



THE PILGRIMAGE

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

February 2026

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.

Do not let God's love for you in Christ go unrequited

Dear Members and Friends of Pilgrim Lutheran Church,

Some of you may know that I am a fan of *Peanuts*, the comic strip and its characters written and drawn by Charles M. Schulz for more than 50 years. With the approach of February, I recently was reflecting on Valentine's Day and how, for many of the *Peanuts* characters, the holiday, first observed in the strip on February 14, 1952, was routinely "bittersweet". Charlie Brown had an empty mailbox, much like his "Trick or Treat" bag filled only with rocks, and he could not bring himself to give a valentine to his classmate whom he loved, the Little Red-Haired Girl, first mentioned in the strip on November 19, 1961, and reportedly inspired by the unrequited love of a rejected marriage proposal in Schulz's past. Charlie Brown's sister, Sally, never got a Valentine from her "Sweet Babboo", Linus, and Linus's sister, Lucy, never got a valentine from her "love interest", Schroeder. Snoopy, meanwhile, spent the holiday enjoying almost more valentines from his many admirers than he could handle!

I remember having to give valentines to everyone in my grade school classes, whether I really liked them or not, which requirement probably was a good thing, given the isolation and rejection children can feel from their social groups even at young ages. And, of course, that requirement should have meant that I received valentines from everyone in the class, too, not that later there was not some unrequited love like Charlie Brown's, and behind it Charles Schulz's, over the years, as well as other peoples' love that I did not return. And, surely, any bittersweetness that we feel over our unrequited love of our fellow human-beings is only a fraction of the sadness that God must feel over His often unrequited love for humankind.

In the Old Testament, God described in marital terms His love for His people Israel, even though they were unfaithful to Him. One example is Isaiah 54:6-8, "For the Lord has called you, like a wife deserted and grieved in spirit, like a wife of youth when she is cast off, says your God. For a brief moment I deserted you, but with great compassion I will gather you. In overflowing

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anger for a moment I hid My face from you, but with everlasting love I will have compassion on you, says the Lord, your Redeemer” (ESV). Another example is Jeremiah 3-4.

Similarly, in the New Testament, Christ’s sacrificial love for His Church is described in marital terms, such as in Ephesians 5:25-33, where the Divinely-inspired St. Paul writes that husbands should love their wives in that same sacrificial way, reflecting God’s love for us. And, in a number of places Revelation also refers to the Marriage Supper of the Lamb, as in Revelation 19:9.

God created humanity perfect, and, when our ancestors fell into sin, He redeemed them—from their sin, from their slavery in Egypt, from their exile in Babylon, and the like. While on our own we hate God and are hostile to Him, His Holy Spirit calls and so enables us to turn from our sin and to trust Him to forgive us for Jesus’s sake. God the Father’s greatest demonstration of His sacrificial love for us was His giving His only Son, that whoever believes in Him should not perish but have eternal life (John 3:16). That Divine love excels all other loves, to paraphrase Charles Wesley (see *Lutheran Service Book* 700, stanza 1 of which is on the bottom of the parish’s February calendar at right).

We may think of our love’s coming first, but God’s love comes first. “In this is love,” the Divinely-inspired St. John writes, “not that we have loved God but that He loved us and sent His Son to be the propitiation for our sins” (1 John 4:10 ESV). And, St. John goes on to write, “Beloved, if God so loved us, we also ought to love one another” (1 John 4:11 ESV). Truly, our love of all of our neighbors should naturally follow from God’s forgiving us through His Word and Sacraments and so transforming us. The Ten Commandments in a sense “order” our love: first of God, then of our next closest neighbors, first of parents, then of spouses and eventually children, and so forth.

This month we have ample opportunity to reflect on God’s love for us and our love for one another, with our usual Sunday Divine Services, an Ash Wednesday Divine Service February 18 at 7:00 p.m., and a Midweek Lenten Vespers Service February 25 at 7:00 p.m., following a Soup/Salad Supper that night at 6:00 p.m. There is also a Congregational Meal following the Sunday Divine Service on February 8 and before the “Walking Together” Open Forum, in which all are welcome to participate (Jitsi should be an option). See the full calendar at right, and may God continue to love us in this place!

