



Pilgrim's Progress Keeping in Touch Issue 28



Pilgrim Lutheran Church

2155 N. Oakland Ave., Decatur, Illinois 62526

“Where the Bible is the inspired, inerrant Word of God”



July 12, 2026

Rev. Brock Abbott
Rev. Bill Abbott
Rev. Lucas Abbott

Staff:

Kay Tolly, Youth Director
Beth Abbott, Office Manager
Judy Tish, Secretary
Andy Apel, Custodian

Church Office: 217-877-2444

e-mail: plc@pilgrimlutherandecatur.org

websites:

www.pilgrimlutherandecatur.org

www.unitedlutheranmission.org

www.waltherseminary.org

Office Hours:

Monday-Thursday: 8:00 a.m. to 4:00 p.m.

Sanctuary is reserved from

8:00 a.m. to 12:00 p.m. on Fridays.

Newsletter Deadline: Wednesday, 9:00 a.m.

OUR RESPONSE TO CALVARY 7/5

General Fund: 18,131.00

Christian Sharing: 765.00

Altar Flowers: 140.00

Loose: 102.00

CDs: 2.00

Donuts: 50.00

Higher Things Youth Conference: 2,000.00

Total: 21,190.00

ACTIVITIES AND EVENTS

7/15 12:00 Wednesday Worship-Communion

7/16 8:00 Quilters

9/13 RALLY DAY - Mark Your Calendars!

ATTENDANCE

7/5 Sunday 8:00 service: 89
Sunday 10:45 service: 87
Adult Bible Class: 91
Sunday School N3-Gr. 12: 10
7/8 Wednesday 12:00 service: 40

MITE OFFERINGS...ALL Pilgrim members are encouraged to use a mite offering box to collect their coins. **JULY** mites will go to New Life Pregnancy Center.



SERVING THE LORD

Communion Assistants 7/15 Wed Allen Kilzer
7/19 Sunday 8:00 Tom Greenwood **10:45** Doug Ward
Ushers 7/19 Sunday 8:00 Joe Marsaglia; Grant Abbott;
 Paul Giesler; Bruce Gifford; Loren Hiser; Dave
 Schroeder; Chad Wooters **10:45** Don Mast; Eric Mast;
 John Mickler; Jim M. Snow; Jim R. Snow; Mark
 Thompson; Mattias Wegmann
Coffee Servers 7/19 Sunday Kurt & Wendy Bickes
Financial Counters 7/19 Sunday Mark Ames; John
 Crowe; Tim Ellison; Paul Giesler
Greeters 7/19 Sunday 8:00 Allen, Kathy & Parker
 Kilzer **10:45** Dana Embrey; Jane Martin
Communion Set Up & Clean Up 7/19 Sunday
 Steve & Jennifer Gensler; Don & Jo-Anne Mast; Carrie
 Thompson; Jane Martin
Trustees Week of 7/12 Larry Wolf; Pete Williams;
 Brad Roberts; Gene & Linda Wise-Litter control



7/1 Julie Pangrac
 7/2 Caebrin Lee
 Andrew & Mackenzie Mills (15 years)
 7/3 Dave Schroeder
 7/7 Pete & Sue Williams (63 years)
 7/10 Steve & Bev Myrvold (61 years)
 7/11 Kaye Beals
 7/12 Robert & Sue Black (52 years)
 7/13 Brock Abbott; Ryder Saul; Ben Tschetter
 Larry & Nancy Wolf (41 years)
 7/14 Amy Cassell; Emily Stenger; Brandon
 Williams
 Brad & Leslie Roberts (47 years)
 7/15 Doug Lueck
 Mark & Carrie Thompson (9 years)
 7/18 Mindy Whisnant
 Robert & Robin Breeden (34 years)
 7/20 Brandilyn Wegmann
 7/21 Charles Duncan; Orson Hoffman;
 Morgan Luka; Amy Robinson; Linda Snow
 7/22 Bill Abbott; Angee Baker
 Allen & Lesley McCoy (18 years)
 7/24 Gloria Beckett; Greg Luka
 7/25 Rachel Burns
 Mark & Jo Ames (28 years)
 7/27 Sharon Carlson
 Byron & Nancy Brown (52 years)

7/28 Michele Collingwood
 7/29 Adam Gensler
 BJ & Lindsey Rotz (20 years)
 7/30 Blaine Burns; Heather Norris
 7/31 Nancy Jacobs; Joe Scott
 Brad & Amber Saul (22 years)

SOS
Substitute Organist
SERVICE

Can you help or know of someone
 at Pilgrim that would like to be trained?

