



## **FEBRUARY 2023**

### **More Truth and Light**

***“He removes every branch in me that bears no fruit. Every branch that bears fruit he prunes to make it bear more fruit.”*** John 15:2

Several years ago, I put in a perennial garden of indigenous plants that attract hummingbirds, monarchs and honey bees. Included in my purchase were several Diervilla Black Kodiac shrubs. The Diervilla is often associated with Honeysuckle because of the yellow flowers, but it is not to be confused with the Honeysuckle variety. As seed catalogues appear in my mailbox and we’re getting closer to that time when certain plants can be started ahead, I’ve been observing the Diervilla and know that within the next four to six weeks, I’ll need to prune the shrubs to control the random spreading of the shrub, but to also enable the Diervilla to produce the abundant yellow flowers that attract the bees.

Just as I am coming upon that season of pruning the shrubs, we are approaching the season of Lent – that time when we experience the lengthening of daylight, and we enter into our own season of pruning our own lives to reflect God’s glory and prepare our spirits and our bodies to be more fruitful disciples. This is our time, as the gospel of John reflects, to **‘remove the branches’** in our lives and our spirits that do not bear fruit. It is that time when in our Lenten disciplines we are trimming away the dead branches and nurturing a better spirit that can **‘bear more fruit.’**

As I reflect on the past year, I can say that we’ve come a long way from where we were. There has been a lot of pruning going on and there has been some new growth. Our Youth Ministry is blossoming. We meet regularly for

fun and our youth have contributed so much of their time and talent in the restarting of our bell choir and our choir. Our weekly attendance has grown and we’re seeing new faces in the leadership of the church. In a recent conversation with Kurt Kalas and the Ministry of Worship and Spiritual Life, we are on the verge of strengthening our ministry for our sick, homebound, and recuperating members. We have reinstated Kid’s Klub, a ministry to our youngest children, offered educational opportunities in the form of Messy Church, several book discussions, and a justice and pizza ministry. For the last several years, we have been engaged in a great deal of ‘pruning’ and we are beginning to see the beauty that has been waiting to show itself in us. As we enter this season of Lent, we have an opportunity to do some self-care and engage in a time of self-reflection that will reconnect our spirits with the ministry of our congregation. This journey can begin with our special Ash Wednesday service that will put our mind, body, and spirits into the context of this reflective and redemptive time. I would invite you to participate in this season with all of its hopes and promises and when we arrive in our worship space on Easter morning, we will be ready to bloom and grow in our faith, our discipleship, and our commitment to Pilgrim Faith U.C.C.

Pruning for the Spirit,

*Pastor Dan Gather*

## FROM THE MODERATOR -

### Words.

*“For surely I know that plans I have for you, says the Lord, plans for your welfare and not for harm, to give you a future with hope. Then when you call upon me and come and pray to me, I ; will hear you. When you search for me, you will find me; if you seek me with all your heart, I will let you find me, says the Lord” Jeremiah 29:11-12*

I have been thinking a lot about words, in general. Words are used to build up people and to rip people down. Years ago, when you gave your word, you did the best to honor it. I have noticed less and less of honoring the word people give. There are great reasons for it. I, myself, had to step away for things after giving my word (to help) due to health and work issues. So I totally understand how it happens, but there is one who does not go back on their word, God.

The Bible (whichever one you choose to read) has God’s word to help Abraham and guide his children to the promised land after Adam and Eve’s little mistake. I was listening to a Bible historian who stated that the Bible read, front to back or back to front, gives the same message. God’s word to Abraham to send a savior and that savior will bring God’s people back to Him.

What if God went back on His word?

If you did read the Bible you will see that humans like to feel in control. Humans like to see what happens behind the green curtain (Wizard of Oz) and rationalize when things do not go the way we planned. I, myself, like to read the last few pages of the book to see if it is something I would like but that is not what God has, had, or will have, planned for me or you (just my belief).

