



## DECEMBER 2023

### More Truth and Light

*“And you beneath life’s crushing load, whose forms are bending low, who toil along the climbing way, with painful steps and slow...” Poem by Edward Sears*

This words from the poem written by Edward Sears (Circa, 1849), was put into a beloved carol that we know as **“It Came upon the Midnight Clear.”** It is perhaps my most favorite Christmas carol. I love the imagery, the contrast between light and darkness and common experiences of men, women, and children throughout the generations. When I sing this carol, I feel as though I know the people whose *‘forms are bending low’* and those *‘toiling along the climbing way.’* Recently, I was out shopping with Carly, and I watched the people, I looked at their faces, and I said first in my mind and then aloud, ‘My goodness, the people I’m seeing look so tired, so weary.’ I could very well have projected my own state of being when I shared my observations with Carly, or I was sensing what people in the United States are experiencing in these days. In such a time as this, ‘how does a weary world rejoice?’ This Advent theme reflects so perfectly what I am feeling these days and what Sears wrote about when he wrote his beloved poem.

As a people, as a nation, as a church and the world, we’ve experienced much that has made us tired, cynical, perhaps very sad. The fast pace of communication, the feeling of helplessness amid multiple crises that threaten our climate, our people, and our fragile democracy. Given all that we know is happening in our time, we are tired, we are weary. In the northern hemisphere, our weariness is multiplied by the cold days and short nights. Amid all of this, we want to be strong for our children, for the generations behind us and even then, our efforts bring us down and we ask, ‘how does a weary world rejoice?’

Throughout this season of Advent, we will explore answers to this question. Acknowledging our weariness is a first step in finding the healing of this season. As another beloved carol proclaims, ‘...The

*hopes and fears of all the years are met in you to-night...”* Once we know our fears, we can look for the hope that helps a weary world rejoice. The words from the carol, *Angels from the Realms of Glory* remind us that we find joy in a weary world by connecting with the world and its people who have demonstrated time and again, God’s abiding presence. The lyricist writes, *“Saints before the altar bending, watching long in hope and fear, suddenly, your prayers attending Christ beside you shall appear.”* A weary world rejoices when we allow ourselves to wonder and to be amazed at the unexpected ways that God’s Spirit breaks into our world and helps us embrace the forever presence of God in our lives. In the Epiphany Carol, *“We Three Kings”* we are invited into a world of wonder and amazement. *“O star of wonder, star of night, star with royal beauty bright, westward leading, still proceeding, guide us to thy perfect light.”* The weary world rejoices when we can allow ourselves to be amazed.

How does a weary world rejoice? We rejoice when we acknowledge our weariness, find strength in our connection with one another, and allow our minds and spirits to be amazed. In doing these things, the stories of hope that enshrined in the Christmas story bring us joy and meaning on Christmas morning. With confidence and great joy, we sing, *“Joy to the earth! The Savior reigns! Let all their songs employ; while fields and floods, rocks, hills, and plains repeat the sounding joy”* and our weary spirits rejoice.

How does a weary world rejoice? We rejoice when we can *‘rest beside the weary road, and hear the angels sing.’* In this season of Advent may we find time to do just that – pause and hear the angels sing. This is how a weary world rejoices. May your Advent be filled with quiet moments of joy!

Wishing all a blessed season:

Rev. Daniel Gather

# Food Pantry Paint Party Fundraiser

A FOOD PANTRY PAINT PARTY FUNDRAISER will be held on Tuesday, Dec. 19th from 6 PM - 9 PM in Colonial Hall.

Come out for an evening of painting, prizes and **FUN** while helping raise funds for the food pantry.

For each ticket sold, \$20 will be donated to the Pilgrim Faith food pantry. You can grab your tickets here ==> <http://paintersrowartparties.com/pfucc>. **Save \$5** when you purchase your ticket by 12/12/23. Hope to see you there!



