

Discover
Your
Faith



PILGRIM FAITH UCC

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

www.PilgrimFaith.org

(708) 422-4200

Rev. James Bowman Harris

January 2020



PASTOR'S MESSAGE

Here we are the start of a New Year. If our prayers are answered then we can finally put 2020 behind us. A new year is a time that is to bring a new hope. A time in which we can look back to reflect on the lessons we learned from the past year. A time of new beginnings. A time to embark on new adventures. A time that many of us will make resolutions in the hope of bettering ourselves. For some that means a new work-out plan, to travel (well, when we can again), to explore a new hobby, and the list can go on and on. My hope is that in your New Year resolutions you will think of how you can become even a larger part of the ministry here at Pilgrim Faith.

When each of you joined Pilgrim Faith, you made covenantal promises on how to be an active member of this body of faith. Those covenantal promises that you made were to give of your time, your talent, and your finances. So, like your yearly New Year resolutions, how faithful and successful have you been at keeping these covenantal promises? Keeping up with New Year resolution takes a commitment just as it does to keep up with the covenantal promises you have made to Pilgrim Faith. Statistics say that it takes at least 66 days to learn a new way of thinking or to form a new behavior. 66 days is a just a little over 2 months. In the scheme of a 365 day year, not including Leap Year, 66 days to make a change for the better is really not too bad.

Yet, it is human nature to simply give up when you slip up during the 66 days it takes to make the change. Instead of offering yourself grace and forgiveness, you shame yourself into thinking you're a failure and give up. When instead, giving yourself grace and forgiveness could be just the fuel you need to pick yourself up to start a new 66 days toward a positive change. In other words, be kind to yourself and find new ways to live into your resolutions and to strengthen the covenantal promises.

It will take all of our efforts this coming year as we begin to find new ways to be the church. It will take all of us to make a New Year resolution to live into the covenantal promises. It will take us all to see how we can offer more of our time to the ministries of our church. Here we are at the first of the year, and we are looking for members to join the different ministries. This is one of the ways you can give of your time. What about your talents? How can you offer them? Do you play a musical instrument? Are you good with graphics and like social media? These are just a few talents that I wish I had, but I don't. Here is a way that you could give of your talent.

Yes, you knew the topic of finances was going to be mentioned. Friends, the last report that I was given, our Stewardship pledges are less than last year's. While the giving of time and talent are important, giving of our treasure is what helps us keep the church going so we can give of our time and talent. There is still time to send in your Stewardship pledges.

When you are thinking of your personal New Year resolutions, prayerfully consider how to make your covenantal promises to Pilgrim Faith a part of them. It will take all of our time, talent, and finances in 2021 to be the church. The church that God has called us to be, and the church that we want and hope to be.

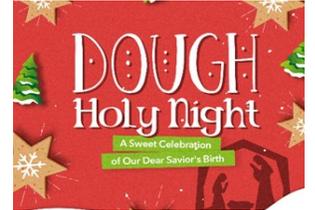
**Happy New Year Pilgrim Faith UCC,
Pastor James**





CE BOARD NEWS DOUGH HOLY NIGHT

What a FUN time Dough Holy Night has been! It was an interactive experience designed for your family to do at home. We watched a video and heard the story of the birth of Jesus, baked cookies, and then ATE them- what could be better? Here a some of the pictures that came in-



January 2021

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
					1 HAPPY NEW YEAR 	2 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon
3 10:00AM Virtual Worship COMMUNION	4 Board Reports Due	5 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon Girls Scouts 6:00	6 Scouts 6:00	7 CE Board 7:00	8	9 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon
PICK - UP STAR WORD FOR 2021						
10 10:00 AM Virtual Worship Virtual COFFEE Hour on Zoom STAR WORDS	11 Mission 7:00 Deacons 7:00	12 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon Trustee 7:00 Girls Scouts 6:00	13 Scouts 6:00	14	15	16 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon
17 10:00 AM Virtual Worship	18 	19 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon	20 Council 7:00	21	22	23 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon
24 10:00 AM Virtual Worship Book Club 7:00 PM	25	26 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon	27 BEDS Meal Donations Due to Peggy Martin by 3 PM	28 BEDS MEAL Provided by Pilgrim Faith	29	30 Food Pantry 10:00 a.m. to Noon
31 10:00 AM Virtual Worship						

Happy NEW YEAR from the Moderator!