The last intergenerational retreat, my group was looking at fish and picking what we believed God’s plan was for us. I picked the blank fish. My reason is simple; every time I plan something, God’s hand leads me to something else. Two years ago, the principal who I was working under, found out that my spouse was a woman. She couldn’t handle that, so she made it that I could never work for the Catholic School System again. So I found a great paying job, made a lot of close friends and God opened the door with the principal who originally hired me back in 2017. With God’s guiding hand, I have been and continue to work for her teaching a topic that I enjoy and challenged me to look at each situation with loving, tired eyes. I have a firm belief that God had a plan that I could not even see because I am only a human. Limited in my sight and knowledge and clouded by my feelings. That is where reading the Bible and praying comes into play.

Allowing God’s words, God’s plans and God’s light into Pilgrim Faith is what we are all called to do. So when looking at the future of Pilgrim Faith, please remember to pray, read the Bible or read the verse at the beginning of this letter. If you look, God will show the plan He has but it will be on His terms, not ours.

May God bless you and keep you under His wing of love.  
Mary Weierman

## FROM THE MODERATOR -

### Looking Forward

*“But now you must get rid of all such things-anger, wrath, malice, slander, and abusive language from your mouth. Do not lie to one another, seeing that you have stripped off the old self with its practices and have clothed yourselves with the new self, which is being renewed in knowledge according to the image of its creator.” Colossians 3:8-10*

I know that things have not been the same. We have gone through three challenging years. Actions that others have done have worn-down our spirits and bodies. It has split us up and it has chased away good people. But that was then and this is now.

Looking forward, we can learn from each other, lean on each other and move forward together under God’s new plan for Pilgrim Faith. We are a congregational church and when two or more come (in God;s name) and pray; there is God. Before voting, before talking, before action, take two seconds with God - he will do great things.

May God bless you and keep you.  
Mary W



## Remember Our Homebound

### Mary Brehm

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

### Ruth Hook

Aperion Care  
9401 S. Ridgeland  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

### Grace Pluhar

8824 S. 55th Ct.  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

### Linda Aitken

The Pointe at  
Kilpatrick  
14230 Kilpatrick  
Crestwood, IL. 60418

### Darlene Wank

10942 S. Oak Ave  
Chicago Ridge, IL  
60415

### Mildred House

Clarendale of Mokena  
#2221  
21536 S. Wolf Rd.  
Mokena, IL 60448

### Donna Twichell

10032 Harnew Rd.  
East  
Oak Lawn, IL 60453

### Bob Salveson

6146 S. Karlov Ave.  
Chicago, IL 60629

### Doris Seitz

11237 S. Normandy  
Worth, IL 60482



**LIMITLESS YOUTH NEEDS THE HELP OF MEMBERS AND FRIENDS** to assist with their Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, and their upcoming game night fund-raiser. Please consider helping the youth with the following planned activities and let Pastor Dan, Dennis and/or Alexis Healy know if you are willing to help.

**MARCH GAME NIGHT FUNDRAISER:** As a part of our evening of fun and games on Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup>, the youth would like to auction off **'theme baskets'** and the youth are looking for a minimum of the members and/or friends of the youth to sponsor and put together a theme basket. Some ideas for theme baskets might be an activity basket for children, pasta night, car wash baskets, sports related themes, movie night, and countless other ideas that you can probably name. We'd be asking members and friends to put together the basket and have it to the church by Saturday, March 11<sup>th</sup> by Noon as we set up for the evening. Game night will begin at 4 p.m. and conclude around 6 p.m. The winners of the baskets will be announced at 5:30 p.m. Please know that 10% of the funds raised that evening will be given to the mission **Feed my Starving Children**, where the youth will be volunteering in May. Thank you so much for your support. Please let one of our youth leaders know that you are willing to sponsor a basket!

**PLASTIC EGGS AND INDIVIDUALLY WRAPPED CANDY** are needed for the Limitless Youth Easter Egg Hunt on Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>! This is a youth initiative to reach out to the children of our community and we are in need of plastic eggs and individually wrapped candy for our event. As you are shopping in this season, please consider purchasing or donating plastic eggs for the candy. The youth are also asking for individually wrapped candy. Please bring your donation to the church and there will be baskets in Narthex to place your donation. **ALSO, ON SUNDY, MARCH 26<sup>TH</sup>** after worship, the youth will need help to stuff the eggs. We are planning for 250-300 children from the community and we'll need your help. Thank you so much for your donations and your help in stuffing the eggs.

