

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”
December 2024**



Pilgrim Lutheran Church
The Lutheran Church Missouri Synod
(310) 829-4113
www.pilgrism.org
amenmail@aol.com



December Calendar at a Glance

Sunday Worship Service Schedule December

Join us for Bible Class at 9 a.m., Our Worship Services are held at 10:00 a. m. You may also watch our Worship Services on Facebook and Pilgrim's website.

December 1 †First Sunday of Advent, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion

December 4 †Midweek Advent 1 at 6 p.m. On-line only

December 8 † Second Sunday of Advent, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion

December 11 † Midweek Advent 2 at 6 p.m. On-line only

December 15 †Third Sunday of Advent, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion

December 15 Pilgrim's Annual Christmas Party begins at 11:15 a.m.

December 18 † Midweek Advent 3 at 6 p.m. On-line only

December 22 † Fourth Sunday of Advent, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion

December 24 † Christmas Eve Divine Service / Holy Communion at 7 p.m.

December 25 † Christmas Day Greetings at 10 a.m. On -Line only

December 29 † First Sunday of Christmas, Divine Service at 10 a.m. / Holy Communion

Thank you Jane for scheduling our after worship fellowship:

December 1st—Sara and Jane, December 8th—Barbara, December 15th—Henry and Jane, December 22nd—Carolyn, December 29th—Lana

Christmas Decorating! Thank you to all who helped set up and decorate our beautiful sanctuary for Advent/ Christmas! We had eleven men who helped us with the heavy lifting. They set up the two large Christmas trees and the huge wreathes in the courtyard and helped decorate the trees! Many thanks to John P. and his sons Ian and Aidan, Michael, Travis, Noland, Andrew, Joseph, Henry, Allen and Anthony. Carolyn helped coordinate the volunteers and worked along side with them. We want to thank Susan, Lana, Jane, Carolyn, Katie and Lizzie. Lizzie cooked some delicious desserts for us! Susan decorated the pews, Lana put the poinsettias in place, a large job. Jane and Henry helped set up the Nativity scene in the Narthex. We all worked together and everyone did more work than what is reported in this newsletter. (Not everyone who helped is in this photo.)



Sunday Gospel Readings for December 2024

December 1, 2024 Luke 21:25-36

December 8, 2024 Luke 3:1-6

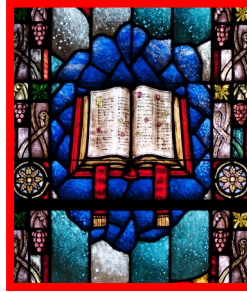
December 15, 2024 Luke 3:7-18

December 22, 2024 Luke 1:39-45 (46-55)

December 24, 2024 Luke 2:1-14 (15-20)

December 25, 2024 Christmas Greeting on-line only

December 29, 2024 Luke 2:41-52



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



One of my favorite Christmas hymns is **Hark! The Herald Angels Sing**. I especially love verse 2: *Christ, by highest heav'n adored, Christ, the ever, lasting Lord, Late in time behold him come, Offspring of a virgin's womb, Veiled in flesh the God-head see! Hail incarnate diety! Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!*

It's the last line that gets me every time. *Pleased as man with us to dwell, Jesus, our Emmanuel!* That God would choose to become one with humanity in all our vulnerability, humbling himself to experience life with us is a challenging idea. It's enormity is hard to capture fully in a children's pageant, or a live nativity, or even in the words of an old Christmas carol. But it happened. We know from the Scriptures that **"the Word became flesh and dwelt among us" (John 1:14)**. It's the ultimate mystery. It's wild; it's not tame; and it defies our understanding. But God doesn't call us to understand it- he call us to believe it. Think of the words of the Apostles' Creed or the Nicene Creed, which states, "I believe...in one Lord Jesus Christ, the only begotten Son of God, begotten of his Father before all worlds, God of God, Light of Light, very God of very God..." Do we understand them all? I know I don't. But do we believe those words capture the Biblical truths of who our God is and what He has done for us? So it is with the incarnation.

This Christmas season, let's savor the incomparable incarnation. We cannot repeat it. But we can and should stand in awe that the Word became flesh!

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 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. Our Care Crew has been reaching out to those who cannot attend Pilgrim in person and to those who need extra help.

Our Wednesday Evening Advent Message will be held on-line only, at 6 p.m. on December 4, 11 and 18, 2024.

Our Christmas Eve Divine Worship Service will be held at 7 p.m. in person and on-line.

Our Christmas Day Greetings will be held on-line only, at 10 a.m.

NOTE: We do not delete our worship services and you may view them later.

Praise the Lord for Birthdays and Anniversaries

Birthdays in December

Tiffany E.	December 10
Ken K.	December 14
Joseph P.	December 17
Jesus	December 24
Apassa S.	December 26

Anniversaries in December

Let the church office know when your Birthday or Anniversary is!



Christmas Party December

15th! Please sign up and join us after the worship service on December 15th as we hold our Annual Christmas Party. Invite your family, friends and neighbors. The food will be delicious and we will enjoy fellowshiping with each other. Let the church office know if you can help with the food or set up/ clean up. Invitations are in the Narthex.

TRI-LUTHERAN RETREAT:

The Annual Tri-Lutheran Retreat is scheduled February 3-5, 2025. The retreat will once again be held at the wonderful Saint Andrew Abbey, in Valyermo, California. Several Pilgrim members attended this wonderful retreat last year. Julie, from Palisades Lutheran called the church office and said the reservations are quickly being filled. If you plan to attend, please fill out the registration form and send it along with your check to Julie. The registration forms are on the table in the Narthex.

