



# Pilgrims' Progress

## December 2015

### Dear Pilgrims,

We are fast into the season of Advent with our Worship Series, "Testify to Love". It is easy to bask in testimonies to love. The stories of people reaching out beyond their comfort zones to help others are inspiring. They do fill our hearts with hope and joy.

Some may ask how we can allow ourselves to be lulled into such warm fuzzy thoughts in the face of the dire situations that fill our lives and our world in these turbulent times. Can we, with integrity, testify again and again to righteous love when we are faced with ongoing wars and the domination of some governments over others? Can we lift up liberating love in the face of brutal and insidious racism? Can we celebrate incarnate love in atmospheres where sexism and homophobia denigrate so many lives?

Yes, indeed, we should; we must; we can. This is the promise of Christmas. Hope, peace, joy and love rule our lives. The Christ is born in us and in our world as we are able to embrace this promise and give our lives to it. We give our lives to it when we allow the Christ to be born anew in us and we are able to live fully in compassion, kindness and humility.

The evils we face in this world are only able to exist in an atmosphere of fear. Love is the only power that can conquer fear whether it is an intimate situation in our family or city or a global

situation encompassing thousands of people. To testify to the power of love and, in so doing, encourage our faith in love empowers people to overturn the evils we deplore. This is the Christmas miracle to which we give our lives.

May you have a blessed holiday season filled with unfettered love.

Ann



**Redding Tree  
Lighting Ceremony**

source: <http://www.redding.com>

# Learning Report

Dear Family,

With the seasons of Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany we are entering some of the most exciting days of the Christian year. Children can see the signs around them that announce that Christmas is approaching: decorations in stores, community parades, increased advertising on television, special school assemblies, and seasonal craft sales and other events. Their time with their church community helps remind them that we are preparing to celebrate the birth of Jesus.

Advent is a time of watching and waiting. Children may be bringing home a resource sheet of prayers for an “Advent Family Ritual” (from the November 29 session) and we encourage your family to participate in the ritual of preparing an Advent wreath and lighting a candle each week leading up to Christmas. There are ideas for making Advent wreaths in the Virtual Resource Booklet, which is posted in the Library on the Seasons of the Spirit [website](#).

Through the Advent scripture readings we will explore the prophecy of Jeremiah (Jeremiah 33:14–16), the announcement of John the Baptizer’s birth to Zechariah and Elizabeth (Luke 1:68–79), the ministry of John (Luke 3:7–18), and Mary’s joy as she waits for Jesus’ birth (Luke 1:39–45). On the last Sunday of Advent children may bring home a booklet of ways they can celebrate with their families and reach out to others during the twelve days of the Christmas season. Take some time during this holiday season to explore the stories of Jesus’ birth and the journey of the magi in the first chapters of the gospels of Luke and Matthew.



In the Season after the Epiphany (epiphany comes from a Greek word that means “to reveal”) we will be reading stories about Jesus and his ministry from the gospels of Luke and John. In this season children will explore what it means to be a follower of Jesus and the ways in which they can shine the light of God’s love in the world. We encourage you to discuss with your child what was explored in church school. Many of the stories this season can inspire great mealtime conversations.

Many children in this age group want to be involved in doing something to make the world better. The Season after the Epiphany (January–February) might be a time when your family could participate in service or outreach projects in your church or community. These seasons include busy days for families, as schedules and routines change to accommodate school breaks and special church and community activities. We will be praying for each child in the group, and for each family, that the blessings of these seasons will be abundant. We invite you to include us in your prayers too.

We wish you a blessed Advent, a joyous Christmas, and fulfillment in the coming year.

Learning Co-Coordinators,  
Paula Kahler &  
Andrea Gibbons

# Serving Report

Serving Report for November 2015

It's been a busy fall for those on the Serving team. Every Sunday, volunteers on the Coffee Set Up crew prepare liquid refreshments for the fellowship time after worship. Betty Gronwoldt schedules that crew and buys the supplies which keep us all hydrated. (If you'd like to continue enjoying food with your coffee, tea or lemonade, be sure and sign up to bring refreshments. The sign up clipboard is kept on top of the coffee mug cabinet in the Fellowship Hall.)

