

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Pilgrim Lutheran Church and School
4300 N Winchester Ave, Chicago, IL 60613
Phone 773•477•4824 Fax 773•477•8996
www.pilgrimchurchandschool.org

Kristian Johnson, Pastor
Christopher Comella, Principal

Mike Suhajda,
Congregation President

DECEMBER 2015

Jeanne Valencia,
Volunteer Editor

Advent and Christmas at Pilgrim 2015

Worship Every Sunday:
8 AM and 10:30 AM



Christmas Caroling, Hot Chocolate & Chili

Sunday, December 13th at 4 PM

Meet at the Pilgrim Lutheran Church, (4300 N. Winchester) for caroling in the neighborhood. Afterwards, join us for a Chili dinner at 5:30 PM at Pastor Kristian and Anna-Kari's house (4332 N. Winchester Ave.) All are invited!

School Christmas Service Dress Rehearsal

Wednesday, December 16th, 9 AM

Open to the Public! Come hear our children sing and join us in a daytime version of our renowned Christmas service!

School Christmas Service

Thursday, December 17th, 7 PM

Sunday, December 20th

9:15 AM Christmas Eve Pageant Rehearsal
Worship at 8:00 AM and 10:30 AM

Thursday, December 24th
4:30 PM Family Candlelight Service
7:30 PM, 11:00 PM
Christmas Eve Candlelight Services

Christmas Day Service

Thursday, December 25th 9:30 AM

Service of Lessons and Carols

Sunday, December 27th 8 AM and 10:30 AM

2nd Sunday of Christmas!

Sunday, January 3rd 8 AM and 10:30 AM

Epiphany Celebration with Procession of Children and Three Kings

Sunday, January 10th- 10:30 AM



Pilgrim School Open Houses for Prospective Families

January 26, 2016, and March 1, 2016 at 9:30 AM

Call Pilgrim at 773•477•4824 to RSVP.



New Member Classes



What does 'Lutheran' mean?

How can Pilgrim help me and my family grow in faith?

What does it mean to become a member of Pilgrim?

If you're at all curious about any of these questions, please explore with us. There are three sessions offered as a part of new member instruction (Part I, Part II, and Part III). People interested in participating in these classes can attend in any order. The next round of sessions will be offered on January 10th, 24th, and 31st, 2016. You may RSVP to Kathy in the Church Office at kdanner@pilgrimchicago.org



Explore The Bible Time

Would you like to learn more about the Bible? Get to know other members in the congregation better? Discuss spirituality and faith in a non-threatening, non-judgmental context? We invite you to join us Sundays at 9:15 AM in Maring Hall as we read and discuss the Bible together... there is NO EXPERIENCE necessary!



Sundays at 10:15 AM, please bring your children to the first floor hallway through the green doors of the narthex. Later, during the offering, we invite parents to come to the first floor hallway to pick up your children so you can take communion/receive a blessing as a family.



Prayer Time at the parsonage (4332 N Winchester), Saturdays from 8:30 – 9:30 AM



(Group Shot! © Robert Knapp, 2012.)

Congratulations to Kristian Elof Johnson
On the 3rd anniversary of his installation
as Pastor of Pilgrim.



Deadline: Please submit items for the February newsletter by January 15th.
Send to Jeanne Valencia at j3valencia@yahoo.com or put in my church mailbox.

Faith Testimonial (October 18th Service)

(Bianka Hardin)



I moved to Chicago 20 years ago for graduate school. If someone I knew told me my pastor would ask me to get up in front of church and talk about faith, I would have thought they were crazy. What did I know about faith? I did not grow up in the church, I was not connected to a faith, and I found church and religion to be a distant and sometimes scary concept.

I had mixed experiences with "church folks." My father grew up with the influence of strong Southern Baptist relatives and I knew when we visited them, we stood in a circle and held hands and prayed before meals. My contact with them was minimal but I knew they were strict in terms of their faith beliefs and there was a focus on what not to do. I also knew them to be open, loving, and kind. My father encountered many losses as a child which I believe caused him to stray from his faith. As a result, growing up, faith, God, religion were issues that were not discussed in my home. My mother was a German Lutheran who did not attend church and was uncomfortable with her experience of going to church in America.

