



August 2025

More Truth and Light

"May your kingdom come. May your will be done on earth as it is in heaven." *Matthew 6:10*

What an inspiring and enriching experience it was to attend *"Into the Deep"* at General Synod 35 in Kansas City, MO. In the July newsletter I shared with you in this space, the work that was before the delegates to General Synod 35. Besides seeing old friends, meeting new ones, inspiring worship, learning about the United Church of Christ and all its ministries, or marching against the actions of ICE in the Kansas City, important work was also done that will impact our life together. I thought I would share some of the good work we've done and the powerful witness and impact the United Church of Christ continues to have in our nation, the world, and among our ecumenical partners.

If I were to summarize the work of General Synod 35, I would say that our work from July 11th through the 15th was the continuing effort of God's people faithfully living into the petition of the Lord's prayer that I've cited above. The United Church of Christ and our Ecumenical partners around the world continue to create a world where God's realm is as present on earth as it is in heaven. Through resolutions and decisions, the United Church of Christ continues to be a leader in making important decision that reflect justice, equity, peace, and inclusion. Let me share how we've continued to do this with the decisions we have made.

At this meeting, the delegates elected Rev. Shari Prestemon, Associate General Minister & Co-Executive of Global Ministries. We celebrated our partnership with the United Church of Canada and the United Church of Christ of the Philippines. In addition, the United Church of Christ entered full communion with Iglesia Evangelica Unida De Puerto Rico (IEUPR) and Evangelische Kirche in Deutschland (EKD). Through the election of Rev. Shari Prestemon, the votes to grant both IEUPR and EKD full communion with the United Church of Christ, we continue to make relevant the prayer of Jesus the imagines a time that 'all may be one'.

In addition to affirming our partners in ministry and mission, the United Church of Christ passed several significant resolutions. By a unanimous vote of General Synod, the four separate Pennsylvania Conferences combined to create the Keystone Conference. In addition, we passed a resolution recognizing that the State of Israel is engaged in genocide and General Synod agreed. We also declared that President's Trumps policies and actions are acts of domestic terrorism by our own elected government and we stand against his policies with multiple

agencies and Christian denominations who believe the same. We passed a resolution speaking against the government of India that is engaged in active segregation toward Muslims, Christians, and other minority religions. The current government of India is moving toward a theocracy of Hinduism and persecuting all other religious people. General Synod declared the action of the Indian government as immoral and a violation of international human rights.

In addition, the United Church of Christ called for the support of full funding and autonomy for the Voice of America and voted in support of the restoration of full funding for the United States Agency for International Development (USAID). These resolutions and others are our best effort this year in trying to live into the vision of doing good on earth as has been done in heaven.

In addition to resolutions of witness, we also elected officers to serve the United Church of Christ in the 'in between time' of our, now, triennial meetings. We passed amendments for the Constitution and Bylaw that reflect our decision to move from biennial meetings to our triennial meetings. The General Synod delegates rejected an amendment that would cede the oversight and election of our three Associate General Ministers to the General Minister and President of the United Church of Christ and the Board of Directors. After robust debate the delegates of the General Synod defeated the amendment to the Constitution of the United Church of Christ.

As always, it is an honor and privilege to serve as a delegate to General Synod, and I am always grateful for the opportunity. More than resolutions, pronouncements, and elections, General Synod is our Church in action and a wonderful opportunity to experience holy, sacred community with UCC members and mission partners from around the world. Indeed, for five days, it felt that God's realm was on earth as it was in heaven. Let me conclude with the Lord's Prayer from the Celtic Christian tradition rendered by Rev. John Philip Newell:

*Holy One beyond all names
Eternal Wellspring
May love rise again in us today
With food for every table,
Shelter for every family
And reverence for every life.
Forgive us our failings in love
And free us from all falseness
That the light of our souls may shine
And the strength of our spirits endure
For Earth and all its people
This day, tonight and forever. Amen.*

With much joy,

Pastor Dan

From the Desk of Mary Weierman

"For it is by grace you have been saved, through faith - and this is not from yourselves, it is the gift of God- not by works, so that no one can boast." Ephesians 2:8-9

As we move forward in God's calling for Pilgrim Faith, we realize that we all are blessed. Historically, summer months have low attendance which worked in our favor; our air conditioning has broken. Building and grounds called a repairman who basically said that we need new units.

