In the year 1917, a group of people with an Evangelical background felt the need to establish an Evangelical Church in Labadie, MO. The first services were held on the lawn of Mr. and Mrs. Florenz Drewel. The congregation sat on benches made by placing a board across the top of two nail kegs or wooden boxes. Pastor J. N. Schuck, of St. Peter’s Church, Washington, MO, was called to lead the worship services. Eventually, the services were held in the Labadie Hall. Many people attended the services by wagon, buggy, horseback and a few automobiles. The minister, and sometimes the St. Peter’s Choir, came from Washington on the 4 o’clock local train and returned on the 9:30 train. The services were held every 2 weeks during the summer months.

By October 1917, thirty-nine people expressed a desire to have an Evangelical Church organized at Labadie. In November, a Constitution was created and adopted and, when the charter was closed at the annual business meeting in January of 1918, seventy-one members had signed the constitution. By March of this same year, a church school was organized and officers were elected with eight people volunteering to serve as church school teachers. Confirmation classes for adults as well as children were a part of the initial program of the new church.

In January of 1919, the church used a $100 government bond that they had to start a building fund. One year later, three lots on Academy Hill were purchased for $400 to build the church upon. Three additional lots were purchased just north of the initial purchase, also for $400. The Dorcas Society, founded in 1919, (now the Women’s Fellowship) donated the money for these six lots.

For the next five years, services continued to be held in the Labadie Hall while all members and friends worked diligently to raise the funds to build the church. Fund raisers were conducted, including bazaars, chicken dinners, and ice cream socials. They were so successful that the Dorcas Society was able to give the $800 to buy the land and donate $2400 towards the building fund.

By the help of God and the faithful and untiring support of members and friends, the church structure became a reality. On May 6, 1926, the cornerstone was laid. The entire cost of the church structure was estimated to be $10,000. The new Pilgrim Evangelical Church building was dedicated to the service of God on December 12, 1926.

In 1934 our church became part of a union between the Evangelical Church and the German Reformed Church. Our new name was Pilgrim Evangelical and Reformed Church of Labadie.
A huge sale, called the “580 Sale” was held in 1936 to pay off the last of the $580 church note. Members donated livestock, baked goods, canned goods, etc. to raise the funds.

Pilgrim was privileged to be a part of the merger between the Evangelical and Reformed Church and the Congregational Christian Church which occurred in 1957. The fact that we have united two denominations whose traditions differed made this merger all the more significant. After the merger, the church became known as Pilgrim United Church of Christ. Our name was legally changed in April of 1958.

Although Pilgrim Church was without permanent leadership many times, the congregation remained full of faith.

In 2003 Pilgrim decided to become a Teaching Church. We seek a student from Eden Seminary entering their second year of seminary. We keep them for 2 years until they graduate. This works well for all interested parties. The student gets real-life experience dealing with all aspects of being a pastor, and the congregation gets a fresh perspective on bible lessons and service ceremonies.

We feel truly blessed to be continuing the tradition that our forefathers began so long ago in 1917.