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JULY 2020



# July Newsletter



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## A WORD FROM THE MODERATOR

June 26 & 27 was Candidate Weekend at Pilgrim Faith. Pastor James Bowman Harris and his husband, Don Harris, traveled from their home in Tennessee for their first opportunity to visit Pilgrim Faith. On Saturday morning, Pastor James made a brief visit to the food pantry, followed by scheduled small group meetings with approximately 45 church members which extended throughout the afternoon. On Sunday morning, Pastor James conducted the church service which was attended by 54 people who were required to wear masks and adhere to social distancing rules. Following the service, Pastor James and his spouse were escorted out of the sanctuary while the members of the congregation participated in a short discussion about the candidate before taking a vote to extend a call to Pastor James to become Pilgrim Faith UCC's new settled pastor. 42 members were present to vote in person and 21 members voted via Zoom with all voting to affirm the candidate.

We would like to extend a warm welcome to Pastor James for accepting the call, and we extend a huge thank you to the members of the Search Committee for their tireless work in selecting our new pastor! Pastor James expects to begin his work at Pilgrim Faith at the beginning of September.

## HAPPY 100<sup>TH</sup> BIRTHDAY JANETTE!

Pilgrim Faith's oldest member, Janette Talsma, celebrated her 100<sup>th</sup> birthday in June! If you would like to send belated birthday greetings, the address is: Janette Talsma Brookdale Assisted Living, 16051 S. LaGrange Rd. Orland Park, IL 60467



## ELLEN PEARSON RESIGNS

On June 21<sup>st</sup> Ellen Pearson submitted a letter of resignation as Music Director and Organist effective immediately. In her letter Ellen stated, "Pilgrim Faith has been a blessing in my life and I have enjoyed sharing my talents. However, the time has come after 50 plus years of music performance to retire and explore new opportunities. May God bless Pilgrim Faith in its ongoing faith journey." Moderator, Charles Martin, received the letter and has begun the task of looking for a new director of music at Pilgrim Faith.



## MEET PASTOR JAMES

As Pilgrim Faith anxiously awaits the arrival of Pastor James in September, members may be wondering, "Just what is it that qualifies Pastor James to be our new settled pastor?" In answer to that question, here are a few highlights from Pastor James' resume.

Pastor James received his Bachelor of Arts in Biblical Studies and Preaching Ministry from Point University before entering Candler School of Theology at Emory University where he received his Master of Divinity degree in 2015. Following his time at Emory University, James served as a chaplain resident at Emory St. Joseph's Hospital before becoming a chaplain/bereavement counselor at Halcyon Hospice where he provided spiritual care services to patients, families, and caregivers during the end-of-life stage.

In 2018, Pastor James became the pastor of United Church of Cookeville. In addition to leading weekly services, Pastor James implemented the smart use of visual technology during worship, started online streaming of worship, revamped the church's marketing efforts, and started the church's first Vacation Bible School program. Under his guidance, the church increased its community involvement and visibility through participation in local events and increased church membership by 24 in just two years. Pastor James implemented a worship committee to plan weekly worship and instituted a weekly "Coffee with the Pastor" extending an open invitation to the congregation as well as to the larger local community. Want to know more about Pastor James? Watch for more info in the August newsletter!



## MONTHLY GIVING AS A NEEDED OPTION

Events in 2020 has created unforeseen challenges to our weekly offerings. Many members of our church have chosen to do direct deposit from their bank accounts to Pilgrim Faith to make sure their overall pledge and giving's are deposited (*without putting them in our weekly collection baskets*). Our request is that everyone please consider this direct deposit option, if you did not make a pledge, you can still take the amount you would have given monthly and set-up a direct deposit. If you need help to achieve this with your bank let me know, we'll be happy to discuss how we did it here at our home. Mike & Pam Cusack



## VIRTUAL VBS JULY 27 – JULY 29

**Pilgrim Faith Families!** We are excited to announce VBS WILL HAPPEN this year! Instead of you bringing your kids to VBS, we're bringing VBS to your kids! This summer, Mon. July 27, Tues. July 28, and Wed. July 30, we'll be using a quarantine friendly VBS called BOLT. With minimal preparation, easy-to-follow instructions, a video that leads you and your kids step-by-step through each of the 3 days, BOLT is designed for you to perform with your family at home.