After prayerful guidance, we (for right now) are not going to buy a new unit. The repairman has fixed the unit so it works (prayerfully for this summer).

June Numbers

Deposits 25,167

Withdrawals 21,192

Difference 3,975

I want to thank everyone who is giving their time, services and donations.

While we move forward, I want everyone to know that the money that we do bring in, does go to bills. Even though this report shows a positive from June, the repair for the AC and a problem with us not receiving the grounds keeping bill, has taken most of this positive balance.

Continue to pray during this time of change. I continue to pray for you all and the focus of our church. May God bless you and keep you under His wing of Love.

FOOD ITEMS NEEDED FOR HOMELESS THAT DO NOT HAVE A WAY TO REFRIGERATE OR COOK FOOD.

Food for our unhoused friends in our food pantry is quite depleted. The Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry needs food items that can provide nourishment for those who do not have a way to cook or store food. On your next trip to the grocery store, please consider items that can be provided for the unhoused population in our community and bring them to the church. A partial list is below. There may be other items that you find that would also be helpful to our unhoused friends.

Bumblebee snack on the run chicken salad

-Bumblebee snack on the run tuna salad

-Hormel completes

-Protein drinks

-Shelf stable milk

-Mac and Cheese in microwave cups

-pouches of chili or beef stew



Thank you for your thoughtfulness and helping our food pantry meet the needs of our unhoused friends.



SEEKING VOLUNTEERS TO HELP PLAN OUR LEGACY CELEBRATIONS!

Since our decision to merge with Salem United Church of Christ and to create a new church, we would like to celebrate the legacy of Pilgrim Faith United Church of Christ. Pastor Dan is looking for volunteers willing to plan our celebration service in November, our final service at a date yet to be determined, and any other ways we would like to celebrate the impact of Pilgrim Faith U.C.C. over these many years. Pastor Dan would like to plan to have our first meeting in the month of August. If you are interested in helping us plan our celebrations, please contact Pastor Dan by **Sunday, August 17th** and we'll begin planning our celebrations.



September Limitless Youth Group Start-Up!

In the fall, we are excited to be starting up the youth group again, but

this year the kids and families will be running the group in preparation for the merger. We will tentatively plan to have a youth group meeting hosted at Pilgrim Faith UCC in early September. More information to come, and if you have any questions, reach out to Kevin Holt.

Online Giving Now Available

A number of you have asked that we make it possible for you to give your donations through an online option. We are pleased to inform everyone that you can now do that. Simply scan the QR code below with your phone or tablet and you will be directed to our online page where you can make a donation. Thank you!



Remember Our Homebound

Mary Brehm
Bridgeview Healthcare
Ctr.
8100 S. Harlem Ave.
Bridgeview, IL 60455

Linda Aitken
The Pointe at
Kilpatrick
14230 Kilpatrick
Crestwood, IL. 60418

Donna Twichell
10032 Harnew Rd.
East
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

Bob Salveson
6146 S. Karlov Ave.
Chicago, IL 60629



The following sermon was preached on Sunday, July 6th and several members requested that the sermon be included in the August newsletter. The sermon is printed below, and I pray that for those who were unable to worship on this day, that you will find strength and inspiration in this interpretation of the passage from Galatians.

**The Fourth Sunday after Pentecost
July 6, 2025**

Galatians 6:7-10

“Edging out the Darkness with the Light of Christ”

Two-Hundred and Forty-Nine years ago 56 undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees signed the Declaration of Independence and created what would become the United States of America. My curious mind wonders what that must have been like for the people of this new nation. I'm imagining the sun rising and slowly shedding its light upon a tired and weary people – a people who had been fighting for justice, freedom, and happiness for a long time. Fifty-six undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees signed the Declaration of Independence and invited friends and strangers to voluntarily join them in this new experiment – an experiment where there would be no king, no ruling class, and no authoritarian strongman who would govern by intimidation, hateful threats, persistent bullying, or abusing the privileges of an elected office.