We need more people willing to take turns
 running the SOS on **Sundays/Wednesdays**
 when we don't have an organist.

It's not difficult to run and I would be happy
 to train you or show you how it works.

You can sit with one of our experienced
 volunteers before doing it alone.

Teens are welcome to give it a try too.

Please contact me to take a look!
 ~Kay Tolly

SAVE THE DATE!

PILGRIM LUTHERAN CHURCH

RALLY DAY

CARNIVAL

SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 13, 2026

in Pilgrim's wooded area

LUNCH AT 12:15 P.M.
 Catering by
 Bricks Exquisite Eats

SPECIAL GUESTS
 Heartland
 Mini Hoofs

ADDITIONAL INFORMATION
 Prizes for
 Carnival Games
 Volunteers Needed
 Free-Will Offering
 More Information
 Coming Soon

ATTRactions
 AirWalk Action Dual Slide
 Billiard Soccer
 Soccer Dart
 Roller Ball Game
 Carnival Games

SWEET TREATS
 The Frozen Spoon
 Ice Cream Truck

COME ONE, COME ALL!



2026 Higher Things Youth Conference

“So You also must consider yourselves dead to sin and alive to God in Christ Jesus.” Romans 6:11

Thank You to the Pastors, Congregation, Church Council and Individual Donors

***Thank you so much for letting us attend Higher Things again. It was an awesome week! I'm really thankful for all the work and time everyone put into making this conference so much fun and meaningful. I had a great time hanging out with everyone, and learning more about God and His Word. It was really cool to be with so many other Christian kids who believe the same things we do, worship the way we do and aren't afraid to show their faith. Thank you for making this such a great experience. I'll always remember this week and can't wait to come back next year!
Braeden Lee

***Thank you for giving us donations so that we could go learn more about Christ. My favorite part of Higher Things was we would do these breakaways where we got to go to different lessons that interest us, my favorite one was Developing Faith Habits it taught that we should we should make a simple and repeatable practice that we should do every day. Thank you again for your donations. **Harper Ritter**

***Thank you so much for the support in allowing us to attend the Higher Things conference! These events help so much with forming connections to other Lutherans, establishing friendships that have lasted me many years. We truly are blessed to be able to bring a big group and enjoy fellowship with our brothers and sisters in Christ! Higher Things is a highlight of my summer, and I always look forward to this great time of fellowship and praise. **Josh Bryan**

***Thank you for supporting PYC youth and chaperones at another year of the Higher Things conference! This year the theme was “Dying Church, Rising Hope.” We were comforted every day through worship services, plenary sessions, and breakaway classes that reminded us of the promise of eternal life we have in the resurrection of Christ. We are grateful that our Pilgrim congregation supports and encourages our youth in their faith! **Jennifer Bryan**

***Thank you for the opportunity of the generous chance to go to the Higher Things youth conference. The enrichment of my faith and the Word of God was truly amazing. The constant support from the congregation and pastors is amazing. Thank you! **Steven Musgrove**

***Thank you to all at Pilgrim Lutheran Church for giving all of us the chance to experience this conference. This was really helpful especially for me allowing me to further educate myself on Lutheranism.
-Addison Hyden

***Thank you to all of the congregation, pastors, and any donors, thank you. The Higher Things trip is truly a blessing and a great opportunity for everyone who goes. Without such an amazing congregation none of this would be possible. Thank you, **Royce Stenger**

***I'm very thankful and grateful for the donations you guys have blessed us with. I had a great time and learned a lot about my faith. I want to thank the Pastors for all the time you guys spent talking to us and teaching us about Jesus. Thank you all for everything, **Caebrin Lee**

***Thank you so much for your generosity, which made it possible for our family to attend Higher Things again this year! It has been another incredible conference, and we are truly blessed to have this opportunity to learn, worship, and grow in God's Word. It is amazing to be in fellowship with so many like-minded believers and to be surrounded by our brothers and sisters in Christ from across the country.

