

Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
1730 Wilshire Blvd.  
Santa Monica, California 90403



**Called by the Holy Spirit,  
we are an intergenerational community of  
worship and service  
that invites the people  
of Santa Monica and beyond  
to flourish in the love of Jesus Christ  
through Word and Sacraments.**

**“Pilgrim’s Progress”**

**January 2025**



Pilgrim Lutheran Church  
The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod  
(310) 829-4113  
[www.pilgrimsynod.org](http://www.pilgrimsynod.org)



## January Calendar at a Glance

### Sunday Worship Service Schedule in January

- 9:00 a.m.** Sunday Morning Adult Bible Class, meets in the Discovery Conference Room.  
**10:00 a.m.** Worship Service Indoors and on Facebook and Pilgrim's website.
- January 1** | New Year's Day, Campus closed  
**January 1** | The Circumcision and Name of Jesus
- January 5** †Second Sunday of Christmas, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion  
**January 6** The Epiphany of Our Lord  
**January 11** | Take down Christmas trees and decorations at 9 a.m.  
**January 12** †The Baptism of Our Lord, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion  
**January 19** †Second Sunday after Epiphany, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion  
**January 20** Martin Luther King, JR Day, Campus closed  
**January 22** National Sanctity of Human Life Day  
**January 25** The Conversion of St. Paul  
**January 26** † Third Sunday after the Epiphany, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion

Thank you to all who helped decorate Pilgrim for Advent/ Christmas .We now need volunteers to help remove our Christmas trees and decorations on Saturday, January 11th.

Thank you to all who helped make our Christmas party a huge success! Thank you Dietmar for the delicious food—better than a fancy restaurant. Thank you also to those who brought additional food and who helped set up for the event then take down the food and decorations afterwards. Carolyn, Barbara, Bonnie, Lana, Marcia, Jane, Henry, Andrew and Mat, among others. Mat and his brother -in- law and Andrew stayed late and put the large tables back into the storage area. **Mat was a fantastic MC** (Master of Ceremony) and Pastor Upchurch did wonderful prayers for us. We had a large crowd and were honored to have a neighbor and his wife join us!



**Thank you to all who attended our Christmas Eve Worship Service.** And thank you to all who watched the online Christmas Eve service. Thank you to Rev. Upchurch for his always inspiring sermons! And thank you to Zabelle for her Solo performances on Christmas Eve. (Above is a photo of Rev. Upchurch with his daughter lighting candles on December 15th.)

**Our Christmas Day online message was a huge success!! As of December 27th we have had over one thousand views on Facebook!** Thank you Mat for filming this and thank you Rev. Upchurch for your suggestion on doing this online only service.



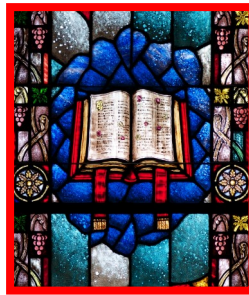
## Sunday Gospel Readings for January 2025

January 5, 2025 John 1: 1-9 and 10-18

January 12, 2025 Luke 3:15-17 and 21-22

January 19, 2025 John 2:1-11

January 26, 2025 Luke 4:14-21



### STRATEGIC PILLARS For PILGRIM

1. Connected Meaningfully in Worship
2. Connected in Spiritual Formation through Intergenerational Christian Education
3. Connected Sustainably to our Future through our Gifts and Resources
4. Connected in Witness and Service to our Neighborhood (including digital connection)
5. Connected in Partnership with Pacifica Christian High School
6. Connected in Care with One Another

### Updates from Pastor Upchurch

I recently heard a man go into a little bit of detail on his wish for a happy new year. My personal wish in 2025, he said is "for a big fat bank account and a nice slim body. I just hope these two wishes don't get mixed up like they did last year!" I hope he gets what he wishes for in 2025. I hope we all do, and all of us have a happy new year. But something tells me, before the New Year has even begun, that we're not all going to get what we wish for. We all want happiness but some of us may get some sadness in the New Year. We may very well run into some complicated situations, confront some sorrow, even deal with some suffering.

Our Savior knows all about that. Jesus made enemies, and he suffered rejection. Ultimately, he suffered crucifixion on a cross. To say it as directly as it should be said, God's plan was that his Son would go through hell so that we might go to heaven. God's will was that Jesus would pay dearly for our mistakes, for our failures, for our sins, and for the sins of the whole world. God's desire is for us to be forgiven, for us to be saved, for us to spend eternity with him ... but, for that to happen, Jesus would have to suffer. Jesus would even have to die.