I wonder how the men and women in 1776 must have felt when they heard the words, **“We hold these truths to be self-evident, that all men [sic] are created equal, that they are endowed by their Creator, with certain unalienable right, that among these are life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness.”** I would imagine that these spoken words were, to the people, like the light of freedom edging out the darkness of despair – a torch lighting the way beside the golden door of this new nation. And to imagine that these words were signed by fifty-six undocumented immigrants, asylum seekers, and refugees who did not fear the king, did not grow weary in their pursuit of freedom and happiness, and even under the threat of death, persevered and initiated a sequence of events in our American history that we are celebrating this weekend – two-hundred and forty-nine years later. Against the deep darkness of the earth, a fireworks display reminds us of the light of freedom that every human spirit longs to know and wish that they could have. Yet, even in a land that prides itself in freedom, we still have too many who are not free. Through mindless executive orders, heartless legislation, and a terrible abuse of power, the United States, today, is denying God's beloved children the very values that shaped our nation. **“... life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness...”** In our nation today, there is such deep concern for our nation that not even a bright, fantastic drone assisted firework display can edge out the darkness that we are feeling, nor does it fill our hearts with pride. In such a time as this, the words from Paul ring loud, clear, and are convicting to me. His call to me and to all who follow the light of Christ is one that asks of us not to despair, but to, instead, embrace the moment and be the light of Christ that edges out the evil, the grief, and the darkness that surrounds us. Paul writes, **“So let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.” Galatians 6:9.**

When Paul penned these words for his church in Galatia, outside voices were calling the believers to turn to a differ-

ent gospel and one that Paul had not been teaching. At this point in his ministry, Paul was not a compliant patriot of Rome. He was not interested in national propaganda that laid the mantle of God upon the Roman Emperor. At this point in biblical history, the Jewish religion was propping up the Roman Empire and the Sadducees, Priests, and Pharisees were the religious broadcasting station for the empire. Paul could see how the political leaders and religious leaders of the time were exploiting one another for their own political, social, and economic gain. The actions of the religious leaders of the time were undermining the message of Christ with a gospel that dehumanizes God's beloved ones. The message that was being heard and taught in religious settings was contrary to the teachings of Jesus Christ that we embrace. In Galatia and in the region known as Asia Minor, the outside voices, calling believers to turn to a different gospel were ones that measured success in dollars and cents, believed that self-worth must be merit based, each person was nothing more than a transaction to complete a service, and it believed in a two-tiered society, the wealthy few and everyone else. In this context Paul teaches his people about doing the right thing – to stand in the light of Christ. He reminds his congregation that you 'reap what you sow.' **“If you sow to your own flesh, you will reap corruption from the flesh, but if you sow to the Spirit, you will reap eternal life from the Spirit.” Galatians 6:8.** The context of Paul's world was not unlike what we are witnessing today. We are hearing outside voices that are not Christian in the least and are not faithful to the teachings of Jesus Christ. Paul's words to his church in Galatia are words we need to hear today. If we are going to edge out the darkness with the light of Christ. Our message must be clear. It must be a message of inclusion and justice, and our mode of operation is not to destroy God's Realm but to build up God's realm. “If you sow by the flesh, you will reap corruption. If you sow by the Spirit, you will reap the goodness of Spirit God. We must believe in the values that shaped the Declaration of Independence. Once we reclaim these values that are lost in our nation and the world today, we can once again live in a nation, a world where every soul is valued, every dream is realized, and every tree, flower, or animal is a special gift from God to us that demands the same kind of love and care that God gave each one of them on their birthing day. All that we have known in recent memory is a call to Christian action that must work faithfully and diligently to edge out the darkness that is all around us today.