During BOLT, your family will participate in fun games that illustrate what it means to listen to, focus on, and follow Jesus. Depending on your pace, you can expect that each day's experience will last an hour and a half. It's great for kids 5 and up. Even middle and high school kids can enjoy it! If you want to get a better idea of what BOLT is, you can watch a promo video on the church website, <http://pilgrimfaith.org/vbs>. We're really excited about an amazing outreach opportunity— If you feel comfortable gathering with people, you can invite neighbors, friends, and family to your house for BOLT. It's an easy and fun way to share the good news of Jesus with our community.

**Register at:** [www.pilgrimfaith.org/vbs](http://www.pilgrimfaith.org/vbs). More information will be sent closer to, **July 27, 2020**.

In the meantime, get your family excited about BOLT. Blessings, CE Board & Daune Sebastian

### DIVERSITY AND EQUITY WORKSHOP

On Tuesday, June 30, approximately twenty-five Pilgrim Faith members and Pastor James attended a virtual Diversity and Equity Workshop via Zoom. The workshop was led by Professor Jessica Oladapo who is a colleague of Cari Stevenson at Kankakee Community College. With the racial tensions that have arisen in the aftermath of several recent shootings of black citizens by police officers around the country, Cari Stevenson and the Deacons received approval of the Church Council to offer this diversity training in hopes of helping members to better understand the Black Lives Matters movement. This discussion about race tied in well with a book study about Social Justice that Cari Stevenson is currently leading on Tuesday nights at 7:30 via Zoom. The Social Justice Group is currently reading *White Fragility* by Robin Diangelo. If you are interested in joining the Social Justice Group, contact Cari Stevenson.

If you would like to make a donation electronically, visit the website [www.PilgrimFaith.org](http://www.PilgrimFaith.org) or scan the code with your phone.



## IN SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the families of...

**Melinda Kosvick** who passed away on May 12 at Bria Hills Health Care Center. No service was held.

**Elsie Salvesen** who passed away in early June.

**Betty Neumann** who passed away on June 19 at her home. A service will be held at a later date.

### VIRTUAL CHURCH VISITATIONS

During the months of July and August, Pilgrim Faith will not have a pastor on site as we await the arrival of Pastor James Bowman Harris. Because many are not comfortable with attending live services during the COVID-19, the Deacons have decided that this would be a great time for members to attend virtual worship services provided by other churches who have similar beliefs. Visiting other churches may give us new ideas that we might like to incorporate into our own services as we transition to our time with a new pastor. Each week of July and August, the Deacons will recommend a virtual service that you can view online either live on Sunday morning or at your convenience. Below are the churches we have scheduled to visit in the coming weeks.

**Sunday, July 19** – First Congregational UCC, Madison, Wisconsin <https://www.firstcongmadison.org/>

**Sunday, July 26** – Plymouth UCC, in Des Moines, Iowa <https://www.plymouthchurch.com/>

**Sunday, August 2** – Hope UCC, in Naperville, Illinois <http://sharehope.org/>

**Sunday, August 9** – Countryside Community Church in Omaha, Nebraska <https://countrysideucc.org>

These churches are aware that PF members will be joining their service remotely and are eager to welcome us. Visit the Pilgrim Faith website or the Pilgrim Faith Facebook page for further details weekly throughout the summer regarding ways to submit prayer requests for each Sunday. If you have a prayer request but don't have a computer, contact the office with your request and it will be passed on to the church of the week. August 16, 23, and 30 have not yet been scheduled. We will inform you of the details as they are available.

### STEWARDSHIP FUNDS MAY 2020

#### Operating

Rcvd: \$55,484.77

Spent: \$65,584.44

#### Mission

Rcvd: \$5,196.32

Spent: \$0.00

#### Capital Campaign

Pledges \$356,100.00

Donations Rcvd 362,493.75



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