

**PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH**  
United Church of Christ

**Providing the Chattanooga community with a liberal Christian tradition by maintaining a caring, inclusive, and open-minded church where individuals may search for a vision of God and relate the Christian faith to the modern world.**

# PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH NEWS

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UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST  
400 Glenwood Dr., Chattanooga, TN 37404

**God is still speaking, [www.ucc.org](http://www.ucc.org)**

**September 1, 2016**



## **“Choose Your Seats with Care”**

There are always some built-in risks, whenever a pastor, writer or speaker has to begin a presentation with an apology. Nevertheless, here is a genuine attempt to do so. I honestly have no idea how many Pilgrim Church participants live on Signal Mountain. This is the “whole truth”, so, whoever you are, this article is **NOT** about you. Now, with this apology in mind, I will proceed to share one of my recent experiences and pray my reason for sharing it will be apparent.

The Lectionary Readings, for Sunday, August 28, includes a Gospel Lesson from Luke 14: 1, 7-14. In it, Jesus tells a parable regarding the most appropriate way to choose a seat, when invited to be a guest at a wedding banquet. He suggested that it is not a good idea to choose, for oneself, the highest seat of honor, lest someone of greater importance arrives, after you, and out of respect for the new arrival, the host asks you to move down so the new guest may take the seat you’ve chosen for yourself. He even suggested that having this experience could bring a degree of “disgrace” to the person who is asked to move down to the lower seat.

Last week, I had an experience, here in Chattanooga, that suggests there may be some status issues, within and surrounding the city, that unnecessarily hamper the establishment of cross-cultural, cross-socio-economic relationships. I’ve had experiences similar to this one, here in Chattanooga, on at least two prior occasions. I met a couple (a man and woman), at a local supermarket, whom I had never met before. They were expressing divergent views regarding his desire to purchase a double-chocolate cake rather than the low calorie cookies, located on a nearby shelf. As they talked, they looked in my direction, as if, they needed a mediator to help them with that “major” decision. (-: Being the extravert that I am, I immediately invited myself further into their conversation and chose the side of the man, as we jointly tried, in vein, to convenience his wife that the chocolate cake was a better choice. It didn’t take long for me to realize, to my surprise, that my wearing a clergy collar added no additional weight to my perspective, at all. So, as he reached over to get the low calorie cookies, they asked, “Which parish are you with?” Sensing that they viewed me as a priest, I explained to them that I am not catholic, but serve as pastor at Pilgrim Congregational Church and proceeded to tell them about this wonderful, progressive congregation. Not wanting to miss an opportunity to extend an invitation to worship with us, I asked, do

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you live here in the area? At that moment, and with a considerable sense of urgency, the wife, said, “Oh no, we live on Signal Mountain!” Then there was an uncomfortable pause that seemed to invite a reaction from me. To be honest, the pause seemed to invite and to anticipate some expression of awe, praise and/or admiration from me. Therefore, my response with the words, “I see”, devoid of any sense of excitement, must have led her to assume that I lacked sufficient knowledge to properly assess her good news that they lived on Signal Mountain. I say this, primarily because her next and prompt comment to me was, “Oh, do you not know about Signal Mountain?” (A phrase that sounded to me like: “Oh you poor, uninformed soul, do you not know about Signal Mountain?”). Then, she said, “It’s a lovely, upscale community, about 10 miles from the city. You owe it to yourself to see it!” I politely smiled, but did so in a way that signaled my personal content to “live in the area.”

I confess, it took several days for me to clearly discern what was happening, during this brief conversation, on the edge of an isle in a Chattanooga-area super market. I am convinced, it is because of the plain, the level, this woman chose for herself and because of the level I chose not to relinquish, she could not possibly have known that my most vivid mental image of Signal Mountain is the fact that, Byron De La Beckwith, convicted murderer of civil rights leader Medgar Evers, found Signal Mountain to be a comfortable place to live, near the end of his life. And so, we (all of us) live with these levels, these seating areas in which we voluntarily or involuntarily find ourselves.

