

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Twenty-third Avenue East and Fourth Street
Duluth 5, Minnesota

May 27, 1949.

Dear Fellow Members of

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH:

Your vote relative to the subject matter in the enclosed letter must be received at the Church on or before 8:00 P. M., June 15, 1949, to be counted.

Place it in the ballot envelope, following exactly the instructions set forth on the face of that envelope and then enclose the ballot envelope in the return stamped envelope, after having written in your name and address on the outside of the return stamped envelope.

The ballots will be opened, counted and tabulated by the undersigned Ballot Commission, consisting of proponents and opponents of the plan. A report of the result will be made to the members of the Church at the regular Sunday morning service on June 19, 1949.

Respectfully yours,

Ballot Commission,

D. M. Bellows, Chairman,

Ray G. Palmer,

Mrs. B. S. Savin,

C. D. Stillman,

Mrs. M. H. Tibbetts.

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Twenty-third Avenue East and Fourth Street
DULUTH 5, MINNESOTA

May 27, 1949.

TO THE MEMBERS OF PILGRIM CHURCH OF DULUTH:

In March, 1948 the members of Pilgrim Church voted against the proposal to unite the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Churches into the United Church of Christ by a vote of 524 to 176. The question whether Pilgrim Church should enter the merged church, in the event that 75% of other Congregational Churches should so decide, was not voted upon.

The General Council of the Congregational Christian Churches at a meeting held on February, 5, 1949, voted to enter into the merger. The proposed merger is now being considered by the Synods of the Evangelical and Reformed Church, whose decision probably will be forthcoming within the next few months.

There is opposition to the merger within the Congregational Christian Churches. A "Committee for the Continuation of the Congregational Christian Church in the United States" has been formed for the purpose of defeating the merger. Litigation has been commenced to prevent the merger.

Consequently, the present situation with respect to the merger is confused, and the final outcome uncertain. The Deacons and Trustees of Pilgrim Church believe that it should now decide whether or not it will go into the merged church, make its decision known to all concerned and thereafter act as it sees fit. A ballot is enclosed for your use. The decision of a majority of the members voting will determine the position of the church.

If the vote favors entering the United Church of Christ, no further action on that matter need be taken.

In the event that the Church votes not to enter the merged church, it will then become necessary to decide with reasonable promptness what course our church shall follow, and that question will then be submitted to the members for their decision. The courses of action that will then be open to us, as far as now known, will be (a) to affiliate with other Congregational Christian Churches which have not entered the United Church of Christ, (b) to remain as an independent or community church, or (c) to reconsider entering the merged church.

Our church will be entirely free to follow any course that its members may decide upon.

Every member of Pilgrim Church is urged to vote upon this vitally important question.

For the Deacons,
H. U. MOORE,
Senior Deacon;

For the Trustees,
ELMER F. BLU,
Chairman.

Name _____

Address _____



ROBERT H. HOOD, Clerk

Pilgrim Congregational Church

2310 EAST FOURTH STREET

DULUTH 5, MINNESOTA

BALLOT ENVELOPE

Please do not write on this envelope.

Instructions:

1. Enclose your ballot in this envelope and seal.
2. Place this ballot envelope in the return stamped envelope addressed to  R. H. Hood, Clerk.
3. Write your name and address plainly in upper lefthand corner of the return stamped envelope.

BALLOT

Shall Pilgrim Congregational Church of Duluth
enter The United Church of Christ?

YES	
NO	

Vote by writing an "X" opposite the
"YES" or "NO" in whichever box you desire.

This ballot must be received at the Church on or before 8 P. M.,
June 15, 1949, to be counted.

PILGRIM CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH

Twenty-third Avenue East and Fourth Street

DULUTH 5, MINNESOTA

October 13, 1949.

Dearly Beloved:-

I am writing to tell you the exact situation of our Church in regard to the Merger, in order to clear up the confusion that now exists.

Last Spring we voted not to enter the United Church. That is final. Not even Congress could force us in. The legality of the Merger is now being tested in a New York Court. If it is held invalid the Congregational-Christian denomination will be just as it has been. If the Merger is held valid, the United Church of Christ will be formed next June and our relationship to the national body will be ended at that time.

Like some other "No voting churches" we will remain in the local association and in the state conference. We will pay per capita dues to them but not to the United Church. The use of our benevolent money can be determined either by the giver or the church. We will be an independent Congregational Church managing all of our affairs as has been done for almost seventy-nine years.

I am told that we are a divided church. We must not be. We must devote ourselves to making our church more harmonious, and stronger than it has been. I call upon both sides to be generous, magnanimous and forgiving. I call upon all supporters of the Merger to cease all activities. I insist on this. I call upon the opponents of the Merger to cease all activities for the Continuing Congregational Churches. I insist on this. Continued activity by either side will destroy our spirit of fellowship and without that Christian spirit our church cannot be strong.

I know I am suspect because I was for the Merger. I tell you I accepted that vote last Spring as final. I know that the Executive Committee of which I have been a member is suspect. To prove my good faith in saying my one purpose now is to restore harmony to our Church, I have resigned from the Executive Committee. To cut myself off from friends of many years is not easy but I do it gladly for the sake of Pilgrim Church.

God willing, I intend to stay here and do my utmost to lead you back into strength, and peace, and usefulness. One man cannot do this alone. I must have the help of every man and woman who is concerned for the future of our Church. I ask you to help me. All we need is good will, good sense and understanding to accomplish our purpose. These qualities abound among us and we will not fail.

To begin let us set Sunday, October 30th as "Pilgrim Church Day." Let us all come to our Church to rejoice together in our goodly heritage, to renew our covenant of brotherhood to hold a festival of friendship. Will you put aside other concerns and join in this demonstration of our unity as a family in Christ? I pray you will. From now on let us pull together, working for the future and forgetting the past.

Affectionately your minister,

JOHN M. PHILLIPS.