I once heard some words that lifted my spirit, they made me proud to be an American, and they provided a vision for an America that I could believe in. If your ears can hear, I'd like to share the words that give me pride and joy. Beyond pride and joy, these words give me hope in my world, my context today. Listen and be inspired. *“Give me your tired, your poor, your huddled masses yearning to breathe free, The wretched refuse of your teeming shore. Send these, the homeless, tempest-tost to me, I lift my lamp beside the golden door!* I think you've heard or read these words before. What are they telling you now? ‘Let us not grow weary in doing what is right, for we will reap at harvest time, if we do not give up.’ Words I need to hear on this holiday weekend, and I hope they help you too in such a time as this. Amen.

July Moderator's Article

Hi everyone!

I hope you are all doing well. As I come back recharged from a needed vacation from Colorado, I find myself sitting here wondering what would be helpful to know and leave with you all. I will recap all current merger updates, but also leave us with the more needed encouragement.

- We are securing legal counsel with a lawyer named Ken Friker. He will help us navigate the legal perspective of moving forward with this merger.
- We had our first transition team meeting with Salem UCC on Sunday, July 20th, and will be having our next Transition Team meeting with Salem on **Sunday, August 24th** after worship. We are looking for people to serve on the following teams:

- Property Group
- Finance Group
- Remodeling Group
- Worship Group
- Youth Group
- Outreach Group
- Mission Group

- Next, thank you to those who were able to come out and help with the cleaning day on Saturday, July 26th. Any and all help is appreciated as we move forward with the merger, and our future.
- Also, thank you to those who are providing your questions on the easel in the narthex for the merger. We value your thoughts, so if you have any additional questions, please keep them coming.
- We are meeting with three different realtors on proposals for the property on **Thursday, July 31st from 9:00 am-12:00 pm**. Members of the Pilgrim Faith Transition Team will be hosting these proposals, and will debrief to assess the best option to move forward from those proposals.
- Also, please put **Sunday, November 16th** on your calendars- this will be our service of Celebration and Legacy. More details on what this will look to come in the next few weeks and months, but if you are interested in being a part of this service or helping to plan for it, reach out to Pastor Dan or a member of the Worship and Spiritual Life Team. Also, please help bring lots of people- we want this service to be very memorable, and have as many people come as possible, including past members of Pilgrim Faith UCC.

Finally, I want to leave you all with some encouragement. Sometimes, it's hard to get the momentum going, but something that helps me is remembering what we are doing for- our future, to thrive, and to start this new chapter in our journey. As we continue to move forward, we will make mistakes, and that's okay. We will figure it out- together. I am beyond grateful for you all, for all of the hard work you all continue to do, even if your work is just worshipping. Everyone has a part, and with you, we couldn't do the work we do. So thank you for being YOU- the best thing we can all be. So, check-in on each other, ask people how they're doing, thank someone, but above all, thank YOU! As a Council, we are also committed to being here for you and supporting you all. If you ever have any questions or need anything, reach out to any one of us, and we're always here for you!

Warmly,
Kevin Holt | Pilgrim Faith UCC Moderator

Council Meeting July 16th, 2025

WE ARE PILGRIM FAITH UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST



Opening Prayer

Meeting Start: 6:34pm

Open Session:

1. Old Business Items:

a. Approval of Council Minutes from June Meeting

- i. Motion to approve minutes made by Sue, second made by Pam

1. Unanimous vote to approve June Meeting Council Minutes

b. Policy/Procedure Tracking- Whole Council

- i. "Safe Church" policy

- 1. Doreen made a motion to approve the policy, and Kurt seconded this motion

a. Approved the safe church policy unanimously at 6:42pm

New Business Items:

2. Liaison Share-Outs- All Liaisons

a. Worship and Spiritual Life- Pam

- i. Outdoor/Blessings of Backpacks Worship: on August 17th
- ii. Pilgrim Faith UCC worship being held third Sunday starting in the month of September
 - 1. Mentioned wanting PF people to help with coffee hour/liturgists/etc...
- iii. Celebration of PF Legacy Service- November 16th

b. Building and Grounds- Dennis

- i. Kids helped with taking care of the branches
- ii. Landscaping was delayed in getting paid, but now they have been paid