So, as a child, I went to a few Sunday school classes when I was very young, but that's about it. My father was in the Air Force and we moved every 18 months to three years so we did not have a chance to get connected anywhere. When I was in 8th grade, there was a church around the corner that I began to attend alone. I really enjoyed it and attended weekly and participated in youth group on Wednesday nights. I felt a sense of belonging in comfort. After a year we moved again and I did not go back to church again until I was in my 30's and was not baptized until I was 37. So, you may also be wondering what I know about faith. Good question.

What I do know is that God has been pursuing me, he has been wanting me to see him this whole time. Even when I did not know he was there, he knew he was there for me and he set my life up in ways for me to see him....if I wanted to. I "happened" to buy a condo with my husband across the street from Pilgrim in 2004. I "happened" to meet a wonderful couple in my birthing class who have been so influential in my faith development. They invited me to their church and took me under their wing and, years later, he ended up baptizing me near the Lake on a beautiful Sunday afternoon.

Going back to church was strange, I did not know what to do, how to act. I felt my insecurities popping up, what do I know about the bible? What version of the bible do I get? I don't know the rituals. People are singing and seemingly moved. Should I allow myself to be moved? People are

praying out loud and saying very personal things. I hope I don't have to do that. What if I look weird? This was uncomfortable. I was certainly outside of my comfort zone.

One thing I always say is, "The magic happens outside of your comfort zone." I needed to step outside of my comfort zone in order to grow in my faith. I learned that I had to sing out loud and raise my hands to the lord to feel connection and emotion. I learned that I had to pray out loud and say what was on my heart, even though I did not know "how to do it." I also took a class at my church on what is faith. I joined a group of women who were reading books about faith and wanting to grow in their faith together. At times, I felt like an impostor, because again, what did I know about faith and being a Christian?

During the beginning of my faith journey, I went to a contemporary church that was often doing creative things to get people involved and invested. Our pastor gave everyone journals so they could take notes, draw, and doodle during service. I found myself drawing an image of a heart with outstretched open arms. This image comes to me as if it is saying open your arms and your heart, I am here.

I have learned that I do not really need to feel like I am in charge and I am not responsible for making all the decisions that impact my life. Things have happened in my life that I did not want to happen and I had to accept that I really do not have too much control over the world and this is not necessarily a bad thing. God wants to be on this journey of life with me. So, now I listen to God and am open to what he has to say to me and what he wants to show me. Instead of praying for what I want, I pray, show me.....this is my way of having open hands and an open heart. My regular prayer is "Show me how to make a difference in the lives of people, in my community, and in the world." "Show me how to be a good wife, mother, and friend." I am regularly asking for guidance from God and being open to what he shows me. In doing this, amazing things have happened in my life and I am so blessed.

So, what do I know about faith? I know during my darkest times, I have felt wrapped in comfort and love and have seen God everywhere around me. I know that since I have been listening to God, I have taken leaps of faith in terms of major life decisions and I have had more courage and strength to move forward. I know that faith is an active process and God wants you to fully and wholeheartedly be a part of this beautiful journey. So, how did I grow in my faith? One step at a time...one risk at a time...open arms and open heart with the knowledge that God wants to be in this journey with me.

Hot Meals Ministry

(Janet Taylor)

HOT MEALS PLUS -- a program delivering a hot Saturday noon meal to shut-ins was started last spring. It was well-received for about ten weeks. Because of lack of volunteers to deliver the meals, the program was halted in September. The HOT MEALS PLUS committee would like to try the program again - after the new year begins. The meals are made by the HOT MEALS volunteers.



Two needs really do have to be met before the program can start again. Drivers? Yes, but also names of shut-ins. Three drivers are committed but for the program to start again, at least three more drivers are needed. That would mean a once-in-six weeks commitment. For more information or to make a commitment to the program, contact Jackie Mokszycki - jmokszycki@gmail.com or Janet Taylor - jkstay@aol.com or the church office.

THANK YOU THRIVENT!!!!!! HOT MEALS has been blessed with money for serving both a Thanksgiving Feast and a Christmas Feast.

Pilgrim Board of Education would like to thank Nancy Liljedahl for her many years of service to the Board and to the Parent-Teacher League. Nancy is stepping down from the BOE after serving three years as BOE President. Chad Smith, father of a Pilgrim 1st Grader, has volunteered to serve as President. Bianka Hardin will serve as vice-president and Tricia Koning will serve as secretary. Thank you to all of our parents for their willingness to ensure that Pilgrim delivers Academic Excellence with a Heart!



