

# PILGRIM'S PROGRESS



Volume 1, Issue 4

PILGRIM CHURCH A UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST CONGREGATION

June 1st, 2020

## Non-Ordinary is the New Normal

By Pastor Paul Eknes-Tucker

I am writing this article during the last week of May so by the time you read it, things may be quite different. That is our world right now. ***One day we don't have to wear masks, the next day it is mandatory.*** Some can go back to theaters and others can not. As I am writing these words almost 15,000 people in Alabama have tested positive. That number has risen around 2,000 per week recently. I don't get nervous about that number because my assumption has been that the virus was already well established in Alabama. With more testing, we are simply learning what is true. I am concerned at the rising death count -- currently over 500 people have died in Alabama from Covid-19. All of them depended on the rest of us to keep them safe and we didn't. Of course, we know few of their names and it is complicated by the fact that nobody has known who has been exposed and who might be spreading the virus without symptoms and who has already developed antibodies -- mainly because so few tests are available and so few of us have taken the test. We've been shooting into the dark for over three months. Is it any wonder we are faring so poorly.

What bothers me more is that the ***new normal*** has exposed some old problems... and now they are deadly. Actually, they've always been deadly. ***Perhaps now the outcomes are simply much more visible.*** Access to privilege easily blinds us to the truth of normal life -- even in non-ordinary time. I don't enjoy wearing a facemask. It

looks silly walking down the street. Lots of others (most) are wearing nothing on their faces.

***Not wearing a mask comes from a sense of privilege.*** I go to the grocery store and notice an entire aisle, that used to be filled with toilet paper and paper towels, ***completely empty*** except for the small signs that say ***"limit one per customer."***

Less people are able to shop because of limits and the supply chains remain robust. ***What is the problem?*** Some think the limits don't apply to them. ***(That's called privilege.)*** I don't have an employer who requires I work closely with others or I won't have a job. I don't work in a setting where I am exposed to infection but all of the safety equipment is in short supply and so it must be re-used in an unsafe manner. ***I enjoy the privilege of staying out of harm's way (and I am grateful).***

***Privilege comes in many forms.*** It becomes destructive when we pretend it doesn't exist or that only ***"I"*** deserve it and others don't deserve it. ***Those on the frontlines of this pandemic deserve the privilege of protective gear.***

It is in all of our interest. Those of us who have been aching to return to crowded rooms, hugging strangers, rarely washing our hands and enjoy



### COVID-19 Coronavirus



not worrying about social space are missing our privilege. It is hard to let go of privilege once we have known its rewards. We are in non-ordinary time. It is no longer just about me.

***It is about us.  
The virus  
can't kill us by itself.  
It needs us to  
ignore our privilege.***



Gratitude begins where my sense of entitlement ends.

Steven Furtick

# Our Place In The Sun...

By Jane Philips

## *Hopes and Dreams*

*“Like a long, lonely stream,  
I keep running toward a dream  
movin’ on, movin’ on.  
Like a branch on a tree,  
I keep reaching to be free,  
movin’ on, movin’ on...”*

Stevie Wonder  
 (“A Place in the Sun”)

I remember when Stevie Wonder was on American Bandstand almost sixty years ago. Known then as “Little Stevie Wonder,” he was just a kid and already a phenomenon. He wrote *“A Place in the Sun,”* in 1966, after civil rights had been legislated for African Americans; *schools had integrated, and we thought that was the end of the hard times for black people. We were dead wrong.* Every time there is another news report of an unarmed black man shot dead for doing normal things, we plunge a knife into the heart of our national image: *“the land of the free and the home of the brave.”*

Something I read a few years ago, I think from Anne Lamont, said, *“When we say the word ‘American,’ we mean ‘white people.’ Everyone else has a hyphen.”* Why I had never thought of that, I don’t know, but it says so much. Two months ago, a young man named *Ahmaud Arbery* was killed by neighborhood vigilantes in Atlanta. He was simply jogging. He was only the most



Hate knows that  
love is the cure.

Stevie Wonder

## LITTLE STEVIE WONDER



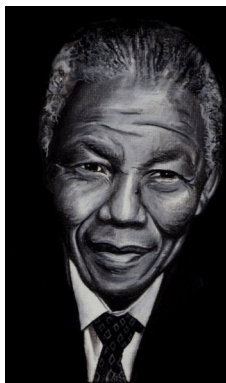
recent in a long line of young black men murdered for no other reason than being black and therefore under suspicion. Being a mother of sons myself, that breaks my heart.

