Minister’s Missive

A time of transition, a time of change...that’s the time it is for Pilgrim Congregational Church. It’s a time of goodbyes and hellos, sadness and hope, anxiety and reassurance. It’s not an easy time.

A time of transition, a time of change...that’s the time it is in the church’s liturgical year. Ordinary Time has ended and the Season of Advent has begun. It’s a time of waiting and watching, expectation and hope, preparation and reflection. Advent, too, can be a challenging time.

If Christmas is going to come to our hearts and our homes, we have to help it happen. Some of us deepen our spiritual practices in order to prepare the way. Some of us increase our giving, of self and of resources, in order to bring Christmas alive. Some of us decorate our homes – inside and out – to bring light and joy into these darkening days. Many of us reach out to family and friends in special ways; we prioritize relationships over all else.

The people of Pilgrim know how to prepare for Christmas, and we know how to get through challenging times. Step by step, prayer by prayer, with kindesses multiplied, with courage and hope, we will move through Advent thoughtfully and well.

As your Bridge Pastor, I will be doing a few specific things to bring stability to our congregation, and to support the ministry of so many already at work in our church.
First, I will coordinate Sunday worship services so that we may continue to be comforted, encouraged and inspired.

Second, I will host Sunday Coffee Hour on Zoom to help us stay connected and engaged.

Third, I will offer Office Hours – Tuesday, Wednesday and Thursday – from 10:00 to 4:00 so that you may call, or come to see me (masking and distancing) at the church. Our beautiful building, our spiritual home, will be safe, but no longer closed.

Fourth, I will work with all of our Co-coordinators – Learning, Serving, Worship, Connecting and Building/Finance – to keep our ministries alive and well.

Fifth, I will participate in community affairs as the face and voice of Pilgrim. Our church has a rich history of being active in Shasta County and I’ll continue that tradition.

Advent is here, and Christmas is coming. We can all help it happen. Together, we can do this.

Worship

Your Worship Co-co’s are figuring out how to create and organize virtual worship services. With the assistance of many people, our services are coming together. We’re very grateful for all the participants who make this possible: liturgists, musicians, our Choir Director, our Children’s Time leader, our preachers, and our amazing Office Manager. Go team!

The filming for the virtual Madrigal Dinners will soon be over and the church’s chancel will shift from representing a castle’s interior to looking a little bit more like a church. Many thanks to the supportive Madrigal adults for decorating our chancel with garlands and wreaths. Your Co-co’s will add an Advent wreath and a few other accoutrements to these greens to create a beautiful worship setting for December.

As we approach Christmas, our Choir Director, Nancy Dutton Hill, will be introducing choral music back into our services. She’ll do this by having choir members record individually and then editing those separate tracks into one single presentation. This work takes a tremendous amount of
time and technical talent. Thank you, Nancy, for giving us these gifts.

A virtual Christmas Eve service will be offered this year. We’re planning a Candle Light Nativity. It will be on YouTube again and Elizabeth will publish the link on Thursday, December 23rd. Watch for it!

A final thank you to our upcoming preachers, Rev. Karen Stanley, Rev. Steve Kindle, and our own Rachel Hatch. They’ll give their best to keep our services meaningful and inspiring.

Respectfully submitted,
Diane Hepburn & Heather Hennessey
Worship Co-coordinators

The Serving committee Co-Cos have gathered names of members who are willing to pick up groceries or necessary items during this quarantine period. For contact purpose:

Kim Healey    605-0080
Peggie Linville  515-4110
Pilgrim Church  243-3121

The Buddy System is still ongoing during this isolation period. For anyone wishing to connect with another member via phone on a regular basis, please contact Kim Healey at 605-0080, and leave a message. Those who have Buddies please continue your calls. They are appreciated.

The Serving Co-cos want to be sure all are aware of instacart.com, a nationwide service that provides home grocery delivery here in Redding. An additional internet site provides pre assembled delivered meals for 30 minute preparation. In your search bar go to every plate. Meals are reasonable and healthy.

Prayer chain requests are always available through
Jean Cannon
227-3274  |  jeancannon@frontiernet.net
Barbara Cross
221-3809  |  eugjoy@gmail.com
A virtual Called to Care meeting was held 11/15 and the next meeting will be 12/13/20.