December was a busy month at Pilgrim Faith! In addition to celebrating the Advent season during virtual Sunday services in December, Pilgrim Faith welcomed five confirmands into membership on December 13, offered its first ever Blue Christmas service on December 22, and celebrated the birth of Jesus with an interactive service on December 24. Each of those virtual services was unique and required much careful planning to keep our congregation safe and healthy. Those services were all very visible publicly via the Internet; however, several things have been happening behind the scenes at Pilgrim Faith Church in the month of December that you may not realize.

The Constitution committee, under the leadership of Bob Cook, has been busy working on re-writing the Pilgrim Faith United Church of Christ Constitution which was last revised in 1996. The 11-member committee has met weekly since early November and has completed the Constitution re-write but is still working on completing the Pilgrim Faith U.C.C. Bylaws. The Constitution committee's goal is to complete the church bylaws early in 2021. When both the Constitution and Bylaws are complete, they will be presented to the congregation for approval.

The technology committee has also been busy working on ways to improve the quality of Pilgrim Faith's streamed virtual services. Thanks to Ken Langevin, the Sanctuary and Colonial Hall now have a strong Internet connection which makes our online streaming capabilities more reliable. The tech team (Ken Langevin, Peggy McGinnis, Mary Weierman, Tom Aitken and myself) has spent many hours on Saturdays throughout December experimenting with the existing video and audio equipment that the church owns with varying results. From December 12-26 the church rented equipment from EZ Cloud Solutions which gave us an opportunity to try out new equipment for four services. The production quality of those four services was much better than that of previous services. The technology committee will bring a proposal to the Trustees and Church Council in January with its recommendations for purchasing the necessary video and audio equipment for continued live streaming of services.

Thank you so much for your support of Pilgrim Faith U.C.C.!

Charles Martin, Moderator



Thank You... To the Talsma Family

Pilgrim Faith UCC would like to thank the family of deceased member Janette Talsma for their generous donation of \$10,000 in memory of Janette. This donation has been designated to be used to start a fund for technology improvements at the church which will enable us to acquire improved audio and video equipment that will be used for streaming virtual services to those members who are unable to attend church in person. The church is incredibly grateful for this generous contribution from Janette's family.



STAR WORDS **Revealed on January 10**

After the birth of Jesus, the magi bringing their gifts followed the star to find baby Jesus. Like the magi, we are also seeking Jesus. We put our trust in God who uses many signs (or stars) to guide us closer to Him.

In the past few years, people worshipping at Pilgrim Faith on the first Sunday after Epiphany have been invited to take a rock that has been gathered from the beach at Tower Hill. On each of the rocks is a printed “**star**” word. We select our “**star**” word rocks without looking at the word printed on the rock because we trust that God will lead us to the word that is right for us.

After receiving a “**star**” word, worshippers reflect on their word to determine what message God is sending to them. During Lent we then have a discussion after church about the meaning of our “**star**” words. Our discussion of “**star**” words has become an especially important intergenerational activity at Pilgrim Faith over the past few years.

Pilgrim Faith will celebrate Epiphany in 2021 on Sunday, January 10. Since the Sunday services will still be held virtually in January, we ask that all who wish to select a “**star**” word come to the church to pick one up between **January 3 and 10**. The “**star**” word rocks will be found in a basket on the cabinet just outside the office the office door in the pantry hallway for you to pick up. Remember, do not look at the word on your rock until after you have selected it! We hope that worshippers of all ages will stop by to receive a word that will guide them through the coming year.

On **January 10**, we ask that you plan to stay a few extra minutes after church for a virtual coffee hour where you will have an opportunity to reveal your word for 2020 and offer your initial reaction to your new word.

God, we acknowledge that we are not always ready to receive your best gifts for us. You have given us an epiphany word in order that our searching will bring us to you.

It is often our habit to turn aside, stumble over, or even reject experiences and encounters that we later understand to have been precious gifts.

Help us to be open to the gift that you offer us now through our star words. We acknowledge that we do not fully understand what this word might mean for our faith, but we receive it from you with gratitude and pray that your Spirit will enable us to live into our word with intention and faithfulness.

Amen.