*Racism is an American tragedy, a living legacy of slavery, and a festering wound on our collective soul. It needs to end.* It would give me great

joy to see it laid to rest in my lifetime. We are way past saying I’m sorry. It’s hollow and inexcusable. We who are white in America need to

follow the way of John the Baptist—repent and cleanse our hearts of this terrible disease.

We have witnessed progress toward equality, but it did not go nearly far enough. It did not take much to scrape the scab off and draw blood again. Electing a black man President in 2008, opened a hell-pit, and put on full display just how close to the surface our racism is.



No one is born hating another person because of the color of his skin, or his background, or his religion. People must learn to hate, and if they can learn to hate, they can be taught to love, for love comes more naturally to the human heart than its opposite.

- Nelson Mandela

Perhaps this happened so that we could stop denying it and find ways to truly heal.

## *Here is my prayer:*

*Let the blood of Ahmaud Arbery be the last spilled, and his legacy be true freedom for his brothers and sisters. And most of all, may America at last find “our place in the sun, where there’s room for everyone.”*

# Cherry Pie Green Smoothie AND Low-Fat, Healthy, and Yummy Granola

By Lauren Blankenship

**OK, you don't have to make this smoothie "green," but I promise you won't taste the spinach!**



### Ingredients:

- 1 Cup frozen dark, sweet cherries
- 1 Cup almond milk
- 1/4 Teaspoon almond extract (*omit if you don't have it, but it adds a "pie crust" flavor*)
- 1/4 Teaspoon vanilla extract
- 1 Large handful spinach
- Sweetener of choice  
(*5 drops liquid Stevia, 1 pack Splenda, 1 date, or half a frozen banana*)

### Low-Fat, Healthy, and Yummy Granola

**Tooting my own horn here – this granola is amazing!**

I love to pour a bowl with milk and eat it like cereal, sprinkle it on yogurt, or just eat it by the palm-ful. After several tries, I managed to make a granola I love with way less sugar and fat than store-bought brands. You can actually omit the oil all together in this recipe and it'll turn out just fine!

### Ingredients:

- 3 Cups rolled oats (not instant or quick cooking!)
- 3 Tablespoons melted, unrefined coconut oil
- 1/4 Cup pure pineapple juice
- 1/2 Cup chopped nuts (*whatever you have on hand – cashews, almonds, walnuts, pecans*)
- 1/3 Cup pure maple syrup
- 1/2 Cup dried fruit of choice (*cherries, blueberries, cranberries, raisins, or mix!*)
- 1/2 Teaspoon salt

- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla
- Few dashes of Cinnamon

### Directions:

Preheat the oven to 300.

Put everything except the fruit in a bowl and mix well. Pour onto two baking sheets, lined with parchment paper, and spread out into an even layer. Lightly sprinkle cinnamon over the top. Bake for 30 minutes, taking the pans out and stirring the mixture every 10 minutes.

Remove from the oven, add the dried fruit, and let it cool to room temperature. This will store fine in an air-tight container for a week, if it lasts that long before you eat it all!



## BEAUTIFUL EASTER LILIES

By Teresa Moran



**Easter has arrived late. Ethel and I agreed we missed seeing the lilies at church on Easter Sunday. These lilies are from Easter's past. Guess they decided this year we might need a second go at celebrating Spring and new life.**

# SPECIAL JUNE CONTEST

## STAINED GLASS BY RON VANDER SCHAAF

**GUESS THE LENGTH  
OF THE COPPER FOIL  
USED IN THIS  
GLORIOUS PIECE OF  
STAINED GLASS ART**

*(Copper foil is wrapped around  
the edge of each piece of glass.)*

*This piece is somewhat different in that a  
number of colors are used in all four  
(or three) sides.*



**SEND YOUR GUESS BY  
JUNE 20TH TO**

**[pilgrimuccbham@bellsouth.net](mailto:pilgrimuccbham@bellsouth.net)**

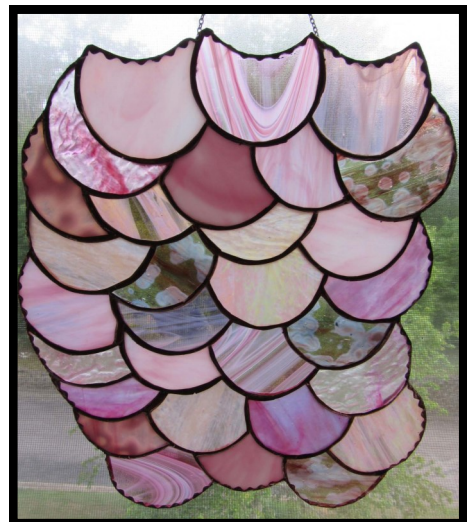
**THE WINNER WILL BE ANNOUNCED  
IN THE NEXT NEWSLETTER!!  
GOOD LUCK EVERYONE!**