And yet, there is always good news for those who put their faith in Jesus. Because there is no sin that God cannot forgive it. There is no suffering we can ever go through that can ever change what Jesus did for us. There is no trouble that is stronger than the love God showed us in Christ. There is no sorrow or sadness or suffering that can keep God's great love from reaching us and saving us.

Because Christ faced hardships, we – his followers -- can make it through whatever 2025 throws at us. I wish you a HAPPY New Year. But, most of all, pray that you will cling to Christ every single day no matter the circumstance.

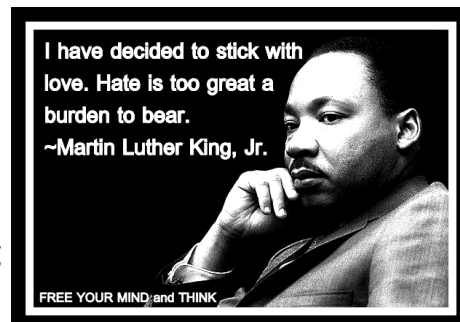
Blessings in Christ,

Pastor Lew

For all of you who would like to help Pilgrim successfully meet our 6th Strategic Priority—CONNECTED IN CARE WITH ONE ANOTHER, we invite you to join a new group we are calling “THE CARE CREW.” Your task would be to keep our members who are homebound or dealing with health issues in our hearts and minds. Please contact Zabelle if you are interested in joining CARE CREW. We recently started this and our Care Crew has been reaching out to those who cannot attend Pilgrim in person and to those who need extra help.

### **Church Office and Campus will be Closed Monday January 20th for Martin Luther King, Jr. Day**

Dr. King’s original name was Michael, but his father, after a visit to Germany where he learned about the Reformer Martin Luther, was so impressed that he changed his name and his son Michael’s name, to Martin. On this day we celebrate the reforming work of Dr. King for the sake of Social Justice



### **January Fellowship Schedule is:**

**January 5, Sara & Jane, January 12, Barbara, January 19, Lana, January 26, –Carolyn**

### **Stewardship....a Way of Life!**

### **Off to a NEW start?**

And I tell you, **ask, and it will be given to you;** seek, and you will find; knock, and it will be opened to you. For everyone who asks receives, and the one who seeks finds, and to the one who knocks it will be opened. What father among you, if his son asks for<sup>4</sup> a fish, will instead of a fish give him a serpent; or if he asks for an egg, will give him a scorpion? If you then, “who are evil, know how to give good gifts to your children, **how much more will the heavenly Father give the Holy Spirit to those who ask him!**”  
Luke 11: 9-13 (ESV)

Pilgrims, let’s review our GIFTS and our AFFIRMATIONS and see how we can be using these gifts in a new way in 2025. What God given gifts have you received but need an encouragement to “put out there”? If you did extend those gifts to the world around you, what difference would they make? Would it help someone in need? Would it uplift a person who is emotionally down, in mourning, overloaded with life’s challenges, financially “in a corner”, or who may just need a friend, OR just needs to hear that Jesus loves and cares for them? Let’s extend ourselves a little more to others this year and be the “hands and feet...fingers and toes” that uplift, care for, reach out, and be willing to pray for others... **but jump into action!** ASK the Holy Spirit to show you HOW, WHAT, WHERE and WHY God needs you to do HIS bidding! This kind of Stewardship of His GIFTS to us, hopefully is becoming more of our **Way of Life! This is an easy and light “burden” HE wants us to bear as Christ followers!**  
*Easy and light out of our love and gratitude. Will you look to see this?*

**Praise the Lord for Birthdays and Anniversaries**  
**Birthdays in January**

Travis B.	January 10
Ann E.	January 20
Nancy L.	January 20
Claudia T.	January 27



**Lutheran Hour Ministries Float**

Lutheran Hour Ministries, the Petal Pushers, and the Lutheran Hour Ministries Float Committee are proud to announce the 2025 LHM float: **"Behold! Jesus the Savior is Born."**

The float will feature two heralding angels calling viewers to the birth of Jesus and the church where Jesus may be found. The stained-glass windows of the church will feature the best days of Jesus' life. LHM invites you to meet—or meet anew—the source of hope and joy that cannot be taken away. Come, see, hear, and experience God's goodness.

The 136th Tournament of Roses Parade will take place on Wednesday, Jan. 1, 2025, in Pasadena, California, under the theme of "Best Day Ever." This will be LHM's 74th time participating in the parade.



Local television will cover the 2025 Rose Parade. Channel 5 does a great job as do other stations.

As a self-funded project of the Southern California District of the Lutheran Laymen's League, the LHM float is the only Christian float in the annual parade. The float carries on a mission to provide a Gospel witness to millions of viewers everywhere, from the 5.5-mile parade route in Pasadena to televisions and computers around the world.



