

Downloaded from [http://www.ucc.org/daily\\_devotional\\_the\\_elusive\\_presence](http://www.ucc.org/daily_devotional_the_elusive_presence)

### ***The Elusive Presence***

September 24, 2018

Written by **Richard Floyd**

*"Draw near to God, and God will draw near to you." - James 4:8*

James makes knowing God sound easy, but I've never found it so. When I was a young man, and had outgrown my Sunday school faith, I hungered to know God, not just as an idea, but as a living relationship.

I sought out people who knew God. They seemed so sure, so certain. I wanted to be like that. In time I found mentors and teachers who helped me along the way.

I also sought out writers who inspired me with their sense of the everyday presence of God. Many were from other traditions and faiths: the Trappist monk, Tomas Merton; the Jewish philosopher Abraham Joshua Heschel; the Roman Catholic poet Gerard Manly Hopkins; and the writer Annie Dillard. The list could go on and on.

The written words of these God lovers were incandescent with the light of divine fire. The world they wrote about was "charged with the grandeur of God" to employ a phrase from one of Hopkins' luminous poems.

In the end I never climbed the mystical ladder to constant intimacy with the living God. God remains a real but elusive presence in my life. It is the human face of God in Jesus Christ that persists as my most accessible experience of the divine.

The truth is, I am more of a Paul guy than a James guy. James wants us to work at "drawing near" to God, whereas Paul invites us to accept God's love as free gift, pure grace. I resonate with Paul's words about being known fully by God, even if not knowing God fully (yet!). "For now we see in a mirror, dimly, but then we will see face to face. Now I know only in part; then I will know fully, even as I have been fully known" (1 Corinthians 13:12). I'm good with that. It's something to look forward to.

#### **Prayer**

Draw near to us, O Elusive Presence, that we may know you and love you, through Jesus Christ our Savior.

#### **Mission Statement:**

***God calls us to live our faith as disciples  
Sharing the love of God revealed through Christ  
In the community and the world.***



#### **Pilgrim United Church of Christ Staff**

**Pastor, Rev. Kirk W. Bruce:**

[pilgrimpastor@ameritech.net](mailto:pilgrimpastor@ameritech.net)

**F.F. Director, Marilyn Freeman:**

[pilgrimce@ameritech.net](mailto:pilgrimce@ameritech.net)

**Music Director, Kyle Kelvington:**

[kelvingtonk@gmail.com](mailto:kelvingtonk@gmail.com)

**Secretary, Kelly Gerstenberger:**

[pilgrimoffice@ameritech.net](mailto:pilgrimoffice@ameritech.net)

