



# The Pilgrim

## From the Pastor's Pen

The Rev. Nathaniel Craddock

As I write this I just got off the phone with a member of our congregation with whom I was discussing the idea of “equipping the saints for ministry.” That’s an overblown churchy phrase for encouraging and teaching folks both to *identify* and to *make manifest* the unique ways that their life stories, their talents, and their passions have shaped them to live out their baptismal vows and join the journey toward God’s dream of a healed world.

I believe strongly that one of the non-negotiables of a vibrant, healthy, growing church—which, we all admit, is precisely the kind of community we envision Pilgrim becoming in the future—is the involvement of active lay people who don’t shy away from this difficult and joyful work. And when I say “work,” I don’t just mean expending energy to *get things done* around the church, though many of you are involved in such activity in one way or another (THANK YOU!).

What I mean is something a bit deeper: I mean the difficult and joyful work of allowing yourself to be equipped for ministry, to name your gifts, to exercise them, and to discover the unique role you have to play in this beautiful, messy, breathing organism called a Church. Can you imagine a life with a sense of purpose and a deep understanding of who you are and who you are meant to be? Can you imagine sharing that depth of purpose and centeredness in your God-given vocation with other people in your neighborhood and throughout the community? What would life look like if you were able to get out of bed knowing that whatever you have to offer the world—whether the world thinks it’s worthwhile or not—is worthwhile and holy?

Remember what Nathanael wondered aloud when his friend Philip came to find him and bring him to meet this Jesus character from Nazareth: “Can anything good come out of Nazareth?” As I mentioned when I preached that text a few weeks ago, it’s often so easy to hear that question as one of disdain and skepticism, especially in today’s environment, where world leaders take lazy potshots at countries who are less fortunate than us and put their character on display for all to see. But what if we heard that question with new ears? What if we hear that question asked with a sense of hope and wonder?

What if Nathanael is asking, “if holy and worthwhile things can come out of Nazareth, can holy and worthwhile things come out of me too?”

The answer, of course, is yes. No matter what the world has to say about what you have to offer, holy and worthwhile things can come out of each one of us if we say “yes” to letting them.

This will look different for different people: for some of us it might look like volunteering to take on a position at Church we’ve never done before for fear that we wouldn’t be able to do it adequately. For some of us it might look like stepping back from activities that aren’t bearing fruit or aren’t a good fit so that we can find those places in which we flourish. For still more of us it might mean doing the soul-searching work of asking what love, talents, skills, abilities, or relationships we’ve been preventing from growing and thriving due to our own fear of growth, or our own desire to cling onto “the way it’s always been.”

We’ve heard over and over again that following the Journey on which Christ calls us to walk beside him will necessarily bring some changes and shifts in our understanding of ourselves and our place in this world, but remember that the force that keeps us grounded and allows for growth to spring forth from us is the gravity of love. And as we turn the corner into Lent on February 14<sup>th</sup>, the Journey itself will ask

us to do this soul-searching work. Think not of Lent as a time to feel bad about ourselves needlessly. Lent instead is our season to prune, to till, to make ready for the holy and worthwhile growth that God is calling forth from each one of us in a springtime of faith. I remain ever privileged and humbled to be walking this journey with you.

Peace and all good,

--- Pastor Nate

## **In the Interim: Dreams for the Church**

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In our interim focus group, we have been engaging in an intentional activity to tease out the things that make our church unique and special in our community called “appreciative inquiry.” This involves asking focused, specific questions that identify our strengths as a community, those “gold nuggets” from the past that can get hidden inside all our longing for the good old days. The goal of this process is to identify those aspects of the best of our past and to carry them forward and manifest them in new ways in the future to which God is calling us. Our sense of mission and vision can emerge from these conversations afresh!

The question we are invited to focus on in February is this: “Looking back on your entire experience at Pilgrim UCC, what was the moment or moments that made you feel most alive, excited about your walk with Christ, joyful to be a part of this community of faith? What were the specifics surrounding that event or those events? Who was involved? How did it make you feel?”