- iii. Ken L has been great about communicating building and grounds issues to team liaison
- c. Christian Formation and Mission- Dennis
 - i. We are looking into Fall Mission Opportunity- more information to come
 - ii. Pushing back collection for Neighbors in Need due to date for CROP Walk, as they were on the same date
 - iii. Recycling doesn't seem like a realistic option at this time
- d. Stewardship and Finance- Mary
 - i. Waiting on June's report, and hoping for July's report in the coming weeks
 - 1. We are transferring money from stocks to help pay for bills
 - ii. Maureen advised us to wait on informing the Insurance company until we are ready to inform them- Insurance price is higher due to claims on the windows/steeple
 - iii. ComEd has a \$1,000 payment for non-for-profits- we will explore this later
 - iv. We mentioned the idea about the organ with possibly giving the organ to the guy at the music company, but this may be in a showroom for an extended period of time, but we would be covered and only receive half of the original amount

3. Building Usage/Leases- Ken/Kevin

a. Parsonage Updates

- i. Paid for the month of June, and has not paid for July Yet
 - 1. Late Letter
 - a. This will be given to the parsonage tenant every month that rent payment is paid after the 6th of the month (1st of the month is the due date, and there is a five day grace period)
 - 2. Ledger
 - a. This will be to detail the payments for the parsonage (both late payments and rent payments)- Candace will fill this out
 - 3. Invoice
 - a. A copy will be given to the tenant, and another copy will be kept in the office for our records. All

of this has been communicated with the office as of July 17th in the morning!

- ii. It was mentioned about a clause in lease stating one year or successful merger, which ever comes first, for the end of the lease dependant on the merger
- iii. Ken L is getting a presentation for a realtor for the property (John C. Kmiecik), and Doreen/Dennis are looking into a second presentation the day of the presentation (Mary Wallace)
 - 1. **Thursday, July 31st at 10:00am**
 - 2. Idea suggested to give each realtor one hour to present on this
- iv. Ken L mentioned his landscaper's church may be looking for a church, and may be interested in Pilgrim Faith UCC for their new church, so this could be a different lead

4. Treasurer Updates- Mary

- a. See above from Mary

5. Pastor's Report- Pastor Dan/Kevin

- a. June Report
- b. July Report
 - i. There were no raised questions on the Pastor's Report

6. Organ Selling Follow-Up- Daune/Doreen/Council

- a. Finance Committee- mentioned waiting on selling organ, or putting organ in the showroom to sell organ, but we are keeping our options open- will revisit on it by our next meeting
- b. Dennis will look into a lead with selling some pianos

7. Merger Conversation- Council

- a. Updates on merger conversations/Transition Team Meeting
 - i. Transition Team Meeting will happen on **July 20th at 11:30am**
 - 1. Focus on aligning PF and Salem Timeline and seeing vision from Salem about merger/groupings/etc...
 - i. Rollo/Tom Aitken mentioned the name of a good lawyer, and Doreen followed up on this for the merger process
 - 2. They are interested in helping us with non-for-profit status dissolving, as well as new non-for-profit, and even handling legal processes.
 - ii. We found two realtors who are interested in making a proposal on the property
 - 1. See building usage/leases section above

- iii. Timeline Documents
 - 1. Pastor Steve and Pastor Dan have both made timelines for us, and Kevin is working on a timeline/to do list for PF to use
- iv. Worship
 - 1. We will worship at Salem UCC every third Sunday starting in September
 - a. We will not go to Salem on November 16th, due to Celebration of Legacy service
 - 2. Merger Moment
 - a. Doreen mentioned an idea it may be nice to have a merger moment (similar to mission moment) focused on merger updates every week for the congregation to increase communication
 - b. Kevin will work on getting this started in the upcoming days/weeks
- b. Building Tenant Letter conversation
 - i. Covered before- see Building Lease Usage/Leases
- c. Proposed PF Timeline- revise and polish timeline
 - i. A revised to-do list for PF will start to become available in the next few days and/or weeks for people to view
- d. Check-in with Merger Task List
 - i. Doreen made a motion to approve Ken Friker to be our lawyer to dissolve the non-for-profit status for Pilgrim Faith, and to help create a new non-for-profit for the merged church, as well as handling the legal. Mary seconded.**
 - 1. Unanimous approval by all present at 8:07pm**
 - ii. Pam made a motion to pursue the title search with Ken Friker on the property. Susan seconded.**
 - 1. Unanimous approval by all present at 8:09 pm.**
- e. Anything else?
 - i. Kurt suggested do we need to have a timeline, or can we just have a task list
 - 1. Council will pursue creating a list of to-dos, rather than a timeline in the hopes of expediting our coming over to Salem UCC