At the risk of being too lengthy, this experience is further illustrated in a sample sermon written by The Rev. Matthews who retired in July after serving as dean of Amistad Chapel at the national offices of the United Church of Christ in Cleveland, Ohio. In her sample sermon, for August 28th, she described an experience she had while on an automobile trip with her daughter. Without attempting any modifications, the following is from this mother’s communication with her daughter, regarding “class” separations:

“As we drove, Kathryn and I listened to CD’s, including the musical score of the Broadway show, *Titanic*. The musical does a better job than the movie of depicting the intense class consciousness of the people travelling on that ship. In 1912, the Victorian age was coming to an end as the storm clouds of war gathered on the horizon. People were truly amazed at the work of human hands, and the ship itself was a great expression of technology and engineering that even competed, it seemed, with divine design. We’ve all heard the words, “Even God couldn’t sink this ship!” As the people board, class by class, you hear the sharp divisions between them, the ranking by worth that was determined by their money. The ship had many levels, and no one was permitted to cross the lines that separated one class from another. It simply wasn’t done.

At the top of the pyramid were the millionaires: famous names like Guggenheim and Astor and Strauss, people who had made a lot of money in the new world of capitalism that concentrated a lot of wealth in the hands of a few. Now, the rich people, the first class passengers, enjoyed a particular way of living and a particular way of being treated--because of their class. They hung around only with one another; that way, they could strike business deals with each other and talk about the coronation they had recently attended in England. They definitely got special treatment and a place of honor at every meal. They assumed they would, of course. That was the way things worked, and you were not to break the rules and traditions that were firmly in place.

Below them (literally), the second- or middle-class passengers hoped to strike it rich, perhaps, but for the most part, they accepted their place (which wasn’t too bad), behaved as expected, and looked down upon the third-class passengers a level below them. And the third-class passengers, the working class and the poor, were people who were hungry for all that America had to offer. In Maury Yeston’s evocative lyrics, one young Irish woman sings of being “a proper person,” respected by others because she will be a “lady’s maid.” Another wants to be a governess, and another a sewing girl. A man sings of being a policeman, another an engineer, and another a shop-keeper in this amazing land of opportunity to rise above one’s former station in life, rise above themselves and the

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grinding poverty they wanted to escape. America was a great beacon of hope for them, and as you listen to them, you can't resist hoping with them.

We all know what happened to these people. We know what happened to the miracle of technology and engineering that could supposedly outsmart even God. And we know how much the "god" of class really mattered when the ship went down. Without a doubt, there was unfairness in the loading of the lifeboats, but in any case, rich and poor alike, hundreds of them, including the millionaires, suffered together a terrible fate. As the ship slowly gathers water and begins to list, its designer, Mr. Andrews, studies the drawings that show what alterations could have made the ship truly unsinkable (he sounds as if he is his own false god). Then he describes what the ordeal of the sinking will be like, with swarms of people running in panic from the advancing and freezing water, and suddenly all those class distinctions will fall away and matter no more."

What bothered me most about the brief super market conversation is the overwhelming sense that informing me that they "live on Signal Mountain" is all the woman felt she needed to share with me. It represents all I need to know and, perhaps, this news is all that really matters. We don't live in this area, pastor, because "we live on Signal Mountain." My fervent prayer is that we may find creative and interactive ways to share with one another, far more about ourselves than our status: where we live, where we studied, our denominational affiliation (for many, a form of status), our pedigree, etc. Before the "ships" go down again and there are many of them, perhaps we'll be able to jointly acknowledge that we are all "children of God."

With Utmost Respectful  
Marvin L. Morgan, Interim Pastor



## ***“Loose Change Matters”***

**When used to  
support LOCAL  
missions, loose  
change can really make a  
difference.**

We all have loose change around — under our couch cushions, in our junk drawer, in our coin saver jar, etc. Let’s do something with this change and help “change” what we can do to support Pilgrim’s local missions. The individual amounts of change might be small, but together these coins can add up to a very significant total.

All Pilgrims are urged to begin saving and gathering your loose change and to bring all the change you can gather for a special offering to be received on **Sunday, September 4**, *the first Sunday of every month*. On this date, please join us, as we discover together what a tremendous and positive difference we can make in the lives of others, simply by donating our loose change for local missions.