**Acolyte:** *Thank You!*

**Altar Flowers:** *In memory of Bobby & loved ones.*  
*Karen Wickiser*

**Greeters:** *Everyone present today!*

**Ushers:** *Thank You!*

**PowerPoint:** *Cheryl Bruce*

**Liturgist:** *Crystal Wagner*

**Fellowship:** *Team #3*

**Steeple Lighting:** *Anonymous*

# ***Pilgrim United Church of Christ***

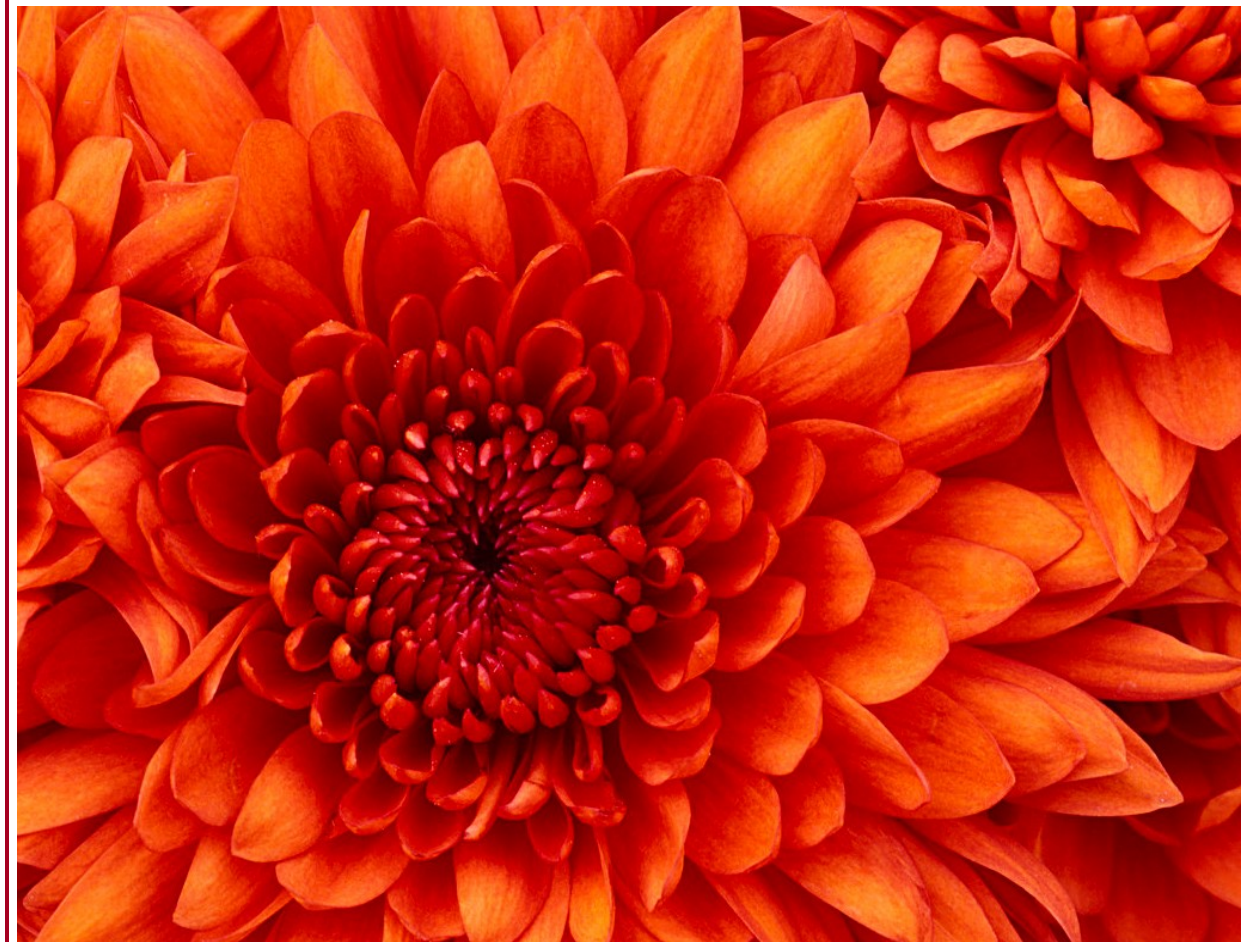
## ***A Caring Church for Thinking People***

130 Broad Blvd † Cuyahoga Falls, OH 44221 † 330.928.4847

[www.pilgrimcf.org](http://www.pilgrimcf.org) †



# Sunday, September 30, 2018



***On Giving Thanks***  
**Rev. Kirk W. Bruce**

**Pilgrim United Church of Christ**  
**A Caring Church for Thinking People**  
**Sunday, September 30, 2018 † Nineteenth Sunday after Pentecost**

THE PRELUDE *My Faith Looks Up to Thee* Yury Arbatsky  
\*HYMN (Red Hymnal) *All Things Bright and Beautiful* No. 478

**OPENING OURSELVES TO GOD**

\*CALL TO WORSHIP (Psalm 19)  
One: The heavens and skies above us tell of Your mighty works O Lord.  
**All: Day and night they tell of Your glory.**  
One: In Your love You have come to us bringing light and life.  
**All: In respect for who You are we pause now to celebrate Your glory.**