All members of the Called to Care group keep busy making phone calls, responding to prayer chain requests, providing meals, sending cards for birthdays, and other greetings. We heartily thanked Pastor Allen for his guidance and supplying connection to our virtual monthly meetings. We gave him our best wishes for his journey ahead.

Serving Co-cos,
Peggie Linville and Kim Healey

Landscape

On November 7, Chris McNeill and Heather Hennessey finished pruning landscape bushes around the east and south sides of the church. Later in the month, Randy Haynes pruned the Bradford Pear that was drooping into the upper parking lot. Randy also burned accumulated brush and limbs after our first good rain.

That first rain inspired Heather to plant daffodils on the newly cleared hillside on the south side of the church. February should bring them into full bloom.

The next big pruning will come in early January when all 28 Crepe Myrtles in the church landscape will need to be trimmed. If you can join in, mark Saturday, January 9 on your calendar. We’ll work from 9 till noon.

In mid-November, Bill Justice had Nick Anderson climb w-a-y up a ladder and replace a burned out light bulb in the very tall light standard by the outside kiosk. Thanks Bill, and thanks Nick!

Burn season has been extended in the city until December 12. Randy will be pruning and burning deadwood in the undeveloped areas around the church. If you’re in the neighborhood, stop by and cheer him on!
Last but not least, the acorns have been falling into our parking lots with a vengeance this fall, and millions of leaves were right behind them. To keep our grounds looking neat and our doorways clear, Randy has regularly been blowing the “hardscapes” around our church. Everything looks good!

**Connecting**

Soup Sale Outcome: Thank you, all soup lovers! Pilgrim netted $1,747, which we divided evenly among our three designated non-profits (SEACM, Faithworks, and the Pilgrim Compassion Fund).

North State Giving Tuesday: Thanks to all who supported their favorite non-profits on December 1. Remember, if you missed giving on Tuesday, donations are always gratefully accepted. The last report I saw showed that SEACM did well, bringing in over $4,000.

Christmas: Pilgrims donated sufficient funds at Thanksgiving time for us to also put together a Christmas surprise for our FaithWorks family. Thank you all for your generosity.

2020 Support: We truly appreciate your support over the year. It has been a tough one. You have donated time and money to help create positive change. It was good practice for 2021. We will have more challenges as we remain virtual while trying to work together to create a more just world. Your connecting co-cos will be in touch with ideas for us all to consider and work on. Watch for that coming soon.

In the meantime, we wish you all a Merry (and safe) Christmas!

Pam Crowe & Sue Crandell,
Connecting Co-Cos
A Note from Sue Crandell

On behalf of the whole Crandell family, I want to thank you all for your prayers, and the cards and food, that magically appeared at our door these past few weeks. All the love that came to us from our Pilgrim family was a great comfort and truly appreciated. Don loved you all. When he came home from the hospital he wanted to go to church and you came to him. Special thanks to the Prayer Chain and the Call to Care Crew, Peggie and Karen F. to Pastor Allen and Heather. There will be a celebration of Don’s life when it’s safe to do so.

With love,
Sue Crandell

Joys & Concerns

Andrea Gibbens-Egolf volunteered to help organize and shop for the 20 Thanksgiving Baskets, which Pilgrim Church will give to all families at the Faith Works community. We are grateful to the Gibbens-Egolf family, Bill Justice, and George Cole for shopping, packaging, and delivering the Baskets.

Sara Hoxie and Sue Crandell expressed deep gratefulness to so many Pilgrims who reached out to their family following the death of our beloved Don Crandell. For those who may not be aware, Don was a child of 13 living in Hawaii at the time of the Japanese bombing of Pearl Harbor. He has published a book of WWII, “The Spies of Lanikai” from the viewpoint of a 13 year old boy.

Note the nicely trimmed shrubbery around the church. That is a big thank you to Chris McNeil and Heather Hennessey.

Amielle Gibbens-Egolf (6 years old) is thrilled to be able to read. We all can rejoice with her with this big learning step! Reading is an adventure that never ends.

The Shasta Arts Council sponsored an online presentation for the “Trio Francais”, Sheri Curtis at the piano, Cheri Gans on violin and Julie Cragle on cello. The lovely concert featured a variety of compositions,
many arranged by Sheri Gans. We are fortunate to have the trio play for many of our online Pilgrim Church Worship services.

November includes celebrations for John and Pam Crowe, their wedding anniversary and her birthday. Also her rapid recovery from her hospitalization for pulmonary embolism.

