



THE PILGRIMAGE

The newsletter of Pilgrim Lutheran Church (LCMS), Broadway at Florey, Kilgore, Texas

January 2020

We glorify God by receiving the forgiveness of sins by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and sharing that salvation through word and deed with those in our midst, in our community, and throughout the world.

Millennials and others are brought to and go from the Church

“Millennials are leaving religion and not coming back,” the headlines said, although the broadcast and print stories that accompanied the headlines did not always provide truly supporting details. And, even what appeared to be Christian or conservative news outlets provided little theological reflection that kept the assertion in the proper perspective.

Recent Pew Research Center data were claimed in support of the headline, but the Pew data alone did not make that claim. The 2018 and 2019 Pew data out this past fall indicate that millennials (those between 23 and 38, for the purposes of this discussion) now are almost as likely to say that they have no religion (four of ten) as they are to identify as Christian (nearly five of ten). And, other considerations about millennials do, in fact, seem to suggest these young adults are less likely to depart from the Church only temporarily as earlier generations did.

For example, many millennials never previously had the earlier generations’ strong ties to religion that developed habits and associations that make it easier for them to return to a religious community. These young adults also are more likely to have a nonreligious spouse, which may not only reinforce their secular worldview but also eliminate the possibility of a religious spouse’s influencing their return. And, changing views about the relationship between morality and religion apparently are said to be convincing many young parents that religious institutions are irrelevant or unnecessary for their children.

Millennials are only one group of the population, of course, but in many senses they are on the cutting edge of two significant continuing trends across all age groups: the United States’s steadily becoming less Christian and less religiously observant.

When it comes to analyzing these trends, we recognize that not all religious traditions believe, teach, and confess the same things about how people are saved and whether or not they stay saved. Based solidly on Holy Scripture and so also on our Lutheran Confessions, we believe, teach, and confess both that people’s salvation is God’s doing and that their damnation

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is their own doing. And, once God brings someone to faith, that person can fall away from the faith and later be brought back to it, perhaps even more than once, unless his or her hardness of heart leads God to end his or her time of grace and salvation. So, even the millennials' futures are not necessarily completely written yet.

Thinking about these U.S. trends, when we prayed the Bidding Prayer in our Christmas Even Candlelight Service of Readings and Hymns, I was struck by the statement that God always grants growth to His Church. Of course, that particular Collect specified increases in the faith and understanding of the Church's catechumens. While each person who enters and remains in the Church on earth is a gain for the one holy Christian and apostolic Church (just as the earthly deaths of faithful believers are losses only for the Church on earth not for true Church), the continued shrinking of the Church on earth may be misperceived as the slow death of the true Church, when in fact it is not.

To be sure, although some religious traditions do not, Holy Scripture does anticipate the continued shrinking of the Church on earth, especially relative to the population living at any given time. For example, Jesus Himself seems both to say that there will be fewer believers than unbelievers (Matthew 7:13-14; Luke 13:22-30) and to ask, rhetorically at least, whether there will even be faith on earth when He comes the final time with glory to judge both the living and the dead (Luke 18:8).

Now, increased likelihood of people's continued unbelief and ultimate rejection is no excuse not to tell others about what God has done for us through the birth, life, death, and resurrection of His Son, the God-man Jesus Christ. We cannot help but speak of the forgiveness of sins that we have by grace through faith in Jesus Christ and of the peace and joy that that forgiveness of sins and the accompanying life and salvation give us. If someone seems to be rejecting us and our invitations, we remember that they are not ultimately rejecting us but the Ones Who sent us (for example, Luke 10:16).

Perhaps especially during the Christmas and Epiphany seasons, our invitations for other people to "come and see" for themselves are appropriate (John 1:39, 46), and in January we even have an extra service to invite them to, at 7:00 p.m. on Epiphany, January 6. God can and does bless such efforts, for it is in the hearing of the Gospel in all of its forms, including the Sacraments (Baptism, Absolution, and Communion), that He creates faith when and where He pleases (Augsburg Confession V:2).