We discussed this question in our January focus group, and the responses from folks who participated identified moments of extending welcome and hospitality to the community, events like Vacation Bible School & Youth Group, social justice projects, and discipleship activities that deepen our faith as being most important in our history. These are forming part of the new identity we are discerning, too.

I'd love to hear everyone's answers to this question as we continue towards identifying our renewed mission and vision! Please feel free to have a conversation with me in person or send me an email with your thoughts and reflections on this. Your voice is crucial in our discernment as a family of faith!

## **Lent & Easter 2018**

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Our Journey together continues as the church year turns from Epiphany into the holy season of Lent on February 14<sup>th</sup>! Lent is a special time of year that encourages us to examine the ways in which we've not been allowing God's light to shine as brightly through us, and encourages us to till the soil for new life to spring up in us.

We do this through special observances in worship, through leaning into intentional spiritual practices of study, prayer, giving, and service, and some of us even choose to forego things we enjoy—dessert, wine, social media, whatever it may be—so that we can focus our attention more deeply on the journey God is calling us to walk with God toward healing the world. Lent isn't a time to feel sorry for ourselves; it's a time to admit that we need help in realizing God's dream, to trust in God's power anew, and to examine ourselves fearlessly as we make ready to celebrate Christ's triumph over death.

### **We invite you to join us for this year's Lent & Easter services & festivities:**

**Sunday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**— Our usual monthly Pancake breakfast gets a Mardi Gras makeover as we break out King's Cake & sparkling cider in one last festive blast before Ash Wednesday. We'll raffle off a basket of wine made by our resident sommelier Denny Schmidt; proceeds from the raffle will go to the Lay Life & Work fund and to yet-to-be-determined needs.

**Ash Wednesday, February 14<sup>th</sup>**— Yes, it's Valentine's Day; make plans with your sweet baboo for another evening, and join us as we begin a holy Lent through prayer, song, reflection,

and the opportunity to forgive one another as we receive ashes to mark the start of our Lenten journey.

**Lenten Soup Supper & Discussion Series**— On Wednesday nights at 6:30PM during Lent (excluding Ash Wednesday and during Holy Week), join us in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30 for a light soup dinner and a spiritual discussion. This year, Pastor Nate will teach and lead a discussion on the UCC Statement of Faith. Everyone is invited to come to dinner!

### **Holy Week:**

**Palm Sunday, March 25<sup>th</sup>**— Celebrate Jesus' triumphal entry into Jerusalem as he prepares for the final showdown with Death itself with a festival procession! We'll remember the way we, who sing "Hosanna!" on Sunday, will turn around to yell "Crucify him!" on Friday.

**Holy Thursday, March 29<sup>th</sup>**— Come remember and reflect on the events of Christ's passion and death with us as we gather for a sumptuous Mediterranean meal in the Fellowship Hall at 6:30PM, where we'll celebrate Jesus' gift to us of Holy Communion, then we'll move through stations to the Garden, the Betrayal and Arrest, and finally the Crucifixion.

### **Prayer Vigil, Friday, March 30<sup>th</sup> 7:00p through Saturday, March 31<sup>st</sup> at 7:00p—**

The Sanctuary will be open for 24 hours for us to join in keeping watch at the tomb, reflecting in prayer and awaiting the promise of resurrection while praying for the needs of the world. Pastor Nate will lead a short devotional service at 6:30PM to begin the vigil. A sign-up sheet will be passed around in church to sign up for time slots.

**Easter Sunday, April 1<sup>st</sup>, 10:00AM**— We'll join together and welcome countless guests from the neighborhood to joyfully proclaim "Christ is risen!" and sing Alleluia for the first time since Lent began! We'll hear the Resurrection story anew and celebrate Christ's presence with us in Holy Communion, then enjoy an Easter egg hunt with our kids afterwards! Be sure to invite friends and family to this joyful service!