**Pilgrim Faith**  
United Church of Christ

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

## Sunday Service Ushers

December 3 Libby Langevin and Maureen Huggon  
 December 10 Pam and Mike Cusack  
 December 17 Ron and Pat Stancik  
 December 24 TBA  
 December 31 TBA

*Please contact Pam Cusack*, Worship and Spiritual Life Team at [pamlcusack@gmail.com](mailto:pamlcusack@gmail.com)

## NAMES OF CHRISTMAS CARD RECIPIENTS SOUGHT

Gail Siwek and Laura Stanton will be leading the youth in creating Christmas cards for sick and homebound members and friends of the church and those who need cheering up. If you know of someone who is not on the homebound list who you would like us to send a card to email Gail at [gailsiwek@yahoo.com](mailto:gailsiwek@yahoo.com) or call (708)423-0399.

**TUESDAY**  
6:00 - 9:00 PM  
**19**  
DECEMBER

# Paint Party!

**\$20 from every ticket sold will go directly to Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry.**



**EARLY BIRD SPECIAL!!! \$5 OFF TICKET PRICE THRU 12/12**

**\*Beginner Friendly**

**PAINTING - PRIZES - FUN**

# SNOWMAN

Pre-traced 11x14 Canvas

# \$40

**HOST:** Candace Chira  
Painter's Row Art Parties  
630.334.9670  
[cachira@paintersrowartparties.com](mailto:cachira@paintersrowartparties.com)

**LOCATION:** Pilgrim Faith Church  
Colonial Hall  
9411 S. 51st Ave.  
Oak Lawn, IL

**All supplies included.**  
**No refunds.**

Sign up here at:  
<http://paintersrowartparties.com/pfucc>

**\*Tickets will NOT be sold at the door.**




**PILGRIM FAITH UCC**  
**RECEIPTS - DISBURSEMENTS - OCTOBER 2023**

	Month of OCTOBER 2023		As of OCTOBER 31, 2023	
	MONTH Actual	MONTH Budget	YEAR-TO-DATE Actual	YEAR-TO-DATE Budget
<b>Receipts</b>				
Pledges & Non-Pledged Giving	\$ 4,287.00	\$ 4,137.48	\$ 68,236.47	\$ 53,798.62
Total Receipts (all sources)	\$ 13,845.06	\$ 9,289.01	\$ 121,767.80	\$ 83,932.09
<b>Disbursements</b>				
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 10,699.23	\$ 10,220.83	\$ 117,184.87	\$ 110,791.53
Expenses	\$ 4,926.30	\$ 7,068.11	\$ 77,928.72	\$ 75,858.07
Total Disbursements (all expenses)	\$ 13,624.47	\$ 17,697.27	\$ 198,315.74	\$ 190,732.90
<b>Net Total</b>	\$ 220.59	\$ (8,408.26)	\$ (76,547.94)	\$ (106,800.81)

If you want a list of all checks written for the month, send request to [finances@pilgrimfaith.org](mailto:finances@pilgrimfaith.org).

## Remember Our Homebound

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

**Darlene Wank**  
 10942 S. Oak Ave  
 Chicago Ridge, IL  
 60415

**Doris Seitz**  
 11237 S. Normandy  
 Worth, IL 60482

**Grace Pluhar**  
 8824 S. 55th Ct.  
 Oak Lawn, IL 60453

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

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

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

**Barbara Dresdem**  
 5133 W. 79th St.  
 Burbank, il 60459





# Limitless Youth Group

of Pilgrim Faith UCC

## Join Us For Festive Events

Sunday, December 10th- After Worship

Help Make Christmas Cards  
For Sick and Homebound Members  
at Pilgrim Faith UCC

Sunday, December 17th- 1 p.m. to 3 p.m.

Youth Christmas Party

Please Bring A White Elephant Gift & Festive Treat  
The Great Christmas Cookie Bake Off-  
Please bake and bring your favorite  
Christmas cookie recipe for a chance to win a prize!  
(participation optional)  
at Pilgrim Faith UCC

Note: If you would like your bake off cookie as your  
treat also, please set some aside for treat as well.