Several times this fall, Linda Lack has organized receptions to follow Memorial Services. She often requests volunteer contributions to these receptions, and she usually does so during the announcement time at worship. Don't hesitate to let Linda know when you can help with this ministry to bereaved families.

Diane Hepburn is the lady to see if you can bring meals to shut-ins and other folks in need in our congregation. Sometimes, meal providers even stay to play Scrabble or Boggle with those recovering from illness or injury. We truly enjoy one another's company!

If you've received a birthday or "thinking of you" card from your church family, Sally Dale is the person to thank. And if you've got cards you'd like to donate, please bring them to Sally on Sunday morning. She sends out a LOT of cards.

Once a month, kind people gather at a Called to Care meeting held in the Fireside Room after worship. We learn about the visits, calls, notes, meals,

transportation and prayers that have been extended in the past few weeks, and who in our congregation might be in need in the near future. We're always happy to have new volunteers join us in this ministry. (Our next meeting will be on December 20 at 11:30 a.m.)

In the meantime, call or email Peggy Mallory if you need to be on the Prayer Chain (and if you want prayers for another person, be sure to get their permission first). And call or email Heather Hennessey or Diane Hepburn if you know of a Pilgrim who needs a visit, call, note or meal. We'll do our best to respond.

Respectfully submitted,  
Heather Hennessey & Diane Hepburn

## Holiday Food Baskets



What a joy it is to be a part of Pilgrim Church. Thanks to your giving spirits, 20 Thanksgiving food baskets were delivered through POP to families who otherwise would have gone without this year. We were also able to deliver an additional basket to our family at Faithworks. Now, we are in the season of Advent and once again we want to show our love to those in need in the community. Between now and Dec. 20th, Paula and Tara will be soliciting names during fellowship hour of those willing and able to donate **turkeys, hams or money** toward our 21 Christmas food baskets. Thanking you for your generosity during Thanksgiving, and in advance for your donations for Christmas.

Gratefully,  
Tara Swanson & Paula Kahler

# Worship Report

The Christmas season is coming fast. Hold on. Here we go!

Advent begins this year on Sunday, November 29; we'll celebrate December communion December 6<sup>th</sup> this year; and Christmas will be just four weeks away.

Sunday, December 6<sup>th</sup>, will be Madrigal Sunday when the SHS Madrigal singers participate in our worship service. The annual choir potluck dinner is that evening at 5:30. Watch for sign-ups. You won't want to miss the fun, food and all it holds this year. Maybe Santa will come back again?

Plans are afoot to go caroling. If you are interested in singing carols, please tell Nancy Dutton. If you know someone who would appreciate hearing carols at home, please tell one of us or Ann Corrin by December 13<sup>th</sup>.

Our children will present a Christmas play during worship on Sunday, December 20.

Winter starts December 22<sup>nd</sup> and more light comes into our lives beginning the next day.



On the 24<sup>th</sup> Christmas Eve services will be held at 7 and 11. The traditional family service is at 7:00 pm and the candlelight service is at 11:00 pm.

Pam Crowe and Donna Nelson  
Worship Co-Coordinator

Remember: Our lives reflect how we experience worship.

Merry Christmas!

## Giving Report

All totals are as of the end of October 2015.

1. General Fund:	\$5,402
2. Restricted Fund:	\$12,645
3. Building Fund:	\$14,963
4. Endowment Fund:	\$80,968
5. Income:	\$10,510
6. Expenses:	\$17,022
7. Income year-to-date:	\$138,568
8. Expenses year-to-date:	\$148,013

October giving was the lowest of the entire year, even lower than our summer months when everyone is on vacation. The result is \$6,000 of red ink! Our general fund is in the red over \$5,000 and our giving for the year is %10,000 behind our expenses. We need to have everyone bring their pledge giving up-to-date and for those of you who can, increase your giving in December.

We do not have a state or national group to send us money. We must dig into our own pockets to bail ourselves out and end the year in the black.