*This is the last painting I did  
before the closure of our  
painting groups.*



*This is a stain glass flower.  
I had the hexagons just hanging  
around so this was the result.*



*I call this "Pink Shingles." It is somewhat  
different from most of my creations,  
it is not rectangular.*

# SHARED STORMS!

By Lauren Blankenship

## NEVER WILL I LEAVE YOU

***Have you ever felt like your faith muscles weren't quite as strong as they should be, despite all the exercise they get?*** There have been countless times God has brought me through a storm, answered a "long-yearned-for" prayer, or met a need I wasn't even aware I had until He filled it.

Yet as soon as the storm clouds gather, and the first drop of rain hits my face, I panic all over again! I guess you could say I'm a little hard-headed.

Acts 28 tells the story of Paul on the Island of Malta.

He arrives on shore with a group of men who have been through a lot recently, *to put it lightly!* These prisoners had just endured a terrible storm, near starvation, and a shipwreck from which they barely escaped with their lives! Forced to abandon ship and swim for shore, they arrive on an unrecognized island. *I imagine they're wet, cold, tired, hungry, and scared.*

Lucky for these men, the people on the island appear friendly and they welcome them with a fire so they can sit, dry off, and warm themselves.

Things seem to be going well, but take a turn for the worse in verses 3-5. As Paul is reaching for some extra firewood, a poisonous snake lunges and bites him on the hand. The superstitious people of the island immediately react in fear, because we have to remember, Paul and his men are strangers to them as well, and people fear the unknown. ***Immediately they jump to conclusions. Certainly this is fate, they think. Certainly Paul is getting what he deserves! He must be a terrible man - a murderer even! The snake bite is the universe's way of bringing punishment to order!***

Paul shakes off the snake into the fire and appears to be okay, but the people waited for him to swell up or suddenly drop dead. We don't know how long they waited for Paul to die. It could have been hours or even days.

*Meanwhile, was he held captive?*

What Paul endured was not only a lesson for him, but for everyone on that island. And we're told that when it comes time for Paul to leave, the people supply Paul and his me with everything they need for the trip!

*So let's recap: Paul and the other*

*prisoners had no idea where they were, but God led them to exactly where they needed to be, and provided them with everything they needed.*

***That doesn't mean there weren't some bumps in the road for them.*** This was a lesson not only for the escaped prisoners, but for the people of the island as well.

***Often times we have to remember that the storms we go through may not be only for us, but***

***for others! Likewise, sometimes another person's storm is for us as well.***

When we are brought through the storm, so are they! God never wastes a hurt. He is able to bring immense good out of what the enemy meant for evil.



***Was he put in prison?*** It doesn't say, but despite both the literal and figurative storms that Paul has just endured, God had been working behind the scenes all along. ***He has never left Paul's side and there has been a plan in place the entire time.***

The people of the island change their mind about Paul when they see that he's going to be okay. They start to bring their sick to him to be healed and Paul prays for them and lays hands on them. Then more and more people come to be prayed for until they have brought all the sick people on the island for healing. ***When God acts, expect mighty things, folks!***

**We may not always know where God is taking us, but we can rest assured He will bless us, protect us, and provide us with EVERYTHING WE NEED!**

# Everything That Has Breath!

By Lauren Blankenship

*“Let everything that has breath praise the Lord!”  
Psalm 150:6 (NIV)*

*“Praise the Lord, all living creatures!”  
Psalm 150:6 (GNT)*

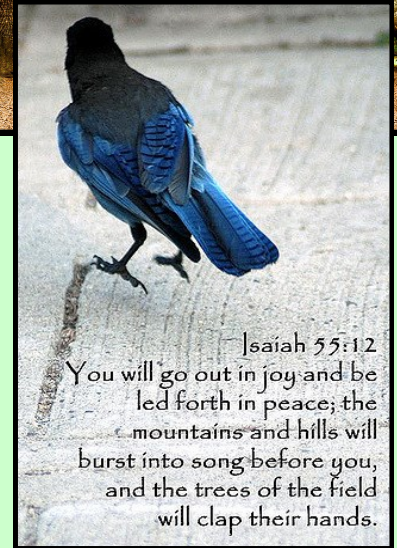
We have a huge water oak tree growing in our front yard. There’s no telling how old this tree is, but I love that it’s there. It gives us shade in the summer and helps keep our home cool. It houses countless birds that sing in the spring. In the fall... well, in the fall, it sheds billions of leaves that give me a good workout raking the yard! It also looks beautiful covered in snow in the winter, especially when the ice starts to melt and it looks like the tree is shaking silver glitter all over the yard.