## A Look Ahead....

Sunday, January 21st- TBD

Youth Group Bowling



## MONTHLY MOMENT OF CLIMATE HOPE!

*To hope is not to wait around until you are feeling optimistic, but to join with others in defiant response to what we are doing to the planet. It is an action that you do rather than a feeling that you have. "Hope is a verb with its sleeves rolled up," David Orr, a leading environmental thinker.*

### Bright Spot 1

"Project Drawdown" is a global research organization that identifies, reviews, and analyzes the most effective solutions to climate change. It ranks "reducing food waste" as the third most important step to tackle climate change, out of a list of eighty solutions. **Recovering just 25 percent of wasted food could effectively end world hunger.**<sup>22</sup>

### Bright Spot 2

The Finnish supermarket chain S-Market hosts a "happy hour"—reducing food prices by up to 60 percent an hour before closing for items close to their expiration date. After the store closes, the remaining discounted products are donated to more than eighty charities, and any inedible leftovers are converted into biofuel. Danish

### Bright Spot 3

Italy provides tax breaks to supermarkets that donate unsold food.

The Danish supermarket Wefood goes even further: its entire stock comprises waste-food items, which it sells at greatly reduced prices. *What can Pilgrim Faith do to spread hope?*



**Pilgrim Faith**  
United Church of Christ

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

## Sunday Coffee Hour Hosts

December 3 Sue Arnold and Pam Cusack  
December 10 Kay Gibson and Charlene Wagner  
December 17 Libby Langevin and Amanda Sullivan  
December 24 Mary Weierman and Deb Petkus  
December 31 Doreen Lopez and Carol Burke

Please contact **Pam Cusack**, Worship and Spiritual Life Team at [pamlcusack@gmail.com](mailto:pamlcusack@gmail.com)



THANK YOU FOR  
*supporting* the



Here are three ways to support the pantry:

Donate goods or host a food drive

Donations may be dropped of M-F 9am-2pm

Volunteer your time

Please email [pfoodpantry.com](mailto:pfoodpantry.com) to volunteer in the pantry!

Make a monetary donation

Scan the QR code, write a check payable to "Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry," or deliver cash donation at the office.



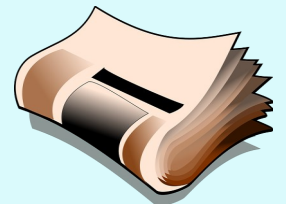
To make an electronic donation:

- 1) Open your smart phone's camera
- 2) Scan the QR code
- 3) Click the link
- 4) Make a donation through PayPal.



## NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Do you have something to contribute to our monthly newsletter? The deadline for the January edition is Wednesday, December 27, 2023. Please submit any articles or announcements for our monthly newsletter by that date and we will be sure to include it.



## LIMITLESS YOUTH HAVE HAD A BUSY FALL!



### COMBINED CHRISTMAS PARTY AND CHRISTMAS COOKIE BAKE OFF WITH SALEM YOUTH!

We had so much fun at Tower Hill with the Salem Youth that we're planning a Christmas party with youth from both congregations on Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup> from 1 p.m. to 3 p.m. We are encouraging the youth to bring a white elephant Christmas gift exchange. There will be extra gifts in case someone forgets their white elephant gift. To sweeten the evening, we're inviting the youth to participate in our Christmas cookie bake off. We are asking each youth to make a recipe of a favorite Christmas cookie for the bake off! Everyone will get to sample the cookies and vote on the best recipe. Please plan for 12-15 youth. A prize will be available for the best overall Christmas cookie recipe! The Christmas party will take place in Colonial Hall at Pilgrim Faith UCC. We'll enjoy good friends, good fellowship, and some holiday fun! Youth in the seventh grade and older

**WHO ARE YOU AND WHO ARE WE** was the theme of the combined youth retreat at Tower Hill in November. We were so lucky to be joined by the youth of Salem United Church of Christ in Oak Lawn. We arrived at Tower Hill as individuals with our separate groups and left feeling like we were more than islands in the stream, but one group bound together by God's love, grace, and a lot of fun. Twelve youth and six adults enjoyed a weekend of games, worship, playing, sharing, and enjoying God's beautiful creation. Thank you to Kevin and Alex who stayed the weekend with Missy and Renita from Salem UCC. Here are some special memories in pictures.