One of the greatest blessings has been watching Caebrin and Braeden continue to grow in their faith while spending time with so many other young Christians their age. Knowing they are not alone—that there are hundreds of other youth who face many of the same challenges, yet share the same faith in Christ—is an encouragement that is difficult to put into words.

From the bottom of our hearts, thank you for your prayers, your generosity, and for making this wonderful opportunity possible. Your support has blessed our family more than you know, and we are deeply grateful. In Christ, **Stephanie Whisnant, Caebrin and Braeden Lee**

***I appreciate the opportunity our youth had to attend the Higher Things Conference. This year, I was blessed to tag along for part of the Conference at Washington University in St. Louis. No matter a person's age, being fed Christ in Word and Sacrament is vital. Learning the truth of Christ crucified for us never ends. This conference was a wonderful blessing for growth and for our Pilgrim youth to engage with other like-minded Christians. Thank you! **Jo Ames**

***A huge THANK YOU needs to go to everyone who is responsible for and who helped provide the Pilgrim Lutheran Youth with the opportunity to attend Higher Things at Washington University in St. Louis with all the other Lutherans. All the church counsel members, those who donated, pastors and all the congregation deserve some recognition. The support and donations from EVERYONE are greatly appreciated. Again, thank you. Sincerely, **Emett Stenger**

***Thank you for the opportunity to let me and some of our other members to attend Higher Things. I am so grateful for this opportunity you have helped donate and support to that allowed us to go. This trip has allowed me to grow in my faith, get to know other Lutherans, and lots of laughter with our group. I have learned short daily habits that I could do to grow in my faith and become a habit for me to do everyday. Thank you again, **Celia Ritter**

***Thank you all for the continued support of our youth by sending them to the Higher Things conference! It is a blessing to share the experience that I enjoyed while in PYC with new faces each year. The HT conference is a great avenue for the youth to be able to surround themselves with the Word and learn about topics both that they encounter every day and that they may have never otherwise considered. The support of the congregation for the youth is greatly appreciated, and I look forward to sending full groups for years to come. **Will Bryan**

***This Higher Things conference has been a blessing to our youth, as well as our young leaders and chaperones. It is a great benefit to the spiritual growth in Christ of our youth to have this experience, and it wouldn't be possible without the support and generosity of our congregation. There is a lot to be thankful for but the fellowship found with being here with such a large group of Lutherans from around the country likely tops the list for most. So, many thanks! Sincerely, **Brett Stenger**

***Imagine being shoulder-to-shoulder tight in pews filled with 797 youth from across America and Canada. With the start of the first hymn, "Built on the Rock the Church shall stand, Even when steeples are falling", your heart and lungs reverberate while your ears are unsure if you've made a sound among the sea of voices. They say the church is dying, yet the Washington University chapel resounded with a rising hope. This was my first impression of Higher Things.

In appreciation for the spiritual growth opportunity you made possible for Pilgrim youth and chaperones this week, I'd like to share a few takeaways from the breakout sessions I attended:

- **Developing Faith Habits:** Start small and simple when creating a faith-based habit such as praying, reading the Bible, having a Christian conversation, serving, or giving. A habit allows you to think about

what you are doing vs pondering what you will do. Eventually you'll find an opportunity to stretch your habit in a way you can bring someone along with you. (See Psalms 141, 92, and 55)

- **Rising Hope on Judgement Day:** Why do we think we have to answer for our sins on judgement day if Jesus already answered for them? Our sin will have already been separated from us just as the sheep and goats have been separated by faith. (See Isaiah 53:5-6, Psalms 103:10-13, Matthew 25:31-46, and Matthew 16:18)
- **Do Not Be Anxious:** Anxiety and worry came after the fall into sin. If you're having trouble seeing past anxiety, think of the birds God created who can't sow nor reap, yet they live. Do not try to save so much or build a kingdom where you'd be okay if God abandoned you. Turn the anxiety around by asking if it will reverse Jesus rising from the tomb. It never will. He is risen. When you need to breathe at a normal pace, read The Litany from the Lutheran Service Book, which is a heartbeat prayer — a call and response. It will be light again. (See Matthew 6, I Kings 17:12, Psalms 6, 13, 22, 23, 40, 46, and 88)
- **Perspectives on Leadership:** Leadership is not authority but influence. A leader motivates not commands, which results in people doing more because they are motivated. Leaders communicate by listening, inspiring/affirming, simply, and constantly. Consider how Jesus interacted with Nicodemus, the woman at the well, Matthew the tax collector, and the woman who anointed Him — He treated everyone with love no matter who they were. (See John 10:14-15 and John 13:12-17)
- **Called Where You Are (Vocation, Hope, and the Ordinary Christian Life):** Trust that God places you where you are for a reason and invites you to find fulfillment in serving others. Listen carefully through prayer and reflection. You can discern God's voice, guiding your decisions and understanding His purpose for your life. Embrace opportunities (including the ordinary) as each moment can reveal His intentions and calling for your life. We are God's workmanship. (See Romans 6 and Ephesians 2)