STEWARDSHIP ... A WAY OF LIFE

Peace
on
Earth



That is sure something that is in short supply these days. Watch the news? You see that it doesn't exist in our community a lot either. Violence is all around us. Bodies, lives, homes and spirits are broken all around us! Families, kids, school, workplaces and even some churches are feeling a lack of peace. That worldly dissension that sin breeds in our lives...however, the GOOD NEWS IS OURS!

Can we be stewards of something we don't have? The answer is YES! We are called to be stewards of peace because we most certainly do have peace. While there isn't an absence of hostility in so many sections of our life, there is an absence of hostility in one very critical section: our life with God. God, in Christ, has reconciled the world to Himself. He has blessed us with a peace that passes all understanding. We are right with Him and death no longer assaults us. God had given us peace in the forgiveness of sins and the new life that goes with it! **And as stewards of that peace. we need to share it with others in our life...it is our free gift to give this season!**

How are we stewards of this peace? **We give it freely.** As we are forgiven in Christ, so we also forgive! We are called to be as radically generous with the forgiveness and peace that we offer as God is with us. Yes, that means you offer forgiveness to those who haven't sought it or deserved it!

So in this Christmas Season, I pray that we all consider what gifts we can "give back" to those around us who need to feel and know God's amazing love and providence. Let's share all of our gifts, our time, talents, and treasures as the Lord's hands and feet, to those who need His compassion and love.

Christmas

Invite OTHERS!
Sunday Services

Christmas Party 12/15

Christmas Eve 7 pm

In Our Prayers. . . .

For those affected by the Mountain Fire in Ventura county.
For those affected by Hurricane Helene including Pr. Upchurch's family.
For Aydan's knee injury
For Allen's health
For Dr. Winge's patients
For Fran, with Parkinson's disease
Mothers & Babies
Brad, Enteritis
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
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
Jackson, lymphoma, friend of Kimshelley & Joe
Valerie in Chicago
Ramona's niece Harriett and Harriett's' husband Dan, both fighting cancer
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 Resurrection 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, we may bring unbelievers to Jesus Christ. For those who are already believers, we ask that they continue to support Pilgrim and increase in-person participation here at Pilgrim Lutheran Church in Santa Monica, CA.

In Jesus Name, Amen



Portals of Prayer October—December are available in The Narthex. This is a Concordia publication With daily devotional messages of encouragement for all of us. Scripture is also included for each day. This is published quarterly. We also have a large Print edition available.



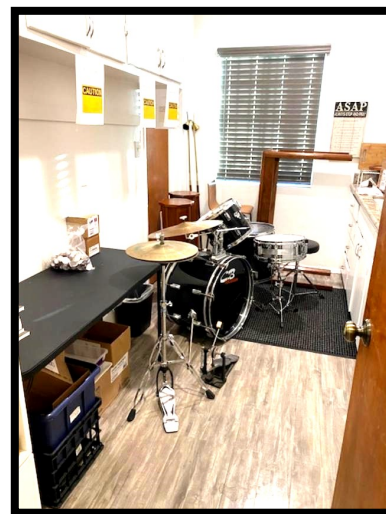
Copies of the **Santa Monica Star Newspaper** are located on a table in the Narthex. This is a monthly **All Good News** publication. Pilgrim has a beautiful monthly advertisement in this paper. They cover local events, give updates on local Santa Monica/ West L.A. citizens. Reading this newspaper will make you feel happy and connected to our wonderful Santa Monica!

Santa Monica Nativity Scenes: Calvary Baptist Church on 20th and Broadway has allowed Santa Monica Churches to set up on their property, for several years. Due to financial matters, regarding the annual taking down and storing each church's Nativity Scene, and then transporting them back into Santa Monica and assembling each booth, not all churches will be able to set up this year. The committee plans to only have booths honoring Baby Jesus, Mary and Joseph. Probably only five booth setups this year. Last year they were not able to let any church set up a booth, again, due to financial issues with the high cost of storing each booth, etc. In order for the well known Santa Monica Nativity Scenes to continue this well known tradition, the Nativity Scene Committee asked Pilgrim and other churches to donate \$1,000.00 to help with the cost involved. Pilgrim donated \$1,000.00 with the help of a member. The new Nativity Scene location will soon be noted.

(Unable to fix spacing error below.)



The church office wants to thank Mat Mulligan for the tremendous help he did in preparation for Celsea and Jonathon's wedding. Mat removed all of the musical instruments from the Sanctuary and placed them in the Sacristy. He repaired one of the entrance doors into the Sanctuary—got up on a ladder to do an emergency repair. He then dressed up in a black suit to help Kathy welcome wedding guests into the Sanctuary. We had a large crowd and Mat was a huge help. Hours later, after the wed-



ding ceremony, Mat put his "work clothes" back on and placed all the musical instruments back in to the Sanctuary. A photo of Mat in his suit is on the back page. Mary Harper helped Mat put the music stands and instruments back. Barbara helped Kathy put the Thanksgiving decorations back on the Chancel.



THANK YOU



Photos from our Stewardship luncheon.

Thank you to Barbara and all who worked so hard on this event.

Photo of Celsea and Jonathon's wedding (Photo was not taken at Pilgrim.)

Photo of Mat in his suit, after working very hard setting up for the wedding! He then changed back into his "work clothes" to put the musical instruments back and set up for Sunday Worship Service the following day! Thank you also to Mary Harper for helping set up the instruments.