We have had a wonderful year at Pilgrim Church. Let's end it in the black.

Bill Justice & Glenn Hoxie  
Finance Cocos.

# Connecting Report

We are still looking for someone to fill the vacant Connecting Co-coordinator slot. Responsibilities include:

- Connect the congregation with the wider community
- Select areas of concern for study and action by the congregation, & serve as an action arm of the church
- Seek to keep the congregation informed about current social issues
- Cooperate with the other churches of the community and with the Conference and national structures of the UCC in study &

action on social issues, recommending policy to Council with regard to social concerns, but without committing the Congregation or its individual members to particular positions

- Oversee advertising and publicity for the church
- Maintain the church calendar for the Council"

Additionally, please contact me if you need any help logging on to the website in order to view the Directory.

Merry Christmas!

Tyler Shuster,  
Connecting Co-Coordinator

# Landscaping

A big thank you to Heather Hennessey and the skilled team of helpers who contributed to the landscape work around Pilgrim. The grounds look beautiful!

*Pictured to the right:  
John Egolf,  
Joriana Gibbens-Egolf,  
William Gibbens-Egolf,  
Jack Goetz,  
Ethel Schmidt,  
Glenn Hoxie,  
Heather Hennessey  
- (not pictured)*



# Hope Outreach Van

Thanks to those who help support the Hope Van with your donated time and goods. If you are interested in getting involved with this monthly volunteer opportunity, please contact the church office.



## Volunteer Opportunities

With the holiday season upon us, many of us consider the ways in which we are blessed and the ways in which we bless others. At Pilgrim there are several ways for you to donate your time and energy toward helping our community, inside and outside. Consider offering your services to one of our many current ministries, starting your own, or helping the community in any way that fits your skills and abilities. For more information about getting involved with Pilgrim's Adopt-a-Block group, the Hope Outreach Van, Rescue Mission lunches, Faithworks, holiday baskets, Called to Care, etc...please contact the church office. Have a Merry Christmas!

# Birthdays

Brian Stupek	4
Alice Anderson	5
Rhoda Antos	19
Hillary Elder	19
Marge Bland	23
Jesus Christ	25
Megan Stupek	27



For the first half of the month, Monday through Saturday building use is only available to the Shasta High Madrigals, so ALL groups and meetings will be held either off-campus, or they have been cancelled. Please contact the church office if you have any questions.

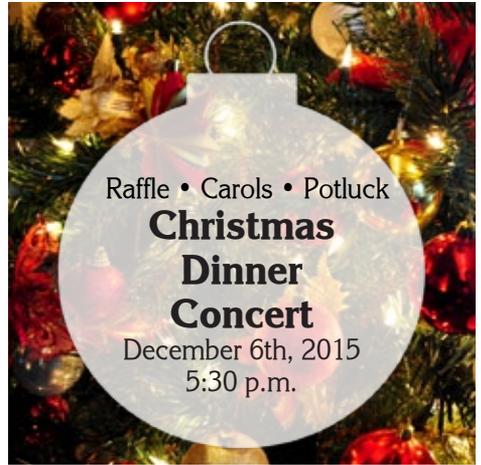
A full calendar of events for December can be found at the church & **online**. If you would like a December calendar mailed to you, please contact the church.

## **Pilgrim Congregational Church**

**Mailing Address: P.O. Box  
993183, Redding, Ca 96099  
(530) 243-3121  
Fax (530)243-3196**

# Save the Date

**Christmas Dinner Concert  
December 6  
5:30 p.m.**



**Fritz Schmidt Memorial Service  
December 13  
1 p.m.**

**Hope Van  
December 18  
8:30 a.m.**

**Good News Rescue Mission  
December 18  
11 a.m.**

**Called to Care Meeting  
December 20  
11:30 a.m.**

Everyone interested in caring for our congregation through notes, calls, meals or transportation is invited to attend in the Fireside Room.

**Christmas Eve Services  
December 24  
7 p.m.**

Traditional Family Service

**11 p.m.**  
Candle-light Service with Communion