One day, while watching the wind blow through the branches of this massive tree, a lyric from Audio Adrenaline’s song “*Sound of the Saints*” came to mind: “...and the trees of the field, they clap their hands.” The song also offers other examples of God’s breathless creations praising Him: the echo of caves, the roar of the oceans, thunder, wind, and the rhythm of the rain — “Forever a symphony of praise.”

I would add in those of us with breath: the bird’s call, the whale’s song, the sheep’s bleat, the dolphin’s giggle, the lion’s roar, and even the prairie dog’s bark. Everywhere you look, and listen, our sweet Father’s creation is praising in its own voice. *And if those of us with breath didn’t praise Him, we are told even the mountains and stones would cry out! (Isaiah 55:12, Luke 19:40).*

With all the beautiful weather we’ve been having lately, I wanted to encourage you all to look at the world with fresh eyes. There is a praise party going on all around us, at all times—singing, clapping, waving, fluttering, leaping, rejoicing, worshipping—creation doing exactly what God made it to do! Life gets hectic, bills have to be paid, things break, illness finds us, and people cut us off in traffic. But every day we wake up with breath in our lungs is a day the Lord has made.

*Let us notice and join in with the rest of creation, rejoice, and be glad in it!*



**Don't worry about anything; instead, PRAY about EVERYTHING!**

**Tell God what you need, and THANK HIM for all HE has done.**

**Then you will experience God's PEACE, which exceeds anything we can understand.**

**His PEACE will guard your HEARTS and MINDS as you LIVE in CHRIST JESUS.**

Philippians 4:6-7

**OH, the comforts of KNOWING and BELIEVING!**

Submitted By Steven Dempsey

*the flower that blooms in adversity is the most rare and beautiful of all.*



**CARRYOUTAL**

Alabama Restaurant and Hospitality Association

For Carry Food Go To:  
<https://carryoutal.com/>

Poetry, Recipes, Life Experiences, Art, or even how Pilgrim has changed your life... Please submit ALL entries to Tammy Webb, Jennifer Lyles or Pastor Paul at [pilgrimucbham@bellsouth.net](mailto:pilgrimucbham@bellsouth.net) We would love to see you in PRINT!

# SPRINGTIME BLESSINGS

By Lea and Bobby Skelton

**I wanted to send a birth announcement for our baby for the next newsletter. Thomas Reid Skelton was born on April 13th at 3:49 am. He weighed 7lbs. 9oz. and was 19 inches long. He's a growing and is a vigorous little person who enjoys Eating, wriggling and scooting on the floor.**



## Orange-Cranberry Muffins

By Jennifer and Tammy

### Ingredients:

#### Topping

- 1/4 Cup Sugar
- 1/4 Cup All-Purpose Flour
- 3 Tablespoons Butter Melted
- Orange Zest (optional)

#### Dry Ingredients

- 1 1/4 Cups All-Purpose Flour
- 1 1/4 Teaspoons Baking Powder
- 1/2 Teaspoon Salt
- 3/4 Cup Sugar
- Orange Zest

#### Wet Ingredients

- 1 Egg
- 1/4 Cup Olive Oil
- 1/2 Cup Buttermilk
- 1 Teaspoon Vanilla Extract
- Juice from half an Orange
- 1 Cup Dried Cranberries
- 1 Cup Walnuts, chopped (optional)

### Directions:

Preheat oven to 425 degrees.

#### For the Topping

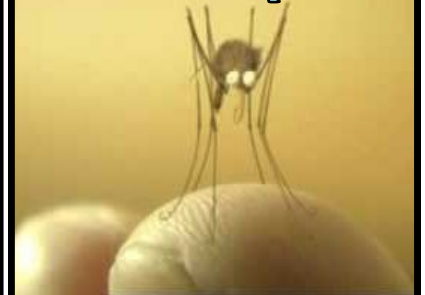
Combine 1/4 cup sugar, 1/4 cup flour, and melted butter. Using a fork, break mixture up until it is crumbly in texture. Set aside.