Planning For The Future

(Endowment Committee)

Many Pilgrim families want to leave a gift to Pilgrim through their estates, but are concerned about making a commitment they may not be able to keep. We understand. That's why we suggest you consider a gift made by using a beneficiary designation or transfer on death (TOD) designation. Examples of the types of accounts that can be transferred (upon death) in this manner typically include: checking or savings accounts, CD's, brokerage accounts, individual stocks or bonds, life insurance, and retirement accounts.

You retain control of the asset while you are alive and the beneficiary has no rights to the account until after you have passed. You have full access to the funds in that account should you need them while alive. You retain the right to close the account or change the beneficiary in the future if you so desire. If you do not wish to leave the entire account balance to Pilgrim's Church and/or School Endowment, you can designate a percentage instead.

A gift to one (or both) of our endowments will assure the continued financial viability of our church and school into the future !

(This article is not intended as legal or accounting advice. Please be sure to consult with your professional advisors.)

2015 Endowment Fund Disbursements

Pilgrim is a generous community! With gratitude, we announce that the following disbursements were approved by the Endowment Committee to support the needs of our community. The allocation for 2015 was \$11,539.25.

Pilgrim Tuition Assistance- \$3,539.25

Luther North High School Tuition Assistance-\$3,000.00

Chicago Uptown Ministry- 750.00

The Common Food Pantry- \$750.00

Lakeview Food Pantry- \$750.00

The Crib Homeless Youth Shelter- \$750.00

Ravenswood Community Services (All Saints Episcopal) \$500.00

Lincoln Square Friendship Center- \$500.00

Coat Angels (via Pilgrim) \$500.00

Lutheran World Relief/Disaster Response-\$500.00



Mark January 30th as the date for Trivia Night! Watch weekly bulletins for more news about this event.


Dining Review: Café Prague

(Julie Lea)

On a lovely Sunday evening in November, we dined on very delicious Czech food at Café Prague. The restaurant has a romantic atmosphere with brick walls adorned with large paintings and indirect lighting held by black fixtures. It is a white table cloth and napkin restaurant. Czech beer and red wine were the drinks of choice. Roast pork with red peppers and crispy pork shank; beef goulash and Czech roast beef, most served with dumplings, are a few of the items on the menu. All are served in a very lovely presentation and timely manner. Everyone enjoyed the tasty food. We had to wait to share apple strudel, but well worth the wait. It would be great for a special occasion and moderate prices.



We will have no December outing but Sunday, January 24th, we will experience **Moroccan food at Shokran**. Watch for the notice!

Pilgrim Parent-Teacher League would like to thank everyone who patronized Lou Malnati's at Dine-Out for Pilgrim. Lou's is donating \$500 to Pilgrim and the PTL has decided to apply this to the Playground Project Phase 2. We are looking forward to the Winter Carnival and we hope that everyone can join the fun on Friday, January 15th. 

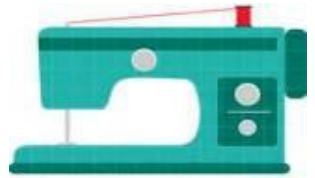
Dear Pilgrim Community:

Last year, on Martin Luther King Jr's birthday, I organized a mitten making day for the poor. We then distributed them among people living under Lake Shore Drive. It was very well received and appreciated. This year, I was hoping to include the Pilgrim Church and School community as we make more mittens to warm those who are living without shelter.

You can help in the following ways:

- 1) Drop off packages of handwarmers (can be purchased in bulk at Costco),
- 2) Mitten Assembly—On January 10th after the 10:30 service, we will be assembling the mittens. On that day, we will need volunteers and some sewing machines that we could borrow for a couple hours. Please email me your interest for sewing or if you have a sewing machine you would like to loan for the day.

Thank you in advance- school parent Jennifer Goolsby at jhgoolsby@gmail.com



Confirmation Testimonial

(Erin Franke – November 1st Service)



Hi, my name is Erin Franke and I am making my confirmation today. First of all, my life started out with Christ when I was born. I was baptized and then ready to fulfill a life with Christ before I could walk. I am thankful for starting my life out with Christ, and now setting believing in him in stone.