\*THE INVOCATION, OUR LORD'S PRAYER (Unison) Crystal Wagner  
**O Lord, Your love of us is greater than we could imagine, more complete than we could know. We gather this day to praise and to give You our thanks. Teach how to live life in Your plan. Show how to invite You into our days and nights. For with You life is a joy. Hear us as we pray together the prayer Your son taught us, "Our Father ..." [debt, debtors]**

\*THE GLORIA PATRI (Red Hymnal) No. 513

**OPENING OURSELVES TO GOD AND EACH OTHER**

\*GREETING EACH OTHER IN CHRIST

OUR LIFE TOGETHER Rev. Kirk W. Bruce  
Stewardship Neighbors in Need Kelly Gerstenberger  
A New Adventure Ed Schadle

CHILDREN'S SERMON Rev. Kirk W. Bruce  
Faith Focus Nancy Anderson

ANTHEM: *Beautiful Savior* Donald Moore  
*Pilgrim's Choir*

**WE GIVE TO GOD**

**\*all who are able may stand**

AN OFFERTORY INVITATION

THE OFFERTORY *The Way That He Loves* Elmo Mercer

\*THE DOXOLOGY (Red Hymnal) *Praise God From Whom All Blessings Flow* No. 515

\*PRAYER OF DEDICATION

CALL TO PRAYER  
(Black Hymnal) *Sweet Hour of Prayer (vs. 1)* No. 505  
**Sweet hour of prayer! Sweet hour of prayer! That calls me from a world of care, and bids me at my Maker's throne let all my needs and wants be known. In seasons of distress and grief, my soul has often found relief, and oft escaped the tempter's snare by your return, sweet hour of prayer!**

THE MORNING PRAYER

\*HYMN (Red Hymnal) *For the Brave of Every Race* No. 308

**GOD GIVES TO US**

SCRIPTURES Deuteronomy 15:7 - 11 (page 160) Crystal Wagner  
Luke 10:25 - 37 (page 62)

SERMON On Giving Thanks Rev. Kirk W. Bruce

**WE RESPOND TO GOD WITH SERVICE**

\*HYMN (Black Hymnal) *This Little Light* No. 524  
(vs. 1 at top, vs. 2 & 3 at top of next page)

\*THE BENEDICTION

\*BENEDICTION RESPONSE (*We invite you to join hands as we sing*)  
*Spirit Song* by John Wimber  
**O let the Son of God enfold you with his Spirit and his love. Let him fill your heart and satisfy your soul. O let him have the things that hold you, and his Spirit like a dove will descend upon your life and make you whole.**

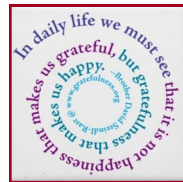
POSTLUDE *Now Rest Beneath Nights Shadow* J.S. Bach

### **SIGN-IN**


There are worship pads on each pew in the sanctuary.  
We joyfully welcome all visitors! Please join us again!  
Please sign in to let us know you are worshipping with us today.  
We are so glad You are Worshiping with Pilgrim United Church of Christ!

### ***Pray for:***

Healing prayers for Don S. who took a tumble and is at Concordia at Sumner. Send cards to 3670 Chestnut Chase, Copley, OH 44321  
The Davies family and friends grieving the death of father, grandfather, great grandfather & friend, Donald on September 9, 2018.  
The Rake family and friends grieving the death of husband, father, grandfather & friend, Herb. Everyone effected by the hurricanes that have damaged property and lives.  
Ralph, recovering from double bypass surgery.  
Daughter-in-law with cancer, lymphoma, a mother of young children.  
Pray for healing and comfort for the family.  
The children separated from their parents at our border.