## **RALLY DAY Sunday September 11th!**



***In Appreciation Of Our  
Teachers, Administrators, Students, and Participants  
in Pilgrim Church!***

***Bagels and Coffee in the Parlor before church.***

***Potluck Lunch in the Fellowship Hall following our  
Worship Service.***

**Sign-up for the Potluck  
Luncheon at the Literature Table  
or  
Call the Church Office, 698-5682.**



Neighbors in Need (NIN) is a special mission offering of the United Church of Christ that supports ministries of justice and compassion throughout the United States. One-third of NIN funds support the Council for American Indian Ministry(CAIM). Two-thirds of the offering is used by the UCC’s Justice and Witness Ministries(JWM) to support a variety of justice initiatives, advocacy efforts, and direct service projects through grants.

Neighbors in Need grants are awarded to churches and organizations doing justice work in their communities. These grants fund projects whose work ranges from direct service to community organizing and advocacy to address systemic injustice. Funding is provided through donations to the Neighbors in Need offering.



**Church Offices Closed September 5**



## Meet A New Pilgrim Member

Ethan was received into the membership of Pilgrim Congregational Church on May 29, 2016.

Ethan, named after the temple musician in the Old Testament, has sung God's praises as a soloist and with the choir. He has also been liturgist, given the children's message, subbed in Sunday School and provided sign language on the first Sunday of each month.

He likes to be active enjoying outdoor activities such as cycling, walking and camping. Indoors he likes opera, theatre, reading, coin collecting, teaching sign language and especially spending time with his family.

According to Ethan, he has felt a part of the Pilgrim community since day one. He likes that there are opportunities for members and nonmembers alike to be involved in the life of the church. He also cites Pilgrim's action on social issues, concern for the community, its sense of "forward thinking" and "congregational intellect" as the church's strengths he values.



We welcome Pete and Robert who became part of our Pilgrim family on August 21, 2016.

Welcome our newest member, Shawn, who joined Pilgrim on August 28.

## PFLAG

We will meet September 18, 1:00 PM in the Slater Room. Please call the church office, 698-5682, for more information.

## Christian Nurture

### Children's Story Presenters

September 4: Patty

September 11: Ethan

September 18: Bryce

September 25: Jerome

October 2: Aaron

**\*\*\*Please see contact information at the bottom of your schedule to switch if you should find that you cannot be a presenter on a particular date. Please let the church office, [mail@pilgrim-church.com](mailto:mail@pilgrim-church.com), know about the switch too! Thank you for all you do for our children!!**



## School Supplies Needed for OKES

Hamilton Cty. Schools open on August 11, which means that nearby Orchard Knob Elementary School will also be starting the 2016-2017 school year. OKES has over 600 students in grades preK-5, and most of the youngsters come from low income families. You probably are aware that teachers spend a lot of their own money on supplies for their students. So, we would like to ask Pilgrims to help stock the teacher supply closet at OKES. Suggested items are: pens, pencils, note paper, glue, scissors, sticky notes, markers, and any other kinds of office or school supplies. Additionally, hand sanitizer, tissues, and paper towels are needed. Children's games and books would also be appreciated. Items could be "gently used." Please put your supplies in the box in the Slater Room marked for Orchard Knob Elementary. *Items will be collected through Sunday, September 11.*

FYI -- Many school supplies go on sale around Labor Day. So, look for major mark downs at the end of August or early September.

## Box Tops for Education

Pilgrims are encouraged to continue to cut out and save the Box Tops for Education coupons located on the packaging for many products. Some of the participating brands are Betty Crocker, General Mills, Ziploc, Hefty, Green Giant, Pillsbury, and Progresso. There is a box for the coupons in the Slater Room. The coupons are periodically taken to Orchard Knob Elementary. OKES staff is very appreciative of Pilgrim assisting with the coupon collection, because each coupon means 10 cents for the school when it is redeemed.



### Thank You!

*Many thanks to everyone who has purchased school supplies for Orchard Knob Elementary. Your generosity is most appreciated by the students and teachers at the school.*

*Remember that the supply drive will continue until Sunday, September 11. Please put your items in the box marked for OKES located in the Slater Room.*

### Men's Breakfast Invitation

**Saturday, September 17, 9:00 A.M.**

Everyone is invited to join us for your favorite breakfast order as we discuss current issues.

Sign up on the narthex literature table.

*Hope to see you!*

### Ladies Guild Luncheon

*All Ladies Are Invited To Join Us*

**Wednesday, September 14, 11:30 AM**

We will meet at O'Charley's Restaurant just off Shallowford Rd. near the intersection with I-75.