As Higher Things came to a close, we raised our voices "To Thee, Light of Light begotten, Praise to be sung eternally."

Thank you for sending us to Higher Things where we were together in faith with many other Lutherans! We return home inspired by this faith-building experience.

May our dead bones be called to life in Christ until the church is raised up everlasting. *Jan Ritter*

***Brother Pastors, Council, and Higher Things Donors,

It is difficult to put into words the fellowship, memories, and lasting impact this conference has on our youth. You would all be so impressed and praise God to see firsthand the fruit that the Holy Spirit produces in every single one of these young brothers and sisters in Christ.

Some of my favorite moments of the week happened after the presentations and sermons had ended. As we gather together for lunch or on the way to another breakaway session, our youth eagerly discussed what they had heard. They asked questions, compared what was said with Scripture and our Lutheran Confessions, and rightly distinguished between what is faithful and what should be rejected. It has been a joy to watch them exercise the discernment they have been taught with a sincere desire to remain grounded in God's Word. At the same time, they are surrounded by nearly 800 other young Lutherans from across the country who share a love for Christ, His Word, and the richness of our historic liturgy. In a world where faithful Christians can often feel isolated, to be a part of that is an incredible encouragement. They leave knowing they are not alone. There are young boys and girls throughout the nation who treasure the same Gospel, sing the same hymns, confess the same creeds, and desire to remain steadfast in the faith.

For that reason, I remain deeply grateful for your continued support of opportunities like this. The friendships formed, the confidence gained, and the continued growth in God's Word are blessings that will continue to bear fruit long after the conference has ended. Thank you for making experiences like this possible for our youth. Your generosity is helping to strengthen the next generation of faithful Lutherans. Please continue to support, encourage, and pray for our youth! They need that more than we know.

In Christ,

Pastor Lucas Abbott

***On behalf of Pilgrim Youth for Christ, thank you for your prayers, encouragement, and generous financial support that made it possible for our youth to attend the Higher Things Conference again this summer.

Higher Things is much more than a youth conference. It is an extension of what our Pilgrim youth have been learning since they were young children through Sunday School, Midweek School, Confirmation, Youth Group, and weekly worship. This year, nearly 780 Lutheran youth from across the United States and Canada gathered to be immersed in God's Word, faithful Lutheran teaching, Christ-centered liturgical worship, and Christian fellowship.

One of the many things that makes Higher Things so special is that our youth are challenged to grow in their faith through thoughtful presentations on topics that are relevant to their lives. There is no "dumbing down" of God's Word. Instead, they are encouraged to ask questions, think deeply, and continue growing in the faith they have learned here at Pilgrim.

The worship life of the conference is always a highlight. Many of our youth especially love Matins and Evening Prayer, and hearing hundreds of young voices singing the liturgy together is truly inspiring. We were also blessed to share the Lord's Supper together as our Pilgrim group. A special thank you to Pastor Lucas for bringing the communion ware so we could celebrate this precious gift together.

While there is plenty of fun throughout the week, one of the greatest blessings is watching our own youth grow closer to one another. Traveling, learning, worshiping, and sharing this experience together strengthens friendships and builds a Christ-centered bond that continues long after we return home.

Thank you for investing in the faith of our young people. Your generosity provided far more than a trip—it provided an opportunity for them to be strengthened in God's Word, encouraged in their faith, and reminded that they are part of the larger family of Christ. We are truly grateful for your continued love and support of the youth of Pilgrim.

In Christ,
Kay Tolly
Youth Director

We pray more of our youth will attend in the summer of 2027!

Check out the video on youtube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vPVGZzc7MXM&t=64s>