Throughout confirmation I have learned a lot. One thing I have learned about God is how powerful he is. From Psalms 33: 11-13 *"But the plans of the Lord stand firm forever, the purposes of His heart through all generations. Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord, the people he has chosen for His inheritance. From heaven the Lord looks down and sees all mankind."* These verses remind me that God is always with you.

I also learned that God has given everyone different gifts. For some people it may be the ability to help others, for some to donate, for some to teach. No matter what, God gives you the ability to do good.

One way I hope to serve God in the future is by going to church and continuing to praise God. I hope to help those in need as well.

For my interview, I spoke about the Sunday School. I would be interested in possibly helping with the Sunday School some days as a way to serve Pilgrim.

To finish, today is a day about confirming what was given to me in my baptism, and confirming my belief in God. I look forward to my journey in life with Christ to come, and I would like to think my parents for starting my life out with Christ. I'm happy to be setting my life with Christ in stone today. Thank you.



Basketball season for 5th/6th Graders is wrapping up and the season for 7th/8th graders is underway! Thanks to coaches Andy Weiss, Charlie Negrón, Eric Jones, Pete Gillespie and Mike Suhajda for working with the 5th and 6th graders. Carol Schlensker coaches 7th/8th Girls and Malik Kvamme is working with 7th/8th Boys. Feel free to come out and support the teams!!

School Subjects

(Principal Christopher Comella)

The Pilgrim Season of Giving is upon us. The week before Thanksgiving, Ms. Huelskoetter's homeroom took 33 completed holiday food bags to the Friendship Center, and Mrs. Andreen's class took another load of 20 bags later in the week. Ms. Huelskoetter is planning at least one more run after Thanksgiving and any odd food items not on the official food bag list will be stocked on the Friendship Center shelves. We are gathering food in the Narthex of the church and lists for food bags are available there.



In addition to the Food Drive, Mrs. Andreen's homeroom is working on several other holiday service projects. The 7th and 8th graders put together woolen mittens and filled them with goodies for those in need. Mrs. Andreen's students are also busy writing Santa letters for our partners at Pablo Casals School. Funding for these projects is coming out of Pilgrim Kids Care.



Students in Mrs. Tighe's homeroom have been busy making place-mats and other decorations for Pilgrim's Hot Meals Program. Mrs. Cardo's homeroom has been making cookies for Hot Meals. Both homerooms have made a commitment to do each of these projects once every month until the end of the school year.



Look for announcements about school and congregation-wide projects to collect coats and toys for our partners at Pablo Casals School in Humboldt Park. Ms. Huelskoetter's and Mrs. Andreen's homerooms will be visiting and delivering coats and toys the week before Christmas Break.

Pilgrim Kindergartners celebrated their annual Thanksgiving Tea. Thanks to all the parents who brought donations and who came to bake cookies. Mrs. Halter, Mrs. Kato and the students worked hard to prepare a fun program of Thanksgiving songs, dances and treats. Eighth grade chapel partners also participated in the Tea. All family members of Kindergartners were welcome to attend. Tricia Koning-Llewellyn is making a DVD of the Tea. Proceeds from the DVD go to support the playground project. Contact the school office if you would like a copy of the DVD.



A big Thank You is owed to the Chicagoland Lutheran Education Foundation (CLEF)!

Clef has donated 15 gently used laptops to Pilgrim. We are planning to use these laptops as part of teacher workstations in classrooms. Workstations will make it easier for teachers to use the document cameras and Smart Boards in their classrooms. CLEF also donated two gently used Smart Boards to Pilgrim earlier this year, one of which has been installed in Ms. Daczyszyn's homeroom and the other is going to be installed in the Tower Classroom. Teachers received special in-service on how to use Smart Boards effectively. CLEF has also worked out an arrangement for Pilgrim to get tech support from Aqueity. These improvements to Pilgrim's technology infra-structure are very helpful in getting our staff the tools which they need to meet students' needs.

THANK YOU!

For the 42nd Year, Pilgrim has received a grant from the Sulzer Family Foundation. This year's award for \$2500 is designated for new programming at Pilgrim. Many thanks are due to the Sulzer Family Foundation for their support of programs at Pilgrim! Pilgrim has also received a North Center Chamber of Commerce grant in the amount of \$3000. Many thanks go to the Chamber for their continued support of Pilgrim. The Chamber's grant is part of fundraising efforts for Phase 2 of the Pilgrim Playground Project.

