

Now Is The Time

News From Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrimage

May, 2017

And on the 8th day, God created Pilgrimage. ARPP-26 Was Good!

...by Tad Steffenson

One of the first things that each of us learns about a Pilgrimage weekend is that 'God is in charge'. This has never been more obvious than at ARPP #26.

Rain, hail, tornados, thunder. More rain, wind, lightning, and even more rain...water rising...now the lake is almost over the picnic tables!

Oops now there goes the power! What about sound and projectors? Coffee-makers?

Yet these obstacles did not dampen the enthusiasm of the nine participants who were on their Pilgrimage.

The nine, each from a different church and location, came together immediately as a group and quickly shared their faith, and sang hymns of God's praise. Soon, all trusted one another in finding their spiritual awakening.

And the final two days saw 4thDay from around Arkansas bringing the love of Jesus Christ in so many other ways. Participants and staff alike were one moment laughing, then the next in awe.

God was definitely at work: every time we had to move between buildings (the Rollo Room, the Chapel, the new Dining Hall, or the old Dining Hall), there always appeared a break in the weather.

Even with the last night bringing near-catastrophic flood waters and a permanent power outage, our participants stayed protected. Somehow all critical facilities maintained electrical power throughout.

And, on that 3rd day, the sun came up and provided the light and warmth needed to finish all the way through.

Particular thanks go out to the Pilgrimage leadership and Spiritual Advisors, who demonstrated God's grace and dignity.

Who present will forget the tears of laughter during the several events? Or the magical music? Or the Palanca? The Chapel services? Communion?

Yes, 'It's in God's hands'. Let us thank him and rejoice.



The rain stoped perfectly on time -- just long enough for a fun photo!



No shortage of laughter at ARPP-26



Earning hug joules brought laughter and joy.



Table groups at ARPP-26 bonded as family

The Serenade -- How Could This Be Any Better?

...by Tad Steffenson

When we ask participants, what is one of their favorite memories from their Pilgrimage Weekend, we often hear, "the Serenade!"

Likewise, many Staff members will tell you the same: it's the Serenade.

Both the participants and the staff love the Serenade; why is this the case?

For many participants, this is an exciting and joyous event. A whole bunch of strangers (although some they may know) show up, encircle everyone, and sing beautiful songs of God's grace.

With beautiful and heartfelt singing, lots of clapping, and lots of smiling eyes, you see the staff members excited like a child in a candy store.

How could this experience be any better? The answer to that question is easy!

Think about it: after several days of completely immersing yourself into helping do the work required for a great Pilgrimage for Participants, there suddenly enters a whole bunch of 4thDay, most of whom you know and absolutely love -- like family. The group quickly encircles everyone, sings God's grace, everyone is clapping and waving at each other.

For 15-20 minutes the room is filled with God's beautiful melodies -- which you get to

enjoy with your fellow volunteers, or your new-found friends and family from your group of participants.

You feel like a kid in a candy store!

"How could this experience be any better?" you had asked yourself a few times.

And that's when you realize it.

The people of Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrimage are truly a part of your God-

loving family. Seeing and hearing this "family" sing God's music could only be better if even MORE of your beloved 4thDay family were in that circle!

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You feel like a kid in a candy store!



Hot Springs Renewal Groups Are a Family

...by Jami Hemund

Our Hot Springs area is blessed to have two vibrant renewal groups!

The more involved I have become in Pilgrimage events, the more I have found this is one big extended family full of love and support. Relationships with Christ naturally deepen in this community of Christian believers.

"I love the fellowship and seeing my 4th Day family," says Susan Joplin. Susan is being supported by 4th Day prayers while she is in treatment for cancer.

Our two groups recently joined forces to host a "Taste of Pilgrimage" at Westminster Presbyterian Church. Fourth-Day members

showered potential participants with music, food and fellowship.

One of our very favorite activities is a "Palanca Party." Twice a year, before a Pilgrimage Weekend, we work

together to make palanca.

As with all Pilgrimage get-togethers, there's plenty of food, hugs, music & togetherness! Sharon Gardner leads these parties. We also bring our personal Palanca to

work on while we are together.

Martha Nielsen leads the Hot Springs Village group. Vicki Jones leads the Hot Springs group. **We are a family!**

"I love the fellowship and seeing my 4th Day family," says Susan Joplin. Susan is being supported by 4th Day prayers while she is in treatment for cancer.

Help Needed ...

Pilgrimage is not just a flash-in-the-pan "experience," but, for many, a genuine life-changer. The ripple from a single Pilgrimage Weekend goes on for decades.

Yes, the "experience" portion of Pilgrimage is in itself important. Pilgrims (and volunteer staff) get to:

- see and experience "the love of Jesus Christ" lived out in reality, and
- experience first-hand what the world would feel like if we lived in true "Christian Community."

But beyond these learning "experiences," Pilgrims learn tools crucial to development of their relationships with Christ over the rest of their lives. They also gain tools to help move the world just a little bit closer to the type of world they experienced at Pilgrimage.

In this way, **Pilgrimage itself** changes the world.

But we must be Christ's hands and feet, doing the **many small things necessary** to make a Weekend a reality.

We can write palanca, staff a Weekend, serenade, make fudge or cookies, or sign up for the Prayer Banner.

Would you pray?

Would you please ask the Lord to speak to your heart, to give you directions for which helps you should provide Pilgrimage?