### Refreshments for Sunday's Fellowship

Open Dates: September 18, & 25

*Please limit refreshments to simple snacks.*

The refreshment calendar sign-up sheet is on the narthex literature table. Please choose a date and sign. As always, be courteous to others and clean-up afterwards.

MARK on your item/s if it contains peanuts or peanut products, tree nut products, wheat, rye, or barley and designate on your dish. We have people who are ALLERGIC to these products and will have adverse affects!

### Curbside Recycling Dates

Tuesday — September 13 & 27

### Hope's Café ---- September 2016

From Christian Century Magazine, August 3, 2016 edition, I offer without comment two brief entries, but I urge you to read them closely and ponder them:

**“WELCOME MAT:** The Canadian government affords citizens a rare opportunity and responsibility: they can band together in groups to adopt refugees from Syria. The sponsorship program provides financial support and practical aid to refugees for a year and helps them learn English and find jobs. The Trudeau government first committed to taking 25,000 refugees, then added more. *The Canadian immigration minister said he can't keep up with the demand of people wanting to sponsor refugee. President Obama pledged that the United States would take 10,000 Syrian refugees, but so far only about half that many have been admitted into the country.*” (Emphasis mine).---from the New York times, July 1.

**“UNUSUAL PUNISHMENT:** In order to write about the inner workings of a private prison, journalist Shane Bauer took a prison guard position at a Louisiana prison for four months, at \$9 an hour. The prison is operated by Corrections Corporation of America, whose CEO made \$3.4 million in 2015, nearly 19 times the amount paid to the director of the Federal Bureau of Prisons. During Bauer's time as a correctional officer, the federal Department of Corrections temporarily took charge of the prison due to a rash of stabbings among inmates. *Thirty-four percent of prison guards suffer from post-traumatic stress disorder, a rate higher than that for Iraq and Afghanistan veterans. Correctional officers commit suicide two and a half times more frequently than the general population.*” (Emphasis mine). ---- from Mother Jones, July/August

Grace and peace to all. Shalom, Kate

### Food Pantry Pals!

**Saturday, September 31**

**9:30 AM to 12:00 PM**

Come join the Pilgrim Pantry Pals! A rewarding experience and much appreciated by our neighbors in need.



### **The Blessing Of The Pets**

Please join us at the Hospice of Chattanooga  
Bereavement Center just off Hwy. 58 at  
4411 Oakwood Dr., Chattanooga 37416

**Saturday, September 17  
10:30 AM**

Animals and people of all ages are welcome!  
There will be a blessing for the animals, prayers,  
information about our pet therapy program,  
and a time of remembrance for  
beloved pets who have died.

Bring Your Pets To Be Blessed!



### **Get Ready, Get Involved!** **Chattanooga's** **Pride** **Festival 2016**

**Sunday, October 2**  
12 noon to 8:00 P.M.  
at Ross's Landing  
101 Market St.  
Chattanooga, TN 37402

For more information visit  
<http://www.tennessevalleypride.com/outreach.html>

#### **MISSION STATEMENT**

Tennessee Valley Pride, Inc. is a 501(c)(3) Non-Profit Organization designed to celebrate diversity in Chattanooga, TN and surrounding cities. Our goal is to combine the wonderful resources of the LGBT [Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, or Transgender] people of our area and reach out to the community with dignity and respect. The board is committed to raising awareness, educating and strengthening the community, and improving the human condition.

### **Pilgrims and Visitors**

Do you have . . .  
a concern?  
a suggestion?  
a question?

We invite you to take a minute to share your thoughts and ideas with us. Note cards are provided for you to share your thoughts, and drop it in the box on the table by the names tags. Just another way for us to communicate with others.

### **THESE DAYS**

*These Days Daily Devotions for Living by Faith*  
Publications for October, November and December  
have arrived and are placed in the Parlor and Narthex  
areas.

### **Support Group for Those** **Affected by Suicide**

Contact the church office for information.

"We are blessed as we have shared,  
we also are blessed by helping others."

### **Caring Corner----Check It Out!**

At "Hope's Café" (the round table in the corner of the Slater Room) we offer very nice *free* all occasion cards and stamps available for purchase at 49 cents each. We often speak in worship of remembering folks. The *Caring Corner* offers us a handy way to do that. Take a few moments in the Caring Corner soon!