**WOULD YOU SPONSOR AN EASTER GRAND PRIZE?** On Saturday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, the youth will sponsor a community Easter Egg Hunt on our property. The youth would like individuals from the church to sponsor an "Easter Grand Prize" for each age group. We will need a minimum of three grand prizes that the children in the community can win. Such prizes might be a stuffed Easter bunny, a large chocolate Easter Bunny, or other fun item that the children could enjoy. The children will be divided into three age groups: Ages infant-age to 3 years old; Ages 4-6 years old, and ages 7-9 years old. If you have a particular interest in one of the age groups and would like to sponsor a grand prize, please let Pastor Dan, Dennis and/or Alexis Healy know what age-appropriate item you would like to sponsor. Thank you for your donation.



## Delegate Report

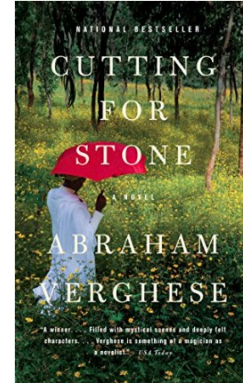
I am often asked what is Cluster 5 and what is its purpose. The January 24 meeting was a great example of why we exist. The main purpose of the cluster is to develop bonds between the various south suburban churches. With Covid it's been hard to develop and maintain those personal relationships but we have done a good job by Zoom.

Pilgrim Faith was the host church for the January meeting. Pastor Dan did a great presentation on the book "Jesus and John Wayne" that we are reading for our Pilgrim Faith book discussions. The conversation showed the sense of community and trust the cluster has developed. One of the issues that came up was the American history of slavery. Everyone, black and white, felt comfortable discussing the issues we still have in society. The only complaint I have is that we could have used much more time for discussion. All church members are invited to attend the Cluster 5 meetings. Contact the church office for details.

Chris Raap, Conference Delegate

**YEAR END GIVING STATEMENTS** have been mailed. If you have any questions about your statement, please contact Don Lagerstrom at 708-514-4427.

## Book Club FEBURARY, 2023



The next Book Club meeting will be February 26<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. The book we have chosen is "Cutting for Stone" by Abraham Verghese, a sweeping, emotionally riveting first novel--an enthralling family saga of Africa and America, doctors and patients, exile and home.

Many of us would like to take a road trip to see the new Tom Hanks movie based on "A Man Called Otto". Please let me know if you are interested and when you can go.

Chris Raap



## LIMITLESS YOUTH NEWS:



**BOWLING WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!** In January we had a great time bowling with the youth from both Salem United Church of Christ and Pilgrim Faith United Church of Christ! There were sixteen young people and eight adults bowling, and all had a wonderful time. Our next event will be an **Escape Room and Pizza** at Pilgrim Faith U.C.C. Youth in the seventh grade or older are invited to all Limitless Youth activities and are encouraged to bring a friend. The Escape Room fun begins at Noon on February 12<sup>th</sup> and will end by 2 p.m. Come and join us! Come and bring a friend!

**SOUPER BOWL** will be Sunday, February 12<sup>th</sup> and the Youth will be collecting money for the Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry. If you are willing to help us collect change from the congregation, please let Dennis and/or Alexis Healy know so that they can look for you on February 12<sup>th</sup>. If you are volunteering to collect money, you will hold a kettle or basket for folks to

drop in a contribution for the Food Pantry! Thank you for helping us support the Pilgrim Faith Food Pantry.

**YOUTH SUNDAY** is set for Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup> and all our youth are encouraged to take part in the service. There will be various readings, music, prayers, skits, and other important jobs that will make this a great day. The theme for this year's youth Sunday will be "*Lost and Found!*" and the skits, music, and worship experience will be based upon the **Parables of the Lost** found in Luke, Chapter 15! There will also be a special announcement on that day about our upcoming Easter Egg Hunt. We had so much fun last year and the members of Pilgrim Faith UCC remembered the day to be extra special. If you have anything that you would like to add to our worship service, please let Pastor Dan know so that your ideas can be included in the service.