With Love, Clay Parton (Chair 2017)



The two Hot Springs area renewal groups work together and are family.



Is it I Lord?

...by Debbi Buckalew, ARPC-7

Note: This article is one in a series, and illustrates "Leadership," as discussed in one of the Weekend talks.

I taught Children's Sunday School for a lot of years. One lesson had a true story about a church that many members collaborated and created a quilt that was passed from member to member when they were quite ill, were recovering from surgery, or during hospitalizations.

Great idea! But it wouldn't work at our church—we had too many ill or aging members—we would need lots of quilts. I couldn't find anyone that quilted.

Move on Debbi. Won't work here.

About 5 months passed. More lessons, more simple projects.

Then I saw a news story on TV. A middle school with a lot of discipline problems had taught the children to knit -- boys and girls alike. The students soon wished for anything that would allow them to stay in at recess -- to knit! The discipline issues dropped off and grades went up.

Neat idea. Intriguing. Move on Debbi.

Fast forward a few months. The Saturday Religion section featured an article about a new idea, a "Prayer Shawl Ministry". I read that article top to bottom. Kept it and re-read it. Got on the internet and read more.

One big concern: I didn't know how to knit. But it wouldn't let go of me. I thought. I prayed.

Finally I knew that God was leading me to this.

I went to our minister. We could get the older ladies of the church to start a Prayer Shawl Ministry! You know, the ones that knew how to knit.

Well, Rev. Anne Russ had a different idea. How about we ("she and I") learn how to knit, and then propose a new ministry, led by me. Huh?

There was a local yarn shop that would teach you if you showed up, bought yarn and needles and sat around. The next week we went bright and early -- and excited. Those ladies didn't expect me back -- I had a rough 4x4 inch square that I had knitted. I was very bad at knitting.

Three weeks later, we called a meeting of interest on Sunday afternoon. Fourteen people showed up, and we started knitting.

"Here I am Lord.

Is it I Lord?

I have heard You calling in the night.

I will go, Lord, if you lead me.

I will hold Your people in my heart."



We started praying. Roughly 6 weeks later, we had our first Prayer Shawl Blessing in a Sunday Morning Worship Service. We blessed 8 shawls that day.

The Ministry grew. Now we spread the shawls throughout the pews and all members touch or hold the shawls as we bless them. We pray as we knit and then we continue to pray about those who have received the shawls.

Through this, I found that my contribution was to lead.

It took about a year for me to discern where God was leading me. It took less than 4 months to start the Prayer Shawl Ministry with lots of help. It took me realizing that God had a plan. I just had to follow. And lead.

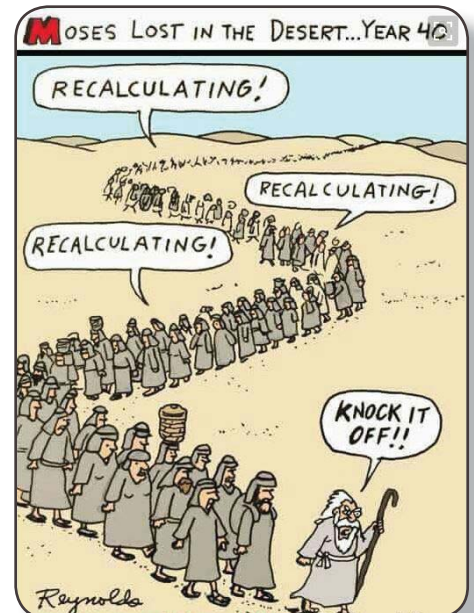
Hundreds of shawls later, the Prayer Shawl Ministry still flourishes at Grace Presbyterian Church, tangible evidence of prayer.

Remember: Ultreya May 13

Missing your 4thDay family? Longing for that special hug?

Come join your family in welcoming these nine wonderful new people! Eat a meal together, sing hymns, experience Holy Communion and visit.

Be there or be square: 2pm, May 13th at Grace Presbyterian Church, 9301 N. Rodney Parham Road in Little Rock.



Arkansas Presbyterian Pilgrimage
309 North Third Street
Rogers, AR 72756

ARPP Newsletter enclosed!

Transition to Camp Paron

We all hold dear the memories of Pilgrimage -- memories of our table groups, lively singing, great food, palanca, chapel, communion. Most of all, we hold in our hearts the experience of the Holy Spirit's presence, and what a true "Christian Community" feels like.

We look forward to creating more of those same memories in a new setting.

This fall, ARPP will host a Pilgrimage at Camp Paron, about 10 miles west of Ferncliff. (Detailed directions to the camp will be distributed in early fall.)

Singing, worship, laughing, praying, Holy Spirit, the fellowship of our Pilgrimage family -- this October at Camp Paron !



Southern Sweet Potato Pie

Ingredients:

3 T all-purpose flour
1 2/3 C. sugar or Splenda
1 C. mashed, cooked sweet potatoes
2 eggs
1/4 tsp. fresh ground nutmeg
Pinch of salt
1/4 C. butter or margarine
3/4 C. evaporated milk
1 - 9 inch pastry shell

To Prepare:

- In a large mixing bowl, combine the flour and sugar.
- Add potatoes, eggs, nutmeg, salt, butter and evaporated milk; beat well.
- Pour into pastry shell.
- Bake at 350 degrees for 55-60 minutes.

Yield: 8 servings.