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ACME CASH BACK program has begun!**  **Save your receipts!**  
**Supports the Pilgrim Mission Trip Fund.** **Place in the box in the Social**

Pilgrim's **NeedleWork** group will meet on the **2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 6:30 - 8:30 pm.** Everyone is invited to bring their crocheting, knitting, embroidery, quilting or other projects to work-on, while enjoying the company of others in the Adult Library!

As the hurricanes hit the east coast, Pilgrim would like to give all an opportunity to give to these disasters. Simply add the amount to weekly, monthly or pew envelopes noting "Hurricane Disasters." As of June 30th, Pilgrim gave 7% of all the benevolence funds received to OCWM Disaster Response for the 1st & 2nd quarters of 2018 totaling \$429.87.



### ***Looking Forward . . .***

October 7, 2018: World Communion Sunday & Neighbors In Need offering taken.  
October 14, 2018: Healing Service at 11:30 am in the Sanctuary.  
November 3, 2018: EOAWRA Annual Meeting, First Congregational UCC, Hudson  
November 4, 2018: All Saints Day: Remembering those who have gone before us.  
November 11, 2018: Stewardship Sunday Celebration  
November 18, 2018: Baptism of Theodore Kusnarsky  
December 2, 2018: Communion Sunday

## **CALENDAR**

### **Sunday, September 30, 2018**

**9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Heritage Room**  
**10:30 a.m. Worship Service - Rev. Kirk W. Bruce, Sanctuary**  
**11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour - Team #3, Social Hall**

### **Monday, October 1 2018**

**1:00 - 1:30 p.m. Absorbent Minds Montessori School - Ty Kwon Do Class, Social Hall**  
**6:30 p.m. Diaconate meeting, Adult Library**

### **Tuesday, October 2, 2018**

**10:30 a.m. Bible Study, Adult Library**  
**8:00 p.m. Broad Highway Group AA, Heritage Room**

### **Wednesday, October 3, 2018**

**11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting, Office**  
**1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Absorbent Minds Montessori School - Dance Class, Social Hall**  
**2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Western Reserve Suzuki School - Violin Lessons, Adult Library & Children's Library**  
**6:00 p.m. Hand Bell Rehearsal, Music Room**  
**7:00 p.m. Bible Study, Heritage Room**

### **Thursday, October 4, 2018**

**3:30 - 9:15 p.m. Western Reserve Suzuki School - Cello Lessons, Rev. Greene Room**  
**6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Cub Scout Pack #3186 Den meetings, Adult & Children's Libraries, Nursery & Room #27**  
**7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Emotions Anonymous, Adult Library or Heritage Room**

### **Friday, October 5, 2018**

### **Saturday, October 6, 2018**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Cub Scout Pack #3186 - Committee Meeting, Adult Library**  
**8:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous, Social Hall**

### **Sunday, October 7, 2018 - All Saints Celebration & World Communion Sunday**

**9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Heritage Room**  
**10:30 a.m. Worship Service - Rev. Kirk W. Bruce, Sanctuary**  
**11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour, Social Hall**  
**11:45 a.m. Stewardship meeting, Heritage Room**

### **Monday, October 8, 2018**

**1:00 - 1:30 p.m. Absorbent Minds Montessori School - Ty Kwan Do, Social Hall**  
**6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting, Adult Library**

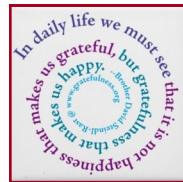


### **SIGN-IN**


There are worship pads on each pew in the sanctuary.  
We joyfully welcome all visitors! Please join us again!  
Please sign in to let us know you are worshipping with us today.  
We are so glad You are Worshiping with Pilgrim United Church of Christ!

### ***Pray for:***

Healing prayers for Don S. who took a tumble and is at Concordia at Sumner. Send cards to 3670 Chestnut Chase, Copley, OH 44321  
The Davies family and friends grieving the death of father, grandfather, great grandfather & friend, Donald on September 9, 2018.  
The Rake family and friends grieving the death of husband, father, grandfather & friend, Herb. Everyone effected by the hurricanes that have damaged property and lives.  
Ralph, recovering from double bypass surgery.  
Daughter-in-law with cancer, lymphoma, a mother of young children.  
Pray for healing and comfort for the family.  
The children separated from their parents at our border.