*His and your servant,
Pastor Galler*

DAILY BIBLE READING

- 1 Luke 2:29-32
Exodus 1-3
- 2 Psalm 59
Exodus 4-6
- 3 Psalm 60
Exodus 7-9
- 4 Psalm 61
Exodus 10-12
- 5 Psalm 62
Exodus 13-15
- 6 Psalm 63
Exodus 16-18
- 7 Psalm 64
Exodus 19-21
- 8 Psalm 65
Exodus 22-24
- 9 Psalm 66
Exodus 25-27
- 10 Psalm 67
Exodus 28-30
- 11 Psalm 68
Exodus 31-33
- 12 Psalm 69
Exodus 34-36
- 13 Psalm 70
Exodus 37-38
- 14 Psalm 71
Exodus 39-40
- 15 Psalm 72
Leviticus 1-3
- 16 Psalm 73
Leviticus 4-6
- 17 Psalm 74
Leviticus 7-9
- 18 Psalm 75
Leviticus 10-12
- 19 Psalm 76
Leviticus 13-15
- 20 Psalm 77
Leviticus 16-18
- 21 Psalm 78
Leviticus 19-21
- 22 Psalm 79
Leviticus 22-24
- 23 Psalm 80
Leviticus 25-27
- 24 Psalm 81
Numbers 1-3
- 25 Psalm 82
Numbers 4-6
- 26 Psalm 83
Numbers 7-9
- 27 Psalm 84
Numbers 10-12
- 28 Luke 2:29-32
Numbers 13-15

FEBRUARY 2026



Texas District Church Extension Fund
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Investment	Fixed Rate ²		Floating Rate ²	
	Rate	APY	Rate	APY
One Year Note ¹	3.800%	3.85%	3.000%	3.03%
Three Year Note ¹	3.750%	3.80%	3.250%	3.29%
Five Year Note ¹	3.850%	3.91%	3.500%	3.55%
Jumbo Investment ¹	4.100%	4.16%		
\$100,000 minimum, 18 month term				
Flex Savings			1.000%	1.00%
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Amounts over \$10,000 receive the Flex Savings rate				
Congregation Savings			1.250%	1.26%
Building Fund			3.500%	3.56%

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February 2026

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
1 4 TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY (G) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service "15-2 Folk" Gathering	2	3 Brandy Ellis (B)	4 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	5 10:30 AM to 2:00 PM DFW Study Group meets in Wylie 4:15 PM Catechesis 7:30 PM Catechesis	6	7 (Willows Services are suspended)
8 5 TH SUNDAY AFTER THE EPIPHANY (G) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service Congregational Meal Open Forum on Walking Together	9 Shen (A)	10 5:30 PM Pastor prays at the Killgore City Council Meeting 6:00 PM Board of Elders Meeting	11 7:00 PM Midweek Bible Study	12 4:15 PM Catechesis 7:30 PM Catechesis	13	14 Ezio Heil (B)
15 TRANSFIGURATION OF OUR LORD (W) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service Mary/Martha Society Gathering	16	17	18 ASH WEDNESDAY (NC) 7:00 PM Divine Service (optional Imposition of Ashes) David Adler (B)	19 4:15 PM Catechesis 7:30 PM Catechesis Heaven Chiasson (B)	20	21 Jeromy McMurray (B)
22 FIRST SUNDAY IN LENT (P) 9:15 AM Refreshments 9:30-10:30 AM SS & Bible Class 10:45 AM Divine Service ("Loose-Change Sunday")	23	24 6:00 PM Clergy and Police Alliance Meeting	25 6:00 PM Soup/Salad Supper 7:00 PM Midweek Lenten Vespers	26 9:00 AM to 1:00 PM Circuit #14 Pastors' meet in Longview 4:15 PM Catechesis 7:30 PM Catechesis	27	28 Gibson (A)

Elder on Duty: Don Gibson
(Back-up: Remo Gualtieri)

**“Love divine, all loves excelling, Joy of heav’n, to earth come down!
 Fix in us Thy humble dwelling, All Thy faithful mercies crown.” (LSB 700:1)**

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

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Pastor Galler is the editor of **The Pilgrimage**. Volunteers assist with distributing editions. Everyone is welcome to contribute articles at any time, and a regular assistant editor is desired to return the newsletter to its previous more-expansive form. All copyright holders of excerpted or reproduced materials are hereby acknowledged, and such materials are used in good faith under fair use provisions.