Confirmation Testimonial

(Joe Twohig – November 1st Service)



Hi, my name is Joe Twohig. I joined confirmation because my parents forced me to join the group, but they did it to show me God and this community to make me a stronger individual. The experiences through my journey showed me God's love working in us and lifting us up to serve Him. Confirmation has helped guide me in my steps in faith and in becoming a better member of our community. Now, I want to share with all of you something that the confirmation group has done every time we have met, share our highs and lows.

I will start with my highs through my faith:

All throughout my journey in faith, there were always people you could depend on, share things with, pray with, tell things to, listen to, and grow stronger with. Those people are the ones that have shaped my image of faith, taught me about faith, showed me what is to be a kind person, and who showed me God. I always feel satisfied after doing something for my community, or church. I know that God was always going to be there.

And, there are the lows of my journey:

Even when I thought God was there, I felt like He wasn't listening to my prayers. I had gotten so buried in my own image and my own friends that I never listened to God's answers to my prayers. I would hear sermons and gospels but not connect or understand them, or even the whole point of religion. I would feel alone and nervous at times.

But... it is at these times when we are having a low, feeling alone or that God hasn't answered, that He draws himself to us. He can save us if we believe in Him and let Him enter us. This is one of the great parts of faith, that we can always depend on someone who is with us anywhere we go in the highs and lows of life. This is one of my favorite bible verses that I feel tells this message better: Joshua 1:7-9 *"Be strong and very courageous. Be careful to obey all the laws my servant Moses gave you; do not turn from it to the right or to the left, that you may be successful wherever you go. Keep this Book of the Law always on your lips; meditate on it day and night, so that you may be careful to do everything written in it. Then you will be prosperous and successful. Have I not commanded you? Be strong and courageous. Do not be afraid; do not be discouraged, for the Lord your God will be with you wherever you go."* Thank you.

MOPS is a morning group for moms. MOPS meets the first and third Thursday mornings of the month from 9-11:45 am at the Pilgrim parsonage (4332 N Winchester). Cost is \$10 and includes childcare. For questions or to RSVP, please contact Tarah Dickerson at tdickerson15@hotmail.com.



Stewardship Update

For those who have not yet turned in your commitment cards, please do so at this time... we need you support to do all the things we do! If you didn't receive your packet or need additional forms, please contact Business Manager Ruth Wasiukiewicz at 773•477•4824 and she will be happy to send one.

Many thanks, and may God's peace be with you during this Thanksgiving season!

Rai\$ing Fund\$ (Anne Barsano)

Looking for the perfect **C H R I S T M A S** Gift? Pilgrim Church and School hoodies and T-shirts are just right for everyone on your list! Show your Pilgrim Pride and order today!



It's past the time we can special order Gift Cards, but check out the cards normally kept on hand which will be sold only on Sundays until school resumes on January 4th. Please contact Anne Barsano at cbarsano@aol.com or 312-972-9040 with any questions. Thank you for your support this year and wishes for a Merry Christmas! See you in 2016!

The Box Tops For Education collection program continues at Pilgrim....you can also place your box tops in the container on the table in the narthex of the church or in the container in the school office. Join the effort! All funds raised from the box tops collection will go to fund Pilgrim Kids Care. Questions? Email Paula Raabe at praabe@pilgrimchicago.org or check out the program's website: www.boxtops4education.com



Girl Scout Cookie Season Begins January 1st, 2016!

Questions? Contact **Judy Daniel** 773-547-2956

FIRST SUNDAY, FEED THE HUNGRY

On the first Sunday of every month, Pilgrim makes a special effort to collect money in support of local and world efforts to help feed the hungry. We invite you to use the special envelopes in each pew, check off our Hot Meals program or any other designated mission listed, enclose your donation of any amount, take the envelope with you when you go for communion, and hand the envelope to the usher standing behind Pastor Kristian. Thanks for keeping the hungry in your hearts.





Pilgrim Groups And Committees

CHURCH COUNCIL Oversees the business of the church, but delegates work to committees. They meet the last Tuesday of the month in the School Library at 7:30 PM. Council positions are elected, but anyone interested is encouraged to attend. Contact **Mike Suhajda** 773-878-8163 or mike@accurate-prod.com for info.

