



UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

Pilgrim's Progress

pil-grim (pilgrim) n. a person who makes a journey to some sacred place

Whoever you are...wherever you are on life's journey...You are welcome

June 2016

Sunday School 10am
Worship 11am

CHURCH STAFF

Moderator: Harry Nelson

Music Director:

Tim Tipton

Pastor:

Rev. Paul Eknes-Tucker

Minister of Education:

Rev. Bud Precise

Administrative Assistant:

Marilyn Ireland

Custodian:

Katherine Miller



IDENTITY STATEMENT

I AM PILGRIM CHURCH...

I AM an open and loving witness for liberal Christianity in the Birmingham area. I stand with those who seek justice and peace for all people. I

AM accepting and inclusive. I embrace all people. I AM a home where people are encouraged: TO seek their own answers, TO explore their spiritual lives.

I AM a follower of Jesus.

Pride and Prejudice

The month of June is celebrated as Pride month across much of the United States and around the world. Here in Birmingham Pilgrim joins with other congregations and organizations around the region to host welcoming and affirming events to celebrate the beautiful rainbow of diversity that God has created in humanity. The season kicks off with the Central Alabama Pride Interfaith Service on June 5th at 6PM at Covenant Community Church UCC. With a united voice people of many faiths will celebrate God's inclusive love and our desire as a community to remove the barriers and prejudice that still prevent all of God's children from knowing unconditional welcome.

On Sunday, June 12th, Pilgrim hosts a table at the Central Alabama Pride event at Sloss Furnace Park. Wearing our red Pilgrim shirts will be a visible and welcoming example that no matter where people are on their journey of faith, they are welcome at Pilgrim. If you would like to be part of our hosting team, please see Jessica Peoples.

When I was a young man back in the 1970s trying to find my way as a gay man and a Christian in Birmingham, I never dreamed I would live to see the day where my marriage would be legal across the nation. I couldn't imagine churches around Alabama opening their doors and hearts to LGBTQ people and having the courage to stand up to the systemic and oppressive prejudices that maintained hatred and fear.

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I am so grateful that I have lived to see the victories and the changes that Alabama and the rest of the nation have gone through these last fifty years. I love my state and my nation and I hold them in my prayers and in my heart regularly. There's still work to be done and I am thrilled to be in this work with all of you.

Recently we used an African American spiritual as our call to worship. The verse said, "Marching 'round Selma like Jericho, Jericho, Jericho! Marching 'round Selma like Jericho for the walls must all come down."

The walls of prejudice are crumbling just like they did in Jericho and Selma so are they crumbling in Montgomery and Birmingham and across Alabama. It gives me joy to see what God is doing in Alabama.

Blessings!
Pastor Paul

June Activities

Pilgrim's Art Committee will be conducting an inventory of all artwork in the building during the month of June. Please pick up all personal items you do not want to donate to the church. Things left after May 31 will be considered to be part of Pilgrim's permanent collection.

The Contemplative Psychotherapy Institute will host a training at Pilgrim on Friday, June 3rd, 10-6PM. CEU's are available for several professional categories.

Sunday, June 5th, 6PM. Pilgrim joins other open and affirming congregations at the Central Alabama Pride Interfaith Service at Covenant Community Church. This event kicks off the LGBTQ Pride events for the week.

The Southeast Conference Jubilee is June 10-11 at Piedmont College. Registration forms are available at the conference website.

Pilgrim will be participating in Alabama Pride by marching in the Pride Parade on June 11th and hosting a booth at the June 12th event at Sloss Furnace. To participate, see Jessica Peoples. The more Pilgrim tee shirts we have walking around on Pilgrim congregants that day, the better.

June 2016 Calendar

Sunday, June 5: 10 AM Sunday school | 11 AM Worship with Communion **Please bring non-perishable dry and canned goods for the GBM pantry.*

Friday, June 10: 6 PM - Cook supper at the Firehouse Shelter. If you can help cook or serve, contact John Williams at john0670@bellsouth.net

Sunday, June 12: 10 AM Sunday school | 11 AM Worship

Sunday, June 19: Father's Day 10 AM Sunday school | 11 AM Worship with Communion **Please bring individually wrapped snacks, drink pouches and wet wipes for the snack bags for the homeless and assemble snack bags after worship*

Sunday, June 26:
10 AM Sunday school | 11 AM Worship

June Birthdays

7th – Isaiah Byrd

8th – Amanda Lavender

16th – Nathan Cooke

17th – John Williams

17th – Glenda Elliott

19th – Lou Erb

24th – John Owen

30th – Ethel Owen



Lections for June 2016

June 5: 1 Kings 17:8-16, (17-24)
Psalms 146 or 1 Kings 17:17-24
Psalms 30
Galatians 1:11-24
Luke 7:11-17

June 12: 1 Kings 21:1-10, (11-14), 15-21a
Psalms 5:1-8 or 2 Samuel 11:26-12:10,
13-15; Psalms 32
Galatians 2:15-21
Luke 7:36-8:3

June 19: 1 Kings 19:1-4, (5-7), 8-15a
Psalms 42 and 43 or Isaiah 65:1-9
Psalms 22:19-28
Galatians 3:23-29
Luke 8:26-39

June 26: 2 Kings 2:1-2, 6-14
Psalms 77:1-2, 11-20 or 1 Kings 19:15-16,
19-21
Psalms 16
Galatians 5:1, 13-25
Luke 9:51-62

June Anniversaries

12th – Aaron and Kista Hamilton

20th – Marsha Sturdevant and Troy
Goss

Sharing the Light

“You are the light of the world. A city set on a hill cannot be hidden. Nor do people light a lamp and put it under a basket, but on a stand and it gives light to all in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before others, so that they may see your good works and give glory to God...”

Matthew 5:14-16

Can you imagine the disciples response when Jesus said to them, “You are the light of the world.” I can almost see them backing away from the implications of that concept, just as we would. The words of denial would come fast and furious. “Who me? Do you know me? Do you know my history? How can I possibly be a light to anybody, much less the world?” But it wasn't a request, or a supposition. Jesus didn't say, “Would you mind being the light of the world?” or “What if you were the light of the world.” It was a statement of fact, a commandment, if you will. If we aren't the light of the world, there will be great darkness.

Jesus may have been talking about inner light; the same one that's been around since the dawn of creation and even before. The light of Spirit, that is ever present to lead the way forward for each of us. Stephen Mitchell, in his book, *The Gospel According to Jesus*, says this: *“Before we can share the light, we have to find it. When we embody it, we can't help sharing it, because it has no limits.”*

But, we all do have that history—the one nobody else knows about, that we try not to let ourselves think about too much. At least, I do. Personally, I think the light we have to share comes right up out of that history. After all, Jesus was talking to a fairly rough bunch—he tended not to seek out the holy folks, preferring, instead, sinners and prostitutes and such. Overcoming our own obstacles of character, getting ourselves to a place of self-respect and humility, stokes the light of gratitude within. Then, we can't help but share. It beams right out of a thankful heart.

Whether your light is high or low, sharing it with others will increase it's wattage. It's the same generosity of spirit that Jesus showed to one and all—forgiveness, acceptance, an open table, and healing for free. You are the light of the world.

In the Spirit,
Jane



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"God is Still Speaking"



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