## CALLING ALL SCHOOL-AGE KIDS!



YOU are officially invited to join our FIRST “KIDS’ EXPLORER TEAM” (we can call ourselves whatever we choose later)!

The Ministry of Christian Formation & Mission has been talking about our desire to have some gathering of the kids once a month, since we currently aren’t offering a traditional Sunday School program. All kids 2<sup>nd</sup> grade- high school are welcome to join in the FUN! There will be games, discussions, and probably some awesome snacks!

JOIN US:

**February 19, 2023 -10:10 AM** (right after the children’s message)

We are very excited to be hanging with the kids again!  
Jimmy Werner & Daune Sebastian

### Thank You!

I would like to thank everyone who helped me in making valentines for the homebound and sick, etc. as well as those who helped me clean up afterward. I also would like to thank Leece N. and Libby L. for providing refreshments for us. I am sure everyone who receives a valentine will enjoy them.

Gail Siwek



## Amazon Smile Program

**AS AMAZON SMILE PARTICIPANTS**, we have recently received the following notice from Amazon announcing the discontinuation of the program.

*We (Amazon) are writing to let you know that we have made plans to wind down AmazonSmile by February 20, 2023. Until this date, customer purchases made via AmazonSmile will continue to accrue funds for your charity as normal. To help nonprofits like you plan ahead, we will also provide you with a one-time payment equivalent to three months of payments based on what you accrued in 2022 through this program. The timing of this final payment will be approximately 60 to 90 days after February 20, 2023. We hope that this will help minimize the impact that this decision might have.*

We do not know if there will be a replacement program for which we are eligible. If you use this program benefiting Pilgrim Faith, please do so by February 20.

Women of God can never be  
LIKE WOMEN OF THE WORLD.  
The world has enough women who are tough;  
*we need women who are tender.*  
There are enough women who are coarse;  
*we need women who are kind.*  
There are enough women who are rude;  
*we need women who are refined.*  
We have enough women of fame and fortune;  
*we need more women of faith.*  
We have enough greed;  
*we need more goodness.*  
We have enough vanity;  
*we need more virtue.*  
We have enough popularity;  
*we need more purity.*

Margaret Dyreng Nadauld

**Messy Church** at Pilgrim Faith UCC in  
Oak Lawn



## What IS Messy Church?

**Messy Church** is a movement that started in a small church in England in 2004 which has spread to more than 30 countries around the world. Used by many different denominations of churches, **Messy Church** welcomes all ages to come together to hear/experience a Bible story in unique ways, participate in games, crafts and share a meal together- in other words a joyous gathering of young and not-so-young exploring how to be a community and how to spread love and caring into our world. So, if you are looking for an informal church experience where you can spend time with others of all ages, have Fun, and eat- check us out!

**Join us** at our next **Messy Church** –

**When:** February 12, 2023 from 10:00-11:30 AM

**Where:** Pilgrim Faith UCC 9411 S 51<sup>st</sup> Ave. Oak Lawn IL 60453 (enter from the side parking lot door and go downstairs- we will be there to greet you)

**February Theme:** **Come to the PARTY!**  
ALL are welcome at the Table!

**Messy Church** meets on the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of each month- Check us out! Please bring a donation for the food pantry.

Questions: Call the church office – 708-422-4200 9:00AM- 2:00PM Mon- Fri



# LENTEN WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES!

**ASHES TO GO** will occur at the train station on Ash Wednesday from 6 to 7:30 a.m. This is a way that Pilgrim Faith U.C.C. reaches out to the community on this special day. The pastor will provide ashes for the commuters at the train station.

**ASH WEDNESDAY SERVICE** will be observed on Wednesday, February 22nd at 7 p.m. A special service to begin our Lenten journey will include communion and the imposition of ashes. Please join us for this traditional Ash Wednesday service.

**THE UCC CONGREGATIONS** in Oak Lawn, Evergreen Park and Blue Island are planning a special Maundy Thursday Service in the evening. The details of this service are being worked out and we will have additional information in the future. Please watch the March newsletter, bulletins, and the weekly E-mails for information.