#### For the Batter

Mix the dry ingredients together in a large bowl. Set aside. Combine the wet ingredients in a medium sized bowl and beat with a whisk. Add the wet ingredients to the dry ingredients and mix until combined, being careful not to over mix. The batter will be thick. Fold in cranberries. Scoop batter into muffin tin that has been lined with 8 parchment paper cups (or sprayed with non-stick spray). Sprinkle with crumb mixture. Bake for 17 to 19 minutes.



**If you think YOU are to SMALL too be effective, then you have never been in the dark with a MOSQUITO!**



BE THE SAME PERSON  
YOU ARE IN THE  
**DARK**  
THAT YOU ARE IN THE  
**LIGHT**

- THOMAS S. MONSON

### HELPFUL MATH IN BIBLICAL MEASURES:

**There are 66 total books in the Bible and here is a great way to remember it:**

- \* Remember the numbers 3 and 9
- \* There are 39 books in the Older Testament.
- \* Multiply 3 X 9 and the answer is 27.
- \* There are 27 Books in the Newer Testament.
- \* If you add 39 and 27 and the answer is 66.

**There are 66 books in the entire Bible.**



### MONTHLY QUOTE:

**“If you are always trying to be NORMAL, you will never know how AMAZING you can be.”**

By Maya Angelou

See how many books of the Bible you can find named here. You should be able to find 35, if you search diligently.

S	O	N	G	O	F	S	O	L	O	M	O	N	C	T	Y	E
N	R	C	A	M	O	S	S	E	L	C	I	N	O	R	H	C
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I	C	L	A	D	T	R	S	U	I	R	Y	N	I	E	O	L
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O	M	S	I	N	V	D	I	S	T	B	E	T	T	I	S	
L	L	S	A	I	E	R	U	O	O	N	F	O	H	Y	T	I
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S	S	A	S	L	M	T	N	O	H	E	X	A	A	W	Y	S
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H	A	B	A	K	K	U	K	H	I	H	U	B	A	A	O	S
T	S	W	E	R	B	E	H	N	M	E	S	A	H	R	M	J
E	T	S	N	A	I	S	E	H	P	E	L	C	E	R	Z	E
K	A	G	E	N	E	S	I	S	Y	L	E	I	K	E	Z	E
U	B	A	D	O	N	D	E	U	T	E	R	O	N	O	M	Y
L	E	U	M	A	S	N	O	I	T	A	T	N	E	M	A	L

### DID YOU KNOW:

The Bible was originally written in three languages: Hebrew, Aramaic & Greek.

The KJV of the Bible is about 611,000 words long.

There was a man with 6 fingers and 6 toes (2 Sam 21:20).

There are at least 185 songs in the Bible.

There are 21 dreams recorded in the Bible.

The most frightened person in the Bible was Belshazzar, whose knees knocked at the writing on the wall.

The fattest man in the Bible was Eglon, the Moabite king killed by the judge Ehud.

The total number of questions in the Bible is 3,294.

When the Bible was first written, there were no chapters or verses as today. In fact, many of the early, handwritten manuscripts were written without spaces between the words! Stephen Langton divided the Bible into chapters about A.D. 1228. The Older Testament was divided into verses by R. Nathan in A.D. 1448, and Robert Stephanus divided the Newer Testament into verses in A.D. 1551. The first complete Bible with chapter and verse divisions was the Geneva Bible of A.D. 1560.

### A LITTLE TRIVIA:

Who laughed at God in Genesis 18 and why?

Which of the following is NOT one of the seven churches in Revelation 1?

1. Ephesus, 2. Smyrna, 3. Pergamum, 4. Thyatira
5. Sardis, 6. Tamari, or 7. Laodicea

What Book of the Bible is considered the greatest love story but is the only book that doesn't mention God? **HINT: It's in the Older Testament**

Which of the following is NOT a Book in the Older Testament?

1. Lamentation, 2. Song of Songs, 3. Ruth, 4. Moses,
5. Psalms, 6. Amos, 7. Obadiah, or 8. Micah

### PILGRIM BIRTHDAYS FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE



- Lily Lawson ~ June 7th
- John Williams ~ June 17th
- John Owen ~ June 24th
- Donna Milton ~ June 30th
- Ethel Owen ~ June 30th



### PILGRIM ANNIVERSARIES FOR THE MONTH OF JUNE

Aaron & Kista Hamilton  
June 12th

**IF WE HAVE MISSED YOUR BIRTHDAY, WE APOLOGIZE! PLEASE LET US KNOW & WE WILL GLADLY ADD IT!**