### **Lenten Meal Schedule**

|                         |   |
|-------------------------|---|
| <b>Wed. February 21</b> | <b>Lay Life &amp; Work</b>                            |
| <b>Wed. February 28</b> | <b>Board of Stewards</b>                              |
| <b>Wed. March 7</b>     | <b>Council</b>  |
| <b>Wed. March 14</b>    | <b>Christian Nurture</b>                              |
| <b>Wed. March 21</b>    | <b>Board of Governors/<br/>Mission &amp; Outreach</b> |

## **Preschool News**

We are hoping everyone was able to have some fun in the recent snow we just had. We know we did! January was a month of learning about bears, hibernation, and other cold weather animals. The 3's will end the month with a "Teddy Bear Picnic." The 4's went on a bear hunt to find their honey pots. We are hoping that the Groundhog doesn't see his shadow, so we can cut winter short and bring on the sunshine.

We will enter the month of February by talking about Valentine's Day fun. We will talk about our feelings, and make special Valentine bags and mailboxes. The children will have a Valentine's Party with a special snack and we will trade Valentine cards. The teachers have been busy evaluating the children for conferences. The parents will get to come to the Preschool to meet with their child's teacher the week of February 19<sup>th</sup> – 23<sup>rd</sup>.

Pilgrim Preschool is having Open Enrollment now. All in-house and church families need to be registered by January 31<sup>st</sup>. Please call the Preschool office for more information.

Happy Valentine's Day,  
Chrisy Greene

## Greeter Schedule

|        |                                 |
|--------|---------------------------------|
| Feb 4  | Lois Ivey & Karen Essell        |
| Feb 11 | Amber & Peyton Tenhundfeld      |
| Feb 14 | Debbie Heintz & Janet Basil     |
| Feb 18 | Meredith Amlung & Donna Bundy   |
| Feb 25 | Debbie Heintz & Carolyn Scheidt |
| Mar 4  | Jill & Terry Parsons            |
| Mar 11 | Lois Ivey & Judy Hoehn          |
| Mar 18 | Carolyn Scheidt & Jean Gilbert  |
| Mar 25 | Bud Rullmann                    |



Our Boy Scout Troop 288, partnering with other troops in the Cincinnati area, is participating in a community-wide project, Soles4Souls. Soles4Souls is a not-for-profit global organization dedicated to "Wearing out Poverty" by distributing your old shoes to people in need.

Most families have lots of "old" shoes. As the charter organization for our troop, they are asking for our help in the collection of those shoes. There will be a collection box in the Narthex to put your old shoes (any type or condition will be accepted). Please rubber band shoes together or tie laces together. We will be accepting shoes until Scout Sunday, February 11.

The project goal for Cincinnati is to collect 25,000 pairs of shoes that will then be given to Soles4Souls who will distribute them to those in need.

Thank you in advance for your help!!

**Installation of newly elected and appointed church officers and committee members will be Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup> during the morning service. We ask those who are newly elected and current board and committee members to please be present.**

Pilgrim Christmas Kitchen says,  
"Thank You"



The 24<sup>th</sup> Annual Christmas Kitchen Sale was another success! Thanks to the hard work and support of our wonderful congregation and committee. You all are awesome! The delicious cookies, candies, and breads grossed a little over \$3300.

THANK YOU to all our CHURCH FAMILY BAKERS. The last few years we have worried about not having enough cookies. Well, no worries! Our small, but mighty congregation came through again. We had many beautiful, delicious cookies! Thank You! Thank You!

Thank you to Bobbi Grimm, Kyla Sprague and Colton Tenhundfeld for helping us on baking night. A big Thanks to David Ralphs and Erin Flaig for the beautiful Christmas music. Thanks to Pam Hoetker for taking care of all the advertising and thank you to Jean and Dick Gilbert for your moral support. We sure missed you.

Many thanks to our great committee: Abbie Clark, Amber Tenhundfeld, Ann Bushle, Audrey Angner, Betty Pfaff, Carolyn Scheidt, Cheri Sprague, Debbie Heintz, Debbie Wooton, Denise Simpson, Eileen Garrabrant, Gail Yust, Jackie Brockhoff, Janet Nailor, Jean Gilbert, Judy Hoehn, Karen Fyke, and Pam Nohr. You are the best!