What a joy for Paula Kahler to spend Thanksgiving in Seattle with her sons, Dylan and Ryan, and their families and to celebrate her youngest granddaughter Hattie’s first birthday.

It is music to our ears to hear Sheri Curtis playing piano arrangements of some classic hymns from her home. Also, on several Sundays, she has played, “God Be With You,” our benediction to our worship services. Maybe some of you sing along with her piano accompaniment.

John Egolf and son Liam hiked 70 miles of the Pacific Crest Trail. This accomplishment earned 7th grader Liam the “70 Mile Hike” Merit Badge in Boy Scouts. John is helping other Boy Scouts to prepare for this badge by taking them to the Whiskeytown Falls Trail.

During the moving worship service on Nov. 22nd (Pastor Allen’s last Sunday), Nancy Dutton Hill sang, “You’ve Got A Friend”. There wasn’t a dry eye for those listening. Thank you, Nancy!

Joriana Gibbens Egolf is a freshman at Shasta High. She recently participated in a learning project by being a part of a model United Nations. Not only did she and her classmates learn about the U.N., but she studied women’s issues of Kenya, the country she represented at the U.N.

Good news for Linda Lack: after her complicated ankle surgery and lengthy recovery, she is now free of her cast and her boot and is in physical therapy. Cheers to you, Linda, for your persistence and patience.

Covid-19 has affected so many in numerous ways. Jim Carr knows this well as he is hospitalized with the virus. We send prayers for his total recovery and for support for his wife, Mary, who has tested positive and is at home.
It is with sadness that we Pilgrims have released Pastor Allen from his role as pastor of Pilgrim Church. Allen is coping with a variety of health issues which have prompted him to resign. What a gift he has been for Pilgrim Church for the past 10 months. We’ll continue holding him in our prayers.

June Mackey had successful surgery to remove a malignant tumor from her kidney. The surgeons report that she is clear of the cancer. Continue caring thoughts for her while she is recovering at home.

Vivi-Anne Thompson’s husband is undergoing eye care with an ophthalmologist in Oregon for a rare condition.

Going through a variety of tests has been on Peggie Linville’s mind. The doctors are trying to determine the best treatment for the heart health challenges Peggie has been having. We hold you in our prayers.

We are glad to hear that Sue Asbill’s son, Scott, is in Redding recovering well from a severely broken leg.

Many in the congregation will remember Mel and Mary Hammer, who are former members of Pilgrim Church. Word has come that Mel recently suffered a stroke and he passed away on Nov. 26th at Mercy Hospital. Mary was also hospitalized at Mercy for back surgery. Our prayers are with the family.

The Serving Cocos, Peggie Linville and Kim Healey, would like to hear from you if you know of someone who may need extra help. This Covid time could be finding many Pilgrims in need of extra care but are hesitant to ask.

Joanne Nelson, a member of Pilgrim church for many years, died on Nov. 28th at Willow Springs Assisted Living, where she has lived for the past few years. Joanne was a talented artist and former teacher. She often ushered for our worship services.
There are several in our midst who may feel isolated due to their living conditions and would appreciate cards or calls. Please keep them in your thoughts and prayers: Deanie Coon, Claudine Cupples, Paul Frye, and Caroline Kennedy.

Submitted by Barbara Cross

Finance Report

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Other income: *$5,100 for the Parking Lot Rental was received on Oct 16

The income for the first 10 months for Pledges, Loose Plate & Building use was $136,893 compared to our projected 10 months income of $140,930 shows a variance to the negative side of -4,037. Income from Pledges and Loose Plate are actually above our projected income for the first 10 months by $4,303. The loss of income from building use is the reason for the total deficit of $-4,037.

Robert Cross, Financial Secretary
Pastor Allen stepped away from the ministry last month. I know this was a tough decision that Pastor Allen did not take lightly. On Sunday November 22\textsuperscript{nd}, the congregation participated in a touching Release of Service Ritual. We were able to express our gratitude for all Allen and all he has done for us. We wish him godspeed and happiness as he begins the next phase in his life.

The search committee that brought Pastor Allen to us has re-formed with some new members and has already begun the process of calling our new settled pastor. Rev. Heather Hennessey has agreed to step in as bridge minister and has already made plans for a spiritually lifting and reflective Advent season. Considering all that 2020 has brought us, Advent and all of the hope that the season offers is sorely needed.