Next Council meeting **August 20th @ 6:30 PM** (Lounge at Pilgrim Faith)



Please let us know *if you would be interested in being a "Stand-by Liturgist"*.. Our upcoming liturgists are:

Sunday Liturgy Leaders

August 3 Jack Lopez
 August 10 Rick Wank
 August 17 Jimmy Werner
 August 24 Keith Stevenson
 August 31 Daune Sebastian
Please contact Pam Cusack, Worship and Spiritual Life Team
 at pamlcusack@gmail.com

SEPTEMBER 7- BIG WELCOME SUNDAY & RALLY DAY



Join us for WELCOME SUNDAY! It is a great day to get back in the swing of things after summer travels and the **perfect time to invite some friends to church!**

Sunday School will kick off that day with the kids participating in 10:00 AM worship service as greeters. After the Children's message, the kids will head to their Sunday School room to start a new year of active learning about God, Jesus, and how we need to love each other. Be sure to come and bring FRIENDS! There are classes for students age 4 through 8th grade.

Sign your kids or grandkids up during coffee hour.

Following worship on 9/7, all ages will gather on the front church lawn (weather permitting) for ice cream sundaes and some FUN games! Rain or shine, we will play games and eat ice cream!!!

Who do you know that would love to hear about how Jesus teaches us to live with kindness and love for everyone? And who loves ICE CREAM??? Be sure to invite them!

All kids should arrive by 9:45 AM in the Narthex, so we can greet everyone and pass out bulletins.

Any questions? Feel free to contact me.
 Daune Sebastian
daune14@gmail.com
 708-567-8692

Please let us know *if you would be interested in serving as an usher*, the usher team needs more participants.

Sunday Service Ushers

August 3 Libby Langevina and Maureen Hutton
 August 10 Mike and Pam Cusack
 August 17 Rick Wank
 August 24 David Faulkner
 August 31 TBA

Please contact Pam Cusack, Worship and Spiritual Life Team
 at pamlcusack@gmail.com



Please *let us know if you would be interested in offering a coffee hour*. We are looking for more participants.

Sunday Coffee Hour Hosts

August 3 Carol Burke
 August 10 David Faulkner
 August 17 Libby Langevin and Amanda Sullivan
 August 24 Doreen Lopez and Carol Burke
 August 31 Sue Arnold and Pam Cusack

To volunteer, please contact Pam Cusack, Worship and Spiritual Life Team at pamlcusack@gmail.com



August 2025

Sun

Mon

Tue

Wed

Thu

Fri

Sat

					1	2 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon
3 10:00 AM Worship Service	4	5 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon	6	7	8	9 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon
10 10:00 AM Worship Service	11	12 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon	13	14 	15	16 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon
17 10:00 AM Worship Service	18	19 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon	20	21	22	23 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon
24 10:00 AM Worship Service	25	26 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon	27	28	29	30 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-Noon
31 10:00 AM Worship Service						



Pilgrim Faith UCC
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MONDAY

12:00pm AA 2nd Floor
5:30pm Girl Scouts
7:30pm GA 2nd floor

TUESDAY

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

WEDNESDAY

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

THURSDAY

10:00am AA 2nd Floor
7:00pm Crew Scouts

FRIDAY

12:00pm AA Basement
8:00pm AA 2nd Floor

SATURDAY

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

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