Vickie Clark and Karen Essell  
Christmas Kitchen Co-Chairs

**Thank you and Merry Christmas to the Loving Congregation at Pilgrim United Church of Christ**

Thank you for sharing the love of Christ in this holiday season. Delshire and C.O. Harrison families will wake up on Christmas morning knowing the joy of the season.

Thank you,  
Mary Erwin  
District Nurse at Delshire & C.O. Harrison Schools

**Mark Your Calendar!**

**UCC Choir Festival  
April 22<sup>nd</sup>  
St. Paul UCC  
6997 Hamilton Ave.  
3:00 pm**

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**We kindly ask that you remember  
our homebound friends in your  
prayers and with cards.**

Gerry Baker  
Velma Becker  
Robert & Jean Brewsaugh  
Alberta Donahue  
Candy Gabriel  
Bob Girard  
Alberta Grimm  
Jean McClain  
Clara Spreen  
Alma Jean Robertson

**Hootenanny**

Our next Hootenanny will be Saturday  
February 24<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm and will  
benefit Washington UCC children's  
programs and Homework Club.  
Musical guests will include:

Joey Drees  
Singer-Songwriter/Pop

Grimace  
Classic Rock

Dave and Jim Esmail  
Acoustic Classic Rock & Country

Bill Schultz  
Singer-Songwriter/Folk

Ben and Luke Wience  
Piano Solos

Mark your calendar for a good time,  
good music and a good cause!

**Birthdays:**

Feb 2 Justin Brockhoff  
Michael Parsons  
Feb 5 Alma Jean Robertson  
Feb 6 Terry Monroe  
Feb 11 Marsha Cole  
Feb 19 Jill Parsons  
Feb 21 Jackson Brockhoff  
Feb 23 Prestin Berting  
Stryker Robison  
Feb 24 Noah Reker  
Feb 25 Clara Spreen  
Feb 28 Val Brandt

**Anniversaries:**

Feb 22 15 yrs Jim & Lynn Esmail

**Birthdays:**

Mar 4 Ann Bushle  
Mar 5 Gerry Baker  
Mar 7 Cameron Etris  
Mar 11 Midge Wiedenbein  
Mar 12 Marlene West  
Mar 16 Kathy Waples  
Mar 17 Amie Williams  
Mar 18 David Bushle  
Mar 22 Kevin Brockhoff  
Mar 25 Jean Veith  
Mar 30 Jim Esmail

**Anniversaries:**

Mar 29 10 yrs Blake & Tricia Shaffer  
Mar 31 39 yrs Catherine & Steven  
Brockhoff

# February 2018

| Sun   | Mon                         | Tue       | Wed  | Thu                            | Fri  | Sat                            |
|---|-----------------------------|-----------|--|--------------------------------|--|--------------------------------|
|   |                             |           |  | <b>1</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts  | <b>2</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous                             | <b>3</b>                       |
| <b>4</b><br>10:00am Worship<br>11:15am Nurture<br>11:15am Personnel<br>7:00pm Bible Study @ Gilbert's                   | <b>5</b>                    | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b><br>7:00pm Choir<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous                        | <b>8</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts  | <b>9</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous<br>6:00pm Boy Scout Lock-In | <b>10</b>                      |
| <b>11</b><br>10:00am Worship/Boy Scout Sunday<br>11:00am Pancake Breakfast<br>11:30am Interim Focus Group<br>4:00pm PYG | <b>12</b>                   | <b>13</b> | <b>14</b><br>7:00pm Ash Wednesday Service<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous       | <b>15</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts | <b>16</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous                            | <b>17</b>                      |
| <b>18</b><br>10:00am Worship/Installation Sunday<br>11:15am Stewards<br>4:00pm PYG                                      | <b>19</b>                   | <b>20</b> | <b>21</b><br>6:30 Lenten Meal<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous<br>7:30pm Choir   | <b>22</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts | <b>23</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous                            | <b>24</b><br>7:00pm Hootenanny |
| <b>24</b><br>10:00am Worship<br>11:15am Lay Life & Work   | <b>26</b><br>7:00pm Council | <b>27</b> | <b>28</b><br>6:30pm Lenten Meal<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous<br>7:30pm Choir |                                |  |                                |