**LOOKING AHEAD TO JANUARY!** Limitless Youth will once again join the youth of Salem U.C.C. for an afternoon of bowling! We are tentatively looking at January 21<sup>st</sup> as the day we'll enjoy an afternoon of bowling. Once again, we will meet at Arena Bowl located in Oak Lawn from 2 p.m. to 4 p.m. Watch the January newsletter for additional information. We've had a lot of fun with this event in the past and look forward to another exciting and enjoyable afternoon. **LIMITLESS YOUTH** will also meet either January 14<sup>th</sup> or 28<sup>th</sup> to plan the rest of our fun for the year. Please look for details about this meeting in January.



**TRUNK OR TREAT FUNDRAISER AND FOOD PANTRY SCAVENGER HUNT!** We had a lot of fun and we raised a little money for our youth ministry. We were excited to give away four wonderful baskets from our raffle! Many thanks to the families who provided some creative and fun boxes. This was followed up by a wonderful scavenger hunt for the Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry. We were able to collect two wagons full of needed food items for the Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry and had wonderful weather for the day. Limitless Youth left flyers around the neighborhood to help promote food donations. It was a great couple of weeks!



## **WORSHIP PLANS FOR 2023!**

The plans for the Advent and Christmas Season will feature familiar traditions and new expressions of this time of year. Please join us for this blessed season.

### **December 3**

Introduction of our Advent Theme and Communion, 10 a.m.  
Family Christmas Workshop, 2-4 p.m. in Colonial Hall

### **December 10**

**Music Sunday** will feature the choir, the Bell Choir, and special musical guests to share the Christmas joy in music. This service will be followed by a celebration in Colonial Hall for Joy Montgomery who will be leaving us at the end of the year to pursue a vocation as a funeral director. Come join us and express your gratitude to Joy for her wonderful ministry.

### **December 13**

Blue Christmas Service at Peace Memorial UCC, Palos Park, 7 p.m.

### **December 17**

Annual Christmas Pageant, *A letter to Jesus from Mother Mary*, 10 a.m.

### **December 24**

**Christmas Eve in the morning!** Come and join us for a different celebration of Christmas Eve as we gather in the morning instead of the evening. We'll light the fourth Advent Candle and transition into a special celebration of Christmas with candles and singing. Join us Sunday morning for this special service.

## MISSION AND LEARNING OPPORTUNITIES:



The Ministry of Christian Formation and Mission will use the month of December to collect a special offering of the Christmas Fund. The Christmas fund, formerly known as the Veterans of the Cross, is an annual offering that expresses thanks to retired and active UCC pastors and lay church workers and their families. This fund provides direct assistance to supplement pensions, medical insurance costs, and funds to meet emergency needs. The theme of this year's Christmas offering is **Grace upon grace**. John writes, "From Christ's fullness we have all received, grace upon grace" *John 1:16*. If you would like to donate to this fund, please pick up a Christmas Fund offering envelope in the Narthex and place it in the offering plate. We will collect this special 5 for 5 offering throughout the month of December. Your gift will be used to help clergy and church workers in a time of great need. Thank you for your generosity.

## CHRISTMAS AROUND THE FIRE: A FAMILY EVENT!

Join us for this special family event that will take place on **Saturday evening, December 16<sup>th</sup> from 4 p.m. to 6 p.m.** This is a community event intended to share the light and warmth of the Christmas story with our congregation and our neighbors. We'll make luminaries, share in some fun activities, and learn about Jesus as the light of the world around a Christmas bonfire. This is a wonderful opportunity for Pilgrim Faith UCC to reach out to the community in a new and creative way and share the stories that bring us joy and happiness at this time of year. Please join us and bring a friend, a neighbor, or grandchildren for a fun and creative evening! Come dressed for the weather because part of this time we will be outdoors.





## Donations for Seniors Needed

**THE OAK LAWN PUBLIC LIBRARY** in partnership with several agencies, churches, and organizations are collecting items for Pathlights, a program for Seniors in our community. We are one of the sites where you and others can donate items that support older adults returning home from hospital or rehabilitation stays. We will be collecting items throughout the month of December. There will be a basket in the Narthex marked Pathlights where you can make donations to this wonderful program. Thank you for your support of this ministry. Below is a list of items that would be appreciated.