Even though we seem to be in the middle of a storm of change, we need to focus on the mission of our church. Pastor Allen, along with the love and participation of the congregation, continued to move our church forward. We will not allow any obstacles to stand in the way as we continue to walk on the path that leads us to God.

On a very practical matter, it is time to nominate a new Vice Moderator. Please submit names to our nominating committee. Members of the committee are Chris McNeill (cjm611@gmail.com), Diane Hepburn dianehepburn@charter.net, and Piyush Dhanuka (pkdhanuka@gmail.com).

Respectfully submitted,
Glenn Hoxie
Pilgrim Moderator
Faithworks Turkey Dinners

Here’s a look into this year’s group effort to compile turkey dinners for Faithworks. Thanks to all those who helped out!
Pilgrim Book Club

Our Pilgrim Book Club resumes on Thursday, December 3rd, at 3:00 p.m. over Zoom. This month we’re reading both the UCC Advent daily devotional (available at church for $3.00 per copy) and Antoine de Saint-Exupery’s slender volume The Little Prince. Please contact, Rev. Heather Hennessey, if you’d like to be emailed that zoom meeting link.

Madrigal Dinner

Hear Ye! Hear Ye!
An important proclamation from our Royal Court:
Due to the plague sweeping our homeland, we are unable to host guests inside the castle; however, it has been approved by our local magistrate to host an alternative, yet special holiday experience! You are invited to secure a reservation which will include your carriage
driving through our enchanted forest that we promise will delight you with the sights and sounds of the season! Additionally, we will provide a packed seasonal feast for your journey back to your village! Lastly, you will have the ability to still enjoy the same full entertainment of song, dance and theatrics via your personal magical mirror access.

To purchase a sponsorship, download and open the form at https://tinyurl.com/madrigal-dinner-2020
Complete the form and send your purchase to the email listed on form!

Dinner Reservations will be $35 per person, inclusive of all fees. Dinner will include:
• Full traditional authentic feast for pick-up in to-go packaging for your enjoyment at home
• Options to purchase additional rolls and gift jars of caramel sauce
• A magical, drive through experience during meal pick up that will include our Madrigal cast as well as seasonal sights, sounds and experiences
• An online viewing access code for one device of the entire musical and theatrical entertainment that you have always experienced that can be viewed by you for a limited period

If you are unable to attend our Drive-through experience and meal pick up but you still want to watch the online performance and support our program, you have an option to purchase a PERFORMANCE VIEWING PASS:
For a $25 donation, you can enjoy the sights and sounds of Madrigal Dinner in your own home.
• This pass is good for an online viewing of the show only (the meal or drive-through experience is NOT included). Your viewing link will be emailed to you the week of December 7th and will be good for 30 days. The purchase includes 1 device per pass ONLY.

County Covid Update as of Nov 20
Dr. Stephen Campbell is the County liaison with the faith communities. He's offered the following update for us:

“I wanted to take some time today to share some statistics with you from our county committee meeting this morning that might help
you understand the deep concern that currently exists among our community officials right now.

The Number of days it has taken to have 1,000 cases:
206 days to get to 1000
28 days to get to 2000
16 days to get to 3000
9 days to get to 4000 (based on current projections)

From March to September we had about 750 cases in Shasta County. We had 750 cases in Shasta County last week.

On October 1, our community spread rate (known as R-effective) was 1.03, which meant that for each new case, we could expect another 1.03 cases to emerge. Currently our R-effective rate is 1.36. That means from the 750 cases we had last week we can expect an additional 1,020 new cases in our community still developing.

In Shasta County 10% of the cases are in people over the age of 65, but 75% of our deaths are in that same group of people over the age of 65.

In contrast, there are currently several infants hospitalized with Covid in our local community right now, so it isn’t just impacting the elderly.

So what do these numbers tell us?
• We have a very high rate of community spread happening in our county right now, which means our health care systems (while they are prepared for this), are expecting a significant surge in the need for their services.
• We need everyone to make a decision to do their part and help us in slowing down this spread. These tools actually do help, but only if people are willing to participate, and it appears we still have a significant amount of people who don’t want to do their part.
• We are at significant risk of this getting worse if people aren’t very careful with their gathering choices during the upcoming holiday seasons. Our health officials indicate that a portion of our current increase in numbers is due to gatherings people had around Halloween, and they are very concerned that if people attend gatherings in the next several weeks, that will only get worse.