THANK YOU FOR  
*Supporting* the



Here are three ways to support the pantry:

Donate goods or host a food drive

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

Volunteer your time

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

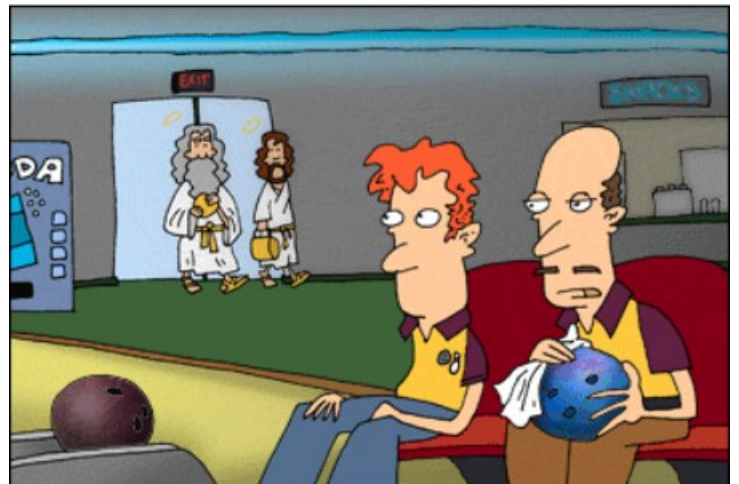
Make a monetary donation

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.



Thanks to Jason Baker

01-26-2009

GREAT, THERE WENT OUR CHANCES FOR  
WINNING THE FATHER & SON BOWL-OFF

# Sun. Feb. 12: Souper Bowl Sunday Lunch

Immanuel UCC; 9815 S. Campbell, 11:30am-1:30pm



Bring a non-perishable food item to the luncheon to help restock the shelves of the **Evergreen Park Food Pantry**. Get out those recipes and share your favorite soup!  
*or:* Just come! There's plenty to share.

**Come after church ~ as soon as you can!**

**All UCCs Invited: Christ Memorial, Pilgrim Faith & Salem**



**Evergreen Park**  
**Village Food Pantry**



Stay for Immanuel's Second Sunday Concert at 2:00 p.m.  
 Theme: "Music & Sports"

	Month of DECEMBER 2022		As of DECEMBER 31, 2022	
	MONTH Actual	MONTH Budget	Year-To-Date Actual	Year-To-Date Budget
<b>Receipts</b>				
Pledges & Non-Pledged Giving	\$ 6,276.00	\$ 7,202.53	\$ 91,293.29	\$ 85,000.00
Total Receipts (all sources)	\$ 8,495.85	\$ 8,952.53	\$116,800.63	\$ 108,000.00
<b>Disbursements</b>				
Salaries & Benefits	\$ 10,888.02	\$ 11,459.63	\$127,405.74	\$ 114,200.00
Expenses	\$ 5,540.23	\$ 12,775.81	\$ 84,068.22	\$ 86,700.00
Total Disbursements (all expense)	\$ 16,428.25	\$ 24,235.44	\$211,473.96	\$ 200,900.00
<b>Net Total</b>	\$ (7,932.40)	\$ (15,282.91)	\$ (94,673.33)	\$ (92,900.00)

Please remember to use Amazon Smile when ordering to benefit Pilgrim Faith by February 20, 2023 - Amazon Smile termination date.  
 If you want a list of all checks written for the month, send request to [finances@pilgrimfaith.org](mailto:finances@pilgrimfaith.org).

# February 2023

**Sun**

**Mon**



**Tue**

**Wed**

**Thu**

**Fri**

**Sat**

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





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

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

## CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

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### **MONDAY**

12:00pm AA 2nd Floor

### **TUESDAY**

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

### **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

### **FRIDAY**

8:00pm AA 2nd Floor

### **SATURDAY**

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

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### **Amazon Smile**

Shop on AMAZON Smile and select Pilgrim Faith UCC as your charity of choice. For each transaction you make, AMAZON donates a percentage back to Pilgrim Faith. Donate to Pilgrim Faith every time you shop!