# March 2018

| Sun  | Mon                                    | Tue       | Wed  | Thu   | Fri  | Sat                                    |
|--|--|-----------|--|---|--|--|
|  |  |           |  | <b>1</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts                 | <b>2</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous   | <b>3</b>                               |
| <b>4</b><br>10:00am Worship<br>11:15am Nurture<br>4:00pm PYG<br>7:00pm Bible Study @ Gilbert's | <b>5</b>                               | <b>6</b>  | <b>7</b><br>6:30pm Lenten Meal<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous<br>7:30pm Choir  | <b>8</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts                 | <b>9</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous   | <b>10</b>                              |
| <b>11</b><br>10:00am Worship<br>11:00am Pancake Breakfast<br>11:30am Interim Focus Group       | <b>12</b><br>7:00pm Board of Governors | <b>13</b> | <b>14</b><br>6:30pm Lenten Meal<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous<br>7:30pm Choir | <b>15</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts                | <b>16</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous  | <b>17</b>                              |
| <b>18</b><br>10:00am Worship<br>11:15am Board of Stewards<br>4:00pm PYG                        | <b>19</b>                              | <b>20</b> | <b>21</b><br>6:30pm Lenten Meal<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous<br>7:30pm Choir | <b>22</b><br>7:00pm Boy Scouts                | <b>23</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous  | <b>24</b>                              |
| <b>25</b><br>10:00am Worship<br><b>Palm Sunday</b><br>11:15am Lay Life & Work                  | <b>26</b><br>7:00pm Council            | <b>27</b> | <b>28</b><br>7:00pm Choir<br>7:00pm Overeaters Anonymous                       | <b>29</b><br><b>6:30pm Holy Thursday Meal</b> | <b>30</b><br><b>Good Friday</b><br>10:00am Overeaters Anonymous<br>7:00pm Prayer Vigil | <b>31</b><br>Prayer Vigil until 7:00pm |

**Pastoral Care** – In order to better serve our congregation and the community, a new Pastoral Care contact number has been established. If you are in need of Pastoral Assistance and the office is not open, you may call **513-549-1641**. When you call, it will ask for your name and then route your call to either Pastor Nate or a designated in-house care person should Pastor Nate be unavailable. Feel free to distribute the number to anyone who asks and keep it handy should you need care.

Pilgrim United Church of Christ  
4418 Bridgetown Road

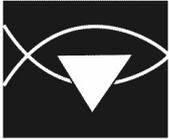
Cincinnati, OH 45211  
513-574-4208  
www.pilgrim-ucc.org

Monthly Newsletter  
February 2018 Issue

The Rev. Nathaniel Craddock  
Interim Pastor

Return Service Requested

Open and Affirming (ONA)



United Church of Christ

## **February Memorials**

*Joanie Flaig*

The Daniels Family  
Terry & Jill Parsons  
David & Judy Hoehn  
Pam Nohr  
Debbie Heintz  
Vickie Clark  
Loid Ivey  
Eileen Garrabrant

*Brenda Greiner*  
Janet Nailor

Jean Veith  
Bonnie Becker  
Carolyn Scheidt  
Betty Pfaff  
Donna Bundy  
Karen Fyke  
Irene Freese

## **Easter Flowers/Memorials**

Order forms for Easter flowers and memorials will be in the front lobby on Sunday February 18<sup>th</sup>. This year we are offering not only the usual daffodils, hyacinths and lilies, but also tulips and geraniums. The cost will be \$11 each. Orders will need to be placed by March 11<sup>th</sup> to ensure Easter delivery.