*His and your servant,
Pastor Galler*



January 2020

INVESTMENT	FIXED RATE		FLOATING RATE	
	Rate	APY	Rate	APY
One-Year Note	2.125%	2.14%	1.625%	1.63%
Three-Year Note	2.250%	2.27%	1.625%	1.63%
Five-Year Note	2.500%	2.52%	1.750%	1.76%
Flex Savings			1.000%	1.00%
Rainy Day Fund*			1.250%	1.26%
*Amounts over \$10,000 receive the Flex Savings rate				
ACCOUNTS FOR CONGREGATIONS				
Congregation Savings			1.250%	1.26%
Building Fund Savings			2.500%	2.53%

DAILY BIBLE READING

- 1 Luke 1:68-79
Mark 2
- 2 Psalm 30
Mark 3
- 3 Psalm 31
Mark 4
- 4 Psalm 32
Mark 5
- 5 Psalm 33
Mark 6
- 6 Psalm 34
Mark 7
- 7 Psalm 35
Mark 8
- 8 Psalm 36
Mark 9
- 9 Psalm 37
Mark 10
- 10 Psalm 38
Mark 11
- 11 Psalm 39
Mark 12
- 12 Psalm 40
Mark 13
- 13 Psalm 41
Mark 14
- 14 Psalm 42
Mark 15-16
- 15 Psalm 43
Genesis 1-3
- 16 Psalm 44
Genesis 4-6
- 17 Psalm 45
Genesis 7-9
- 18 Psalm 46
Genesis 10-12
- 19 Psalm 47
Genesis 13-15
- 20 Psalm 48
Genesis 16-18
- 21 Psalm 49
Genesis 19-21
- 22 Psalm 50
Genesis 22-24
- 23 Psalm 51
Genesis 25-27
- 24 Psalm 52
Genesis 28-30
- 25 Psalm 53
Genesis 31-33
- 26 Psalm 54
Genesis 34-36
- 27 Psalm 55
Genesis 37-39
- 28 Psalm 56
Genesis 40-42
- 29 Psalm 57
Genesis 43-45
- 30 Psalm 58
Genesis 46-48
- 31 Luke 1:68-79
Genesis 49-50



JANUARY 2020

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
 www.pilgrimlc.org
 903-984-4333

Pastor's Regular Study Hours
 Tuesday 5:00–8:00 PM
 Wednesday–Friday 9:00 AM–Noon
 Saturday Noon–3:00 PM

SUNDAY	MONDAY	TUESDAY	WEDNESDAY	THURSDAY	FRIDAY	SATURDAY
Elder on Duty: Remo Gualtieri (Back-up: Jeromy McMurray)			1 Arlene Kuehn (B)	2 (No Plano Study this month)	3 Kathy Hudson (B)	4 10:00 AM Service at the Willows
5 2 ND SUNDAY AFTER CHRISTMAS (W) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service (including Council Installation) M/M Carl Gardner (A)	6 THE EPIPHANY OF OUR LORD (W) 7:00 PM Divine Service	7 Noon Kilgore Ministerial Lunch 6:00 PM Elders' Meeting	8 Noon Rotary Mtg. 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study M/M Gage (A)	9 9:00 AM-1:00 PM Circuit #14 Meets (location TBA)	10	11 10:00 AM Service at the Willows
12 THE BAPTISM OF OUR LORD (W) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service (Pilgrim's Ladies meet briefly after)	13	14	15 Noon Rotary Mtg. M/M Freeman (A)	16	17	18 Reports due to Recording Secretary tomorrow
Pastor Galler is on vacation. (An Elder will answer the Church phone and contact the Pastor on-call as needed.)						
19 2 ND SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY (G) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Matins Service	20	21 Remo Gualtieri (B)	22 Noon Rotary Mtg. 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study John Wilson (B)	23	24	25 8:00 AM-12:30 PM Blood Drive 8:00 AM-12:30 PM Free Conference at Faith, Plano
Pastor Galler is on vacation.						
26 3 RD SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY (G) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service Quarterly Council Meeting	27	28	29 Noon Rotary Meeting 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	30	31	

“The people who walked in darkness have seen a great light;
 those who dwelt in a land of deep darkness on them has light shone.” (Isaiah 9:2 ESV)

Pilgrim Lutheran Church
713 Florey Street
Kilgore, Texas 75662-3503

The Pilgrimage is a monthly newsletter for the members and friends of



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www.pilgrimlc.org



Rev. Dr. Jayson S. Galler, Pastor

pastor@pilgrimlc.org

903-984-4333

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