



THE PILGRIMAGE HERALD

Periodical
Publication
U. S. P. S.
432820

The Church of the Pilgrimage,
8 Town Square, Plymouth, Massachusetts 02360
www.8townsquare.org

THE REVEREND GARY L. MARKS,
SENIOR PASTOR
508-747-3738 garymarks@8townsquare.org

THE REVEREND HEATHER MOODY,
ASSOCIATE PASTOR
hmoody@8townsquare.org

Church Office hours
Mon-Fri - 8:30 am - 4:00 pm

Phone: 508-746-3026
FAX: 508-746-4362
office@8townsquare.org

Volume LXXVIII

December 3, 2006

No. 36

Dear Friends,

On November 19, 2006 I experienced one of the most special days I've had in my long ministry at The Church of the Pilgrimage. That is to say quite a great deal! During 2006 I've tried to build interest in the significance of the Church Covenant, in general, and our own Covenant, in particular. The desire I had for stimulating enthusiasm for the four hundredth anniversary of the Scrooby/Leyden/Plymouth Church Covenant has, in some ways, fallen short of my highest ambition. Yet, on November 19th the morning service in which we renewed the Covenant was wonderful. For that experience I am extremely grateful!

In the evening of that same day the choir, organist, trumpeter and I offered a performance of "A Pilgrim Canticle." It was well attended, though frankly, I thought it would attract an overflow audience. The two hundred plus people who did attend were raving about it, suggesting forcefully that it should be an annual event. There was a magic in the sanctuary on that night. It was, a visitor to Plymouth from Maryland who said, that the "Canticle" was the highlight of his (and his family's) pilgrimage to Plymouth.

I thank the choir, Bill Richter, Elizabeth Chapman Reilly, Phil Hague and everyone else who helped to make the performance such a memorable experience. I have already thanked those who created posters, bulletins, and who delivered information to churches, town offices, and other places. I thank them again.

When I first had the idea to write the "Canticle" I wondered whether an outline of Pilgrim Story could be told with complimentary music within a reasonable period of time. I trusted Bill Richter and Elizabeth Chapman Reilly to select the music. It was masterfully done! I've spent much time editing and honing the text during the last year. On Sunday, November 19th the program all fit together in what, I think, was a most inspiring way. It was a wonderful and uplifting way to celebrate the four hundredth anniversary of the Covenant which was a first stepping-stone toward religious and civil self-governance in America.

I hope to continue raising awareness of the 1606-2006 Church Covenant beyond its four hundredth anniversary. It is a wondrous legacy and an under appreciated one.

Now, we move on to Advent. The season of Advent is a time of preparation for the celebration of Jesus' birth. Amid the clamor of war, a frenzied preoccupation with buying, a decline in hospitable behavior, etc., it is a blessing to be able to make space in our hearts and congregation for the birth of the Prince of Peace. I hope you'll avail yourselves to services and activities offered during Advent at The Church of the Pilgrimage.

As the ancients said, so say I in ending this letter: Come, Lord Jesus, Come!

Love,

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Our First Annual Intergenerational Advent Workshop & Potluck

Saturday, December 2nd from 4:00-6:00p.m.

Children, youth, and adults of all ages are warmly invited to come to Allerton Hall on the first Saturday in December for a wonderful event. We'll have all kinds of Advent and Christmas crafts including cookie decoration, ornament making, Advent wreath construction, and much more. Crafts will be geared towards different ages and abilities—there should be something for everyone to enjoy. We'll experience the joy of the season as well as the gift of Christian community by sharing a potluck meal, so bring a dish to pass. This is a wonderful opportunity to welcome the special season of Advent before we get caught up in the hectic busyness of December. We do hope you'll join us for this fun event.

Flowers: In loving memory of deceased Guild members. Given by the Guild. Members are requested to sit on the right side of the sanctuary.

Greeters: Mike & Michelle Harrington and family.

Ushers: Jody and Jack Saunders and family.

Advent Candle Service: Stephen & Susan Lindsay and Annie Emily.

Nativity Piece from SERRV Sale

Last year a small olivewood king was missing from a nativity set purchased at the SERRV Sale. The Minotts have left the piece in the church office for the owner to claim. If this belongs to you, please call the church office. If you remember who it was let us know so we can contact them. Thanks!

On Our Church Calendar

Sun, Dec. 3: *Morning Worship*, 10:00am, Rev. Gary L. Marks; *The Advent Candle Service* will be led by Stephen, Susan and Annie Emily Lindsay; *Cherub Choir Rehearsal*; *Confirmation Meeting*, 11:45-1:15pm, JRC; *Junior High Fellowship*, 4-5:30, JRC.

Mon, Dec. 4: *Monday Meals of Hospitality* in Allerton Hall; *Women's Fellowship*, 6pm, Maybury Parsonage.

Tue, Dec. 5: Rev. Marks will be in the church office at 9:30am; Rev. Moody will be in the church office 10am-12pm.