**Updated Announcement on Pastor Upchurch!**

The Church Council and Pastor Upchurch have agreed to extend his Vacancy Pastor Agreement through June 30, 2025!



## **In Our Prayers....**

### **Prayers of Intercession**

For those affected by Hurricane Helene including Pr. Upchurch's family.  
For Allen's health  
For Dr. Winge's patients  
For Rev. RZ Meyer & Carrie—health issues.  
Pam with Parkinson's disease.  
For Fran, with Parkinson's disease  
Mothers & Babies  
Mark F. seriously ill  
Goldie, for peace  
Ralph W. for peace  
For those with Dystonia  
For James, Speech Apraxia  
For Randy—breathing issues  
Mark C.—Lungs  
Medical personnel, first responders  
Hilda's mother Berjik, Health  
Hilda's husband Jim, seriously ill  
Tiffany's mother and family  
Grace, Dystonia  
Edith A. shoulder  
Jim K, myasthenia gravis & cancer  
Julia A. fibromyalgia, arthritis  
Cyndy for heart issues  
Mary's mother Jean  
Pastor G. health and eyesight  
Frank, ALS  
Annie, Cystic Fibrosis  
Greater Evangelism  
Marriage difficulties  
Unemployment  
Lamar, found housing!  
Zackary, needs housing  
Mary Ann's health  
Sharon C. -Healing  
Kathy H's sister Alice—MS  
For Missionaries  
Laurie's mother  
Abused children  
Peace on Earth toward all people!

### **Prayers for Those Fighting Cancer**

Corby, cancer  
Valerie—cancer  
Ramona's niece Harriett  
JoAnna, breast cancer  
Myrna, Bob's stepmom  
Susan M.  
Rudolph A.  
George D. Bladder cancer  
Cezanne, intestinal cancer  
Carole, stomach  
Cindy C.  
Monique Y.  
Steve H.  
Susan S.  
Ken B.  
Hilda's husband Jim  
Ivan P.  
Dana A.  
Kay T.  
Kim  
Zack  
Charles (prostate)  
Rich Z.  
Greg W.  
Paul  
Jill  
Paul  
Arminda, kidney cancer  
**Continued Prayers**  
Protection for Police Officers & Firefighters  
Protection for our troops  
Jews for Jesus Ministry  
The ill and lonely  
Persecuted Christians  
Andrew S. in military

### **Prayers of Praise & Thanks**

For the Birth of Jesus!  
For our Wonderful Country!  
For Pilgrim's Wonderful Volunteers!  
**Dear Heavenly Father,**  
We ask that you hear and honor our prayers, as we pray for healing for those who are sick, for comfort for those who are dying and for happiness for those who have been healed and are living successful lives. We know you hear our prayers, and you are in control, not us. We thank you for your beautiful planet, your beautiful trees, flowers, oceans, rivers, mountains and animals. We thank you for your wonderful diverse planet of many countries, many cultures, and many variations in their climate. We thank you for our wonderful USA and we ask that you bless and protect us, guide us and lead us. For those who do not have a personal relationship with Jesus, we ask that through your work here at Pilgrim Lutheran Church, via our Pastor Upchurch and our volunteers, we may bring unbelievers to Jesus Christ. For those who are already believers, we ask that they continue to support Pilgrim and Pastor Upchurch and increase in-person participation here at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Santa Monica, CA.  
In Jesus Name, Amen





**December 22, 2024: Henry and Jane putting up the Christmas Tree Stars that they provided, It was not easy! Jane also lit the candles.**



### **THE STARRY NIGHT IN BETHLEHEM**

By Axel Waite. Axel is 9 years old and writes prayers and reads his Bible every night. He has his dog and cat with him as he reads his Bible. (Kathy's great-nephew)

On a night so still, beneath the starry sky,  
A baby was born where animals lie.  
In a humble stable, on a bed of hay,  
A Savior arrived on that Holy day.

The sheep were resting, the oxen stood near,  
The world felt quiet, yet full of cheer.  
Above the stable a bright star shone,  
Guiding the way to a King unknown.

Shepards in fields, keeping watch at night,  
Were startled awake by an angel's bright light.  
"Fear not!" It called. "For I bring news to you,  
A Child is born and his love is True!"

They hurried to see Him, their hearts full of song,  
Bringing their joy as they walked along.  
Wise men traveled from lands afar,  
Following that same bright star.  
With gifts of gold, frankincense and myrrh,  
They knelt before him their hearts astir.  
For this is tiny baby so gentle and small,  
Was the Prince of Peace, Savior to all.

So remember the night when love came down,  
Not in a Palace, nor with a Crown.  
But in a stable, simple and mild,  
Hope was born in the love of a Child.