Prayer by Michelle Thomas Bush

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



RECYCLING

For several years Pilgrim Faith UCC maintained a recycling bin in the church parking lot not only to encourage paper recycling, but also to earn a little extra money for the church. At the end of 2020, the church Trustees decided to have the paper recycling bin removed from the parking lot because the church was no longer receiving any money from the paper collected. In fact, the church was having to pay a fee to keep the bin in the church parking lot.

The church will continue to recycle by disposing of its paper, cardboard, and plastics by taking them to the Oak Lawn Village recycling bins at the Public Works building located on 98th Street between Central and Washington. We encourage you to also recycle by placing your recyclables in your own recycling bin at home for pick up. If you do not have recycling pickup where you live, we recommend taking your recycling to the Oak Lawn Public Works building.

The one container that remains in the church parking lot is a dumpster for garbage. Nothing placed in that bin will be recycled.

Pantry Update:

December has been an extremely busy month for our pantry! We have been on the receiving end of some really generous food drives! Many of those were organized by students in our community! Also, a tremendous **THANK YOU** to our congregation for their incredible response to our Reverse Advent Calendar! Photos from the end of November and December:



STEWARDSHIP FUNDS YTD November 2020

OPERATING

Received: \$126,698.11

Spent: \$124,407.14

MISSION

Received: \$13,092.32

Spent: \$0.00

CAPITAL CAMPAIGN

Pledges \$356,100.00

Donations Rcv'd \$362,493.75

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.

If you are a church officer, the chairperson of a church board, a coordinator of a mission project such as the Food Pantry or BEDS, or the leader of a church organization such as a youth group, STARS, or WISH, you are asked to submit an annual report. Since 2020 has been such an unusual year with many events cancelled or held virtually, we know that your report may be brief, but we would like to maintain a written record of what has been done in 2020 for future reference.

GREETINGS!

From the Board of Trustees & the Stewardship Committee

Merry Christmas!

With 2020 coming to an end, I hope you all are well. In this time of uncertainty and concern, we are seeing a little hope. A vaccine for Covid-19, our government working together on a new stimulus package to help people and businesses that are struggling, and our new Pastor are all blessings.

Even though our sanctuary is closed, the many other functions of the church are still running as close to normal as possible; the maintenance and upkeep are still there. As we put our budget together for next year, we ask that if you have not already sent in your pledge card, please do so! You can also securely pledge on our church website. Accurate pledging information is critical to creating an actual budget for 2021. Last year we predicted a budget deficit of \$69,000. At this time, we are down in pledges for 2021. We need to do better this year! If you have any questions or comments, please feel free to email me at kenLangevin66@gmail.com or call me at (708) 601-5351.

Many blessings to you all!

Ken Langevin

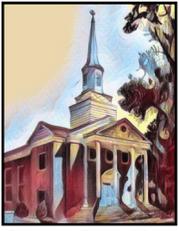
BOOK CLUB — JANUARY 24

The Book Club will be reading *Eagle and Crane* by Suzanne Rindell for the January 24th, 2021 meeting. The Pilgrim Faith Book Club will continue to meet by Zoom at 7 PM. **All are welcome.**

Book Summary

Louis Thorn and Haruto "Harry" Yamada (Eagle and Crane) are the star attractions of Earl Shaw's Flying Circus, a daredevil (*and not exactly legal*) flying act that traverses Depression-era California. After the Japanese bomb Pearl Harbor and one of Shaw's planes containing two charred bodies mysteriously crashes, authorities conclude that the victims were Harry and his father, Kenichi, who had escaped from a Japanese internment camp. To the local sheriff, the situation is open and shut. But to the lone FBI agent assigned to the case, the details don't add up. Thus begins an investigation into what really happened to cause the plane crash, who was in the plane when it fell from the sky, and why no one involved seems willing to tell the truth. *Eagle and Crane* is a novel that tells a gripping story as it explores a terrible era of American history.





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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

ENVELOPES

If you requested **2021** envelopes, they are available for pickup at the church. For those that cannot pick them up, please call the office to make mailing arrangements. *Don Lagerstrom*

WISH

Women in Step with Him

WISH will open 2021 with **Valentine's Day** cards for all the homebound members. Because of covid-19, Gail will prepare them all. Gail is trying to personalize them, so if you know anyone on the list that likes dogs, cats, flowers, etc, please let Gail know by calling her at 708-423-0399 or email gailsiwek@yahoo.com. Also, if there is anyone in the church or a friend of the church who is having a hard time and needs a Valentine to cheer him or her up, let Gail know!