## **ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**ACME CASH BACK program has begun!**  **Save your receipts!**  
**Supports the Pilgrim Mission Trip Fund.** **Place in the box in the Social**

Pilgrim's **NeedleWork** group will meet on the **2nd & 4th Tuesdays at 6:30 - 8:30 pm.** Everyone is invited to bring their crocheting, knitting, embroidery, quilting or other projects to work-on, while enjoying the company of others in the Adult Library!

As the hurricanes hit the east coast, Pilgrim would like to give all an opportunity to give to these disasters. Simply add the amount to weekly, monthly or pew envelopes noting "Hurricane Disasters." As of June 30th, Pilgrim gave 7% of all the benevolence funds received to OCWM Disaster Response for the 1st & 2nd quarters of 2018 totaling \$429.87.



### ***Looking Forward . . .***

October 7, 2018: World Communion Sunday & Neighbors In Need offering taken.  
October 14, 2018: Healing Service at 11:30 am in the Sanctuary.  
November 3, 2018: EOAWRA Annual Meeting, First Congregational UCC, Hudson  
November 4, 2018: All Saints Day: Remembering those who have gone before us.  
November 11, 2018: Stewardship Sunday Celebration  
November 18, 2018: Baptism of Theodore Kusnarsky  
December 2, 2018: Communion Sunday

## **CALENDAR**

### **Sunday, September 30, 2018**

**9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Heritage Room**  
**10:30 a.m. Worship Service - Rev. Kirk W. Bruce, Sanctuary**  
**11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour - Team #3, Social Hall**

### **Monday, October 1 2018**

**1:00 - 1:30 p.m. Absorbent Minds Montessori School - Ty Kwon Do Class, Social Hall**  
**6:30 p.m. Diaconate meeting, Adult Library**

### **Tuesday, October 2, 2018**

**10:30 a.m. Bible Study, Adult Library**  
**8:00 p.m. Broad Highway Group AA, Heritage Room**

### **Wednesday, October 3, 2018**

**11:00 a.m. Staff Meeting, Office**  
**1:00 - 2:30 p.m. Absorbent Minds Montessori School - Dance Class, Social Hall**  
**2:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. Western Reserve Suzuki School - Violin Lessons, Adult Library & Children's Library**  
**6:00 p.m. Hand Bell Rehearsal, Music Room**  
**7:00 p.m. Bible Study, Heritage Room**

### **Thursday, October 4, 2018**

**3:30 - 9:15 p.m. Western Reserve Suzuki School - Cello Lessons, Rev. Greene Room**  
**6:00 - 8:00 p.m. Cub Scout Pack #3186 Den meetings, Adult & Children's Libraries, Nursery & Room #27**  
**7:00 - 9:00 p.m. Emotions Anonymous, Adult Library or Heritage Room**

### **Friday, October 5, 2018**

### **Saturday, October 6, 2018**

**10:00 a.m. - 12:00 p.m. Cub Scout Pack #3186 - Committee Meeting, Adult Library**  
**8:00 p.m. Alcoholics Anonymous, Social Hall**

### **Sunday, October 7, 2018 - All Saints Celebration & World Communion Sunday**

**9:00 a.m. Choir Rehearsal, Heritage Room**  
**10:30 a.m. Worship Service - Rev. Kirk W. Bruce, Sanctuary**  
**11:30 a.m. Fellowship Hour, Social Hall**  
**11:45 a.m. Stewardship meeting, Heritage Room**

### **Monday, October 8, 2018**

**1:00 - 1:30 p.m. Absorbent Minds Montessori School - Ty Kwan Do, Social Hall**  
**6:30 p.m. Trustees meeting, Adult Library**