- \$5 Walgreens or CVS gift cards
- Lip balm
- Hand Cream
- Adult coloring books
- Colored Pencils
- Activity books (Word Search, Sudoku, etc.)
- Stamps
- Note cards and envelopes
- Socks
- Blankets
- Stress Balls
- Fidget Toys

## Trivia Night Fundraiser

The Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry is planning its first **Trivia Night Fundraiser** to support the pantry's efforts to continue fighting hunger and helping our neighbors in need. We are seeking goods and/or gift cards from local businesses to raffle at our upcoming trivia night.

Please contact Alyssa Langevin by phone (708) 822-5351 or email ([PFFoodPantry@gmail.com](mailto:PFFoodPantry@gmail.com)) with questions or interest in supporting this special event! The pantry and our neighbors in need sincerely appreciate your support.

**Trivia Night Fundraiser Supporting  
The Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry  
February 3<sup>rd</sup>, 2024 at 7-9pm  
Pilgrim Faith Church 9411 S 51<sup>st</sup>  
Ave Oak Lawn, IL 60453**

*\*Please look for updates regarding this event and how to purchase tickets on our Facebook page!\**

I am looking forward to collaborating with you to find ways to combat food insecurity in Oak Lawn and surrounding communities!

Thanks,  
Alyssa



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

### Sunday Liturgy Leaders

December 3 Keith Stevenson  
December 10 Kevin Holt  
December 17 Jimmy Werner  
December 24 Jacques Lopez  
December 31 Chris Raap

*Please contact Pam Cusack*, Worship and Spiritual Life Team at [pamcusack@gmail.com](mailto:pamcusack@gmail.com)



## DELEGATE'S REPORT

### Repentance, Rekindling, Renewal

It has been my pleasure as your delegate to the wider church to attend two important meetings in the last few weeks. On September 30<sup>th</sup>, the Chicago Metropolitan Association has it's fall meeting at Northfield Community Church. It was wonderful to be back in person after Zoom meetings for 3 years. Molly Carlson, our Conference Minister, was there. She spoke about building trust among the churches, the associations and the conference. I thought she gave a good talk about how these groups sometimes don't trust each other and she seems determined to work towards a more faithful conference.

The Illinois Conference Annual meeting was Nov. 3<sup>rd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup>. The first day, started early afternoon and we had our choices of workshops. I attended 3 and found them all interesting and valuable.

On Saturday we had the business portion of the meeting. After the usual approval of minutes, the meeting moved on to the report from Jon Prain, Conference President. His main message was talking about rebuilding trust within the conference.

The biggest issue at the conference was the financial report. When Molly Carlson started as Conference Minister in 2020, the finances in the conference were a mess. The former bookkeeper retired and Molly brought some experts in church finance and that team with the new Illinois Conference bookkeeper and the Finance and Business committee, have done a great job in untangling where the money is and should be. Now that the finances are looking better, Molly is concentrating on rebuilding trust and working together.



The item that is of most interest to me, is a proposal that the camps become their own 501c3 organizations. This will take a few years to decide on the proposal and, if approved, to implement the changes.

All in all, this was a great 2 days spent with wonderful old friends and new, all working to improve the Illinois Conference.

Chris Raap



# December 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
					1 	2 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon
3 10:00 AM Worship	4	5 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon	6	7	8	9 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon
10 10:00 AM Worship	11	12 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon	13 Blue Xmas Svc. 7 PM @ Peace Memorial UCC	14	15 	16 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon
17 10:00 AM Worship  1-3 PM Youth Christ- mas Party	18	19 Food Pantry 10:00 AM-  Paint Party Fundraiser 6PM – 9PM	20	21	22	23 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon
24 10:00 AM Worship	25	26 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon	27 	28	29	30 Food Pantry 10:00 AM- Noon
31						



Pilgrim Faith UCC  
9411 S. 51<sup>st</sup> Ave.  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

Non-Profit  
PRSRT STD  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
Oak Lawn, IL  
Permit No.7

## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

C  
O  
M  
M  
U  
N  
I  
T  
Y

**MONDAY**

12:00pm AA 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

**FRIDAY**

8:00pm AA 2nd Floor

**SATURDAY**

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

S  
U  
P  
P  
O  
R  
T