Wed, Dec. 6: Rev. Marks will be in the office, 9:30am; Rev. Moody will be in the church office, 10am-12pm; *Evening Prayer*, 7pm, Sanctuary; *Choir Rehearsal*, 7:30pm, Sanctuary.

Thurs, Dec. 7: Rev. Moody will be in the church office, 10am-12pm; *Christian Education Committee Meeting*, 7pm, JRC, conf. room.

Fri, Dec. 8: Rev. Marks will be in the church office, 9:30am; Rev. Moody will be in the church office, 10am-12pm; *Guild Meeting*, 1pm, Allerton Hall; *Wedding Rehearsal*, 6pm, sanctuary.

Sat, Dec. 9: Rev. Marks to speak with Coral Gables, UCC Church in the sanctuary, 10:30am; *Wedding* in the sanctuary, 4pm.

Other Groups Meeting at Our Church

Monday: Aerobics, 9:15-10:15am, Allerton Hall; Pilgrim Festival Chorus, 7-10pm, Sanctuary; Brownie Girl Scouts, 4-5:30, Allerton Hall; Junior Girl Scouts, 6-7pm, Great Hall; Brownie Girl Scouts, 5:30-7:15, Stewart Room (every other week).

Tuesday: Brownie Girl Scouts, 3:30-5:30, Stewart Room; Aerobics, 6:30-7:30pm, Allerton Hall.

Wednesday: Aerobics, 9:15-10:15am, Allerton Hall; Cub Scouts-Boy Scouts, 6:30pm-10:00pm, Great Hall; Daisy Girl Scout Troop, 4-5:30pm, Stewart Room (every other week).

Thursday: Aerobics, 6:30-7:30pm, Allerton Hall; Brownie Girls Scouts, 5:30-6:30, Stewart Room; AA, 7-8pm, Great Room.

Friday: Aerobics, 9:15-10:15am, Allerton Hall.

Coming Events:

Dec. 10-The Second Sunday in Advent

Dec. 13-Evening Prayer in the sanctuary, 7pm

Dec. 17-The Third Sunday in Advent

Dec. 24 Christmas Eve-Morning Worship at 10am; Family Service with Living Nativity at 7pm; Service of Lessons, Carols and Holy Communion, 11:30pm; all in the Sanctuary.

CHURCH RECORD

Recuperating

- Marion Whiting is now at the Radius Center following a hospitalization.

Baptism

- On November 19, 2006 in the sanctuary Rev. Marks baptized Ayla Marie Flockton, daughter of Romy & Jeffrey Flockton; Adrianna Lee Tedeschi, daughter of Laura & Adam Tedeschi; Laura May Enos, daughter of Meghan & Daniel Enos.

Church Membership

If you have an interest in church membership, please speak with Rev. Marks or call the church office 508-746-3026.

PAC/TV

We are hoping that someone will come forward to learn how to tape our Sunday services for airing on PAC/TV. It could be a valuable asset to a young person to learn such a skill. Rev. Marks frequently hears comments about how much people miss the telecasts. The televised services are a ministry to shut-ins, and they present an alternative to other types of religious broadcasting. Please contact Rev. Marks or the church.

Children's Worship Service

This Sunday, December 3rd, we will have our regular first Sunday of the month Worship Service for Children and Youth ages 3 through 9th grade. Worship will be in the John Robinson Center (formerly known as the Church House) and will include a Service of Communion. Parents, please bring your children to their classrooms *before* the 10a.m. service begins in the sanctuary.

Confirmands and Mentors:

Be sure to join us for Confirmation this Sunday, December 3rd at our regular meeting time, 11:45-1:15p.m.

Junior High Young People Wanted!

Our next meeting for 6th, 7th, and 8th graders will be this Sunday, December 3rd from 4:00-5:30p.m. We hope you'll join us for fun games, lively discussion, and a tasty snack. Share the good news about Junior High Fellowship and bring a friend!

Senior High Fellowship News

So far we've had two successful events, the Kodak Kapers Scavenger Hunt and Bowling at Alley Kat Lanes. Our next meeting will be January 28th at 4:00p.m. This event will include creative shopping and a culinary adventure. Intrigued? We hope you'll join us in January, and bring a friend!

Christmas Poinsettias

Christmas is fast approaching. By your loving purchase of poinsettias, we can enhance the beauty of our church for the Christmas services. Sign up in the lower vestibule following the service for the two Sundays. There will be an insert listing the donors and those memorialized or honored in the Christmas week Herald. The suggested donation for a poinsettia is \$15, although a donation of any amount is welcome. The flowers may be given to shut-ins, or picked up **after** the Christmas Eve services or the following Sunday. Volunteers will be welcomed to take flowers to shut-ins following the Christmas Sunday service.

Guild Christmas Party

On December 8th the Guild will hold their Annual Christmas Party at 1:00 in Allerton Hall with the arrival of Santa. Members are reminded to bring a wrapped \$5 gift for the Yankee Swap and an item to help stock the food pantry.