DINING GROUP A group for all ages which dines out once a month, usually on the 3rd Sunday, and patronizes restaurants with varied ethnic cuisines. We would love to have you join us!! Contact **Julie Lea** 773-764-3140.

GIRL SCOUTS Pilgrim Church is the home of four troops of Girl Scouts: Cadettes, Daisies, Brownies, Juniors, Seniors, and Ambassadors. Contact **Judy Daniel** 773-547-2956.

HOT MEALS Successful outreach program working in teams to prepare and serve Saturday noon meals for area homeless. Each team commits to a three-hour shift (10 AM-1 PM) about four times a year. Interested in helping? Contact **Janet Taylor** 773-777-4052 or jkstay@aol.com.

MOMS IN TOUCH Part of an international organization. All Pilgrim School mothers are invited to join us in the church parlor on Wednesdays, 9-10:30 AM, to pray for our children and school (childcare provided). Call **Cathy Basler** 773-509-0988.

MOPS is a morning group for moms that meets monthly on the first and third Thursdays, 9-11:45 AM at the Pilgrim parsonage. Cost is \$10 and includes childcare. For questions or to RSVP, please contact **Tarah Dickerson** at tdickerson15@hotmail.com.

PARISH LIFE BOARD This group meets monthly on the first Tuesday at 7:30 PM, and is responsible for most of the hospitality, assimilation and outreach activities and projects that go on within the church. If you are interested in joining, please talk to **Anne Barsano**, **Shellie Volkens**, or **Jim Volkens**.

PROPERTIES COMMITTEE Oversees the property of the congregation and coordinates its repair and general upkeep, including church, school, teacherages and parsonage. They meet the first Sunday of the month in the School Office at 9:30 AM (8:30 in the summer). For more information, contact **Jim Volkens** 773-477-4824.

PTL The Parent Teacher League is a very active organization that supports the staff and families of Pilgrim Lutheran School. The PTL hosts many events for the families and staff through the year. Contact PTL President, **Bob Knapp** 773-612-3563 or rkimages@me.com

QUILTERS The group welcomes anyone interested in fellowship and quilting (or other needlecraft). Gatherings are informal and do not adhere to a set schedule. For dates and locations of meetings, please contact **Gail Mendiola** 773-725-8028 or **Chris Wallis** 773-561-5419.

SCHOOL BOARD Oversees our Christian education programs, including Preschool, K-8, Before-School Program, After-School Program (PAS) and sports programs, as well as other programs helpful for youth. Board positions and committees are elected, but anyone interested is encouraged to attend. They meet the third Tuesday of the month at 7:30 PM in the school Library. For more information, contact **Nancy Liljedahl** 773-271-9290.

T.O.P.S. (Take Off Pounds Sensibly) meets every Thursday from 6:30-8:00 PM in the church annex. Please join us for a friendly support program with helpful hints and discussions of current information regarding personal health. Contacts: **Millie Ostrander** 773-281-5762 or **Anne Barsano** 773-472-6037.

WOMAN'S SOCIETY An organization of women that meets on the 2nd Wednesday of the month at 12:30 PM. All women are invited to join this group for fellowship and fund raising activities. Contact: **Millie Ostrander** 773-281-5762

WORSHIP COMMITTEE Plans and creates meaningful worship for the needs of the congregation. They coordinate the activities of the choirs, ushers, acolytes, Altar Guild, organist, worship and communion assistants. They are also responsible for the creation, purchase and display of seasonal decorations in the church. They meet as necessary after the late church service in the Parlor. For more information, contact **Chris Wallis** 773-561-5419 or cewallis1949@yahoo.com.



THE CANDY CANE BENT INTO SHEPHERDS CROOKS WERE INVENTED IN 1670 WHEN A CHOIRMASTER GAVE STICKS OF HARD CANDY TO THE CHILDREN IN HIS CHOIR TO KEEP THEM QUIET DURING LONG CHRISTMAS SERVICES.



DECEMBER (After 10:30 Worship) JANUARY

06	Pancake Breakfast	03	Liljedahl; Biery
13	Carlson; Doerfler	10	Lau; Ruger
20	Daniel; Danner	17	Barsano
27	Williams	24	Erdbeer; Dooley
		31	?