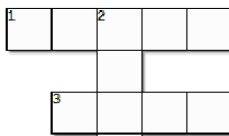


This Christmas is the most unusual most of us can remember. It is a time for Great Joy, but many of us are experiencing deep sorrow and much is unknown and different. Most of us have "enough": we have enough to eat, enough to stay warm, enough love. Some of us are experiencing hard times. If you are experiencing hard times, please reach out to the church. Pastor James and church friends are a phone call away. If you don't have enough to eat, the pantry is here for you. We also have the oft forgotten HOPE fund Helping Our Parishioners Economically. If you need to take advantage of any of these options, call Pastor James or reach out to someone in the congregation for a sympathetic shoulder. For those of you who have "enough", there are several options, outlined elsewhere in the newsletter. No one is expected to choose to support any of these opportunities, but for some their gift to Christ is the first on their "things to do" list. At least one person has already completed her reverse Advent Calendar and brought all 25 items listed on it to the food pantry. Those who have chosen to purchase gifts for children have already made that commitment. But there is still time to give your gifts to Jesus through Project Heifer and the Christmas Fund. May you experience the Joy of Christmas through the gift of giving or through the gift of receiving. If no one is willing to receive, no one can experience the joy of giving.

## HOLIDAY SHOPPING ON AMAZON SMILE

Shop on **AMAZON Smile** and select Pilgrim Faith UCC as your charity of choice. Each transaction you make, **AMAZON** donates a percentage back to Pilgrim Faith.

**Donate to Pilgrim Faith every time you shop!**



DOWN

2. Origin of song traditionally sung on New Years Eve.
4. New Year's Eve \_\_\_\_\_ showing the number of days, hours, minutes & seconds until the beginning of New Year
5. 5th Day of Christmas \_\_\_\_\_.

ACROSS

1. Movie Sound of \_\_\_\_\_
3. Silent Night \_\_\_\_\_ Night.
6. 2nd Day of Christmas \_\_\_\_\_.
7. New Years Song \_\_\_\_\_ !!



Countdown – GoldenRings – TurtleDoves – Holy  
Music – AuldlangSyne – Scottish

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## **Project Heifer**

"If I were a shepherd, I would give a lamb."

We sing the carols of Christmas that we love so well. Sometimes I hear just the beautiful melodies. Always they bring Peace. In the Bleak Mid-Winter has stirred me since I was a child. Nowhere in the Bible does it say that the shepherds gave Jesus lambs, just that they came and worshiped him. But a few of us ARE in a position to give a lamb \$120 and some of us are in the position to give a flock of chicks \$20 or a heifer (young female cow) \$500. We're city people, not country people. We don't know the value of these animals, but the "value" can be the difference between being able to feed a family or to watch them and listen to their cries of hunger. With the animals come a farm worker arrives, too, who teaches the community receiving the animals how to care for them. Chickens provide protein and some of the eggs, allowed to hatch produce more chickens, or eggs can be sold for a meager income. With each animal comes the promise to share the offspring: now two families are fed.

Because of Covid, it is not practical to dispense gift cards to you. Please make your own or a certificate telling the recipient you have made a gift in their honor. Best of all, call the recipient on Christmas and along with the gift in their honor, give them a gift of your time as you reach across the street or across the miles and connect your heart to theirs on Christmas.

If you wish to make a Project Heifer gift, please write Heifer in the memo section of your check or write a note to the financial secretary that part of your contribution to the church this month is \$xxx to Project Heifer.

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## **The Christmas Fund**

The Christmas Fund used to be Veterans of the Cross and gave help to the families of retired ministers in need and a small check at Christmas. It is no longer Veterans of the Cross because most retired ministers are receiving pensions. However, some minister's families have extraordinary expenses from time to time or on an ongoing basis. Extraordinary expenses may be included in having lost their homes in wildfires, or hurricanes or tornados. Ongoing may be having a handicap or dependent child with a handicap, that just can't be covered by the salary ministers are paid. Gifts to the Christmas Fund help with those expenses.

The Christmas Fund is also one of the **5 for 5 giving** opportunities offered by the wider church. The 5 are: Basic, ongoing support of the wider church.

One Great Hour of Sharing, tied to Easter and supporting world wide missions.

Strengthen the Church, tied to Pentecost, and supporting new church projects.

Neighbors in Need, tied to World Wide Communion Sunday and supporting mission within the US.

The Christmas Fund, tied to Christmas and helping the families of ministers with extraordinary needs.

The Mission Board does not expect every person to give every time we offer an opportunity. Some missions are important to some people and others resonate elsewhere. Give where YOUR heart takes you and may your soul be blessed.

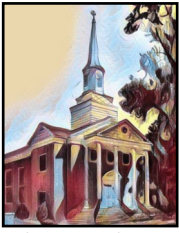
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## **BEDS Food Team Provides Thanksgiving Dinner**

In November, Pilgrim Faith's BEDS Food Team had the pleasure of providing a real Thanksgiving dinner to the 60 BEDS Plus guests who this year are housed in area motels. The guests deeply appreciated the turkey dinners that we provided complete with mashed potatoes and gravy, stuffing, vegetables, salad, rolls, and pumpkin pie with whipped cream. Thanks to the Food Team for the donations of food and cash contributions that helped make this meal possible!

Pilgrim Faith is scheduled to provide the Christmas Eve meal for 60 people in December. Jack and Pat's Butcher Shop in Chicago Ridge has generously donated several chickens for the main course. If you would like to help by cooking some part of the meal, purchasing individually packaged items for distribution, or making a cash contribution to defray the meal cost, please contact Vicki Brooks or Peggy Martin.

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Oak Lawn, IL 60453

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## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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### **SATURDAY**

10:00am Food Pantry  
10:00am AA 2nd Floor

### **MONDAY**

12:00pm AA 2nd Floor  
7:30pm GA 2nd Floor

### **TUESDAY**

10:00am Food Pantry  
10:00am AA 2nd Floor  
6:00pm Girl Scouts  
7:00pm AA District 6 & 21  
*Next meeting March 2021  
(3rd Tues-Every odd mo.)*

### **WEDNESDAY**

10:00am AA 2nd floor  
1:00pm Al-Anon  
6:00pm Boy Scouts  
7:00pm AA 2nd floor

### **THURSDAY**

10:00am AA 2nd Floor  
6:00pm AA *Cancelled*  
7:00pm BEDS Shelter  
*(Discontinued until further notice)*

### **FRIDAY**

8:00pm AA 2nd Floor

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## Check Out the New Website!

The next time you have a question about what is happening at Pilgrim Faith, go to [www.pilgrimfaith.org](http://www.pilgrimfaith.org) where you will find everything you need to know! Many members are not in the habit of going to the website for information because the old site was frequently outdated. That has changed now that we have a beautiful new website designed by Don Harris! As the church tries to rely less on the use of paper for communicating with members, much more information is posted on the website for you to use at your convenience. Every Sunday morning at 10 am, go to the website to access the order of worship and a link to the worship service!

## Attention Church Leadership...

Annual Reports are due to be written and submitted to the church office by the end of the day on Monday, January 4. It is important that all annual reports are submitted on time so that the reports can be compiled and distributed to members at least two weeks before the Annual Meeting of the congregation.