Adopt-A-Family

Adopt-A-Family items can be dropped off in Allerton hall in the box under the little Christmas Tree. Items do not need to be wrapped and you can attach to it the little card taken off the tree. Items must be brought into church by December 10th. Thank you for your help. Sincerely, Laura Curtin

Gift Ideas

The wooden "Cat's Meow" representation of The Church of the Pilgrimage are available from Kathy Marks at \$15. They are lovely and make nice Christmas gifts.

The gift of a hymnal dedication is a unique honor. Please consider the gift of a dedication or the purchase of a new hymnal for Christmas. For the donation of \$25 to the church, a bookplate in your name will be affixed to a hymnal. A list of new dedications will be published in the bulletin on Christmas Sunday, December 24. A small number of uncirculated hymnals remain for purchase, also \$25. Call the office or Bill Harting (508-746-4097) for more information

Thanksgiving News

On November 15, 2006 Rev. Marks took part in an ecumenical Thanksgiving Service at the Newfield House.

On November 18, 2006 Rev. Marks was honored to be riding on a float in the Thanksgiving Parade. The float had the theme of recognizing and honoring the 400th anniversary of the Scrooby/Leyden/Plymouth Church Covenant.

We thank the Membership and Evangelism Committee for providing a chowder/cornbread lunch following our Covenant Thanksgiving Service on November 19, 2006.

Despite the serious rain on Thanksgiving Day a large number of people attended our Open House at The Church of the Pilgrimage. We thank Liisa Budge-Johnson and Dianna Budge for organizing the much appreciated hospitable event. Rev. Marks, soaking wet, spoke to about 100 people about the Pilgrims and the Covenant in the sanctuary. We thank all who provided and served the refreshments, and Lin and John Peterson for acting as hosts in the sanctuary.

Rev. Marks played the role of the Elder Brewster in the Pilgrim's Progress on Thanksgiving Day. It took a day for his Pilgrim costume to dry out!

Rev. Moody participated in the Thanksgiving Day ecumenical service at The First Parish UU Church.

The covenant Thanksgiving Service and the performance of "A Pilgrim Canticle" on November 19th were very special. Gary speaks of them in this week's "Pastor's Letter."

The large banners at the front of the sanctuary were made by Kathy Marks. They are elegant in their simplicity. Thank you, Kathy!

Thank You Ushers

My sincere thanks to all who ushered during the month of November. Katherine Lafayette, Arlene Axford, Janie Chapman, and Shirley Axon. Debbie Cheney, Ann Motyka, Laura Curtin and Austin Curtin. Susan Miller, Hildegard Schimpf, Sarah Barnicle, and Peter Causton. Diane Harting, Rosalee Sinn, and Paul Sinn. Much appreciation also to Don Jennings for the help last Sunday. A special thank you should also go to the acolytes who did an excellent job in November. Ben Anderson, Albert Saunders Jr., Austin Donn, Naomi Moore, Matt Moore, Gabrielle Sears, and Pia DiFrancisco. God Bless you all. Dottie Bottomley

Pagaent Costumes

Your help is needed! Think back to last Christmas Eve if you will. Picture the beautiful little angels (one even flew!), the obedient little sheep, the trustworthy shepherds, the perservering wisemen, the guiding star and the blessed little babe in arms. In order to bring the story back to life again for this year the C.E. Committee needs your help. We need a few able hands to do some mending of the costumes, and we need a handful of adults to get the children into their costumes and into the limelight at their appointed times. None of this is difficult work but it is very important not only to our children but to all who fill the pews on that magical evening. Please consider how you can help. Call Rev. Heather at the church office for details, with questions, and to sign up. Thank you.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH NEWS

The Plymouth Food Warehouse: The Plymouth Area Food Warehouse, now in a new location at 14 Apollo 11 Drive (the 2nd left after Plymouth Fitness in the Industrial Park) relies on food drives and other donations to keep its shelves stocked. We continue to collect non-perishables each week. The following items are needed: canned fruit, baby food (with current dates), ketchup, relish, mustard, soups, coffee, tea, crackers, cereal, juice, peanut butter, jelly, pasta and sauce, and canned tuna and chicken and ham. With each gift we are helping "Our Neighbors in Need."

Overnights of Hospitality: We will be providing shelter to the homeless from Sunday evening (6:30pm) December 17th to Sunday morning (6:30am) December 24th. Although we have some chaperones scheduled, we need two men to volunteer for Monday, Dec. 18th and Saturday, Dec. 23rd. Please call Meg Bross at 508-830-9745 if you are willing to serve.

Call Us Friends-Buffalo, South Dakota: After reading the touching "Call Us Friends" in May, (next page) Kathy Marks mentioned that the Missions and Outreach committee might send a gift from our historic congregation to First Congregational of the United Church of Christ in Buffalo, South Dakota founded by homesteaders in 1929. We did. Along with a check for \$250, we enclosed a letter and booklet about the history of The Church of the Pilgrimage. A beautiful letter arrived from Jean Helmer, printed here to share.

Dear Friends,
Embarrassed does not begin to describe my dismay at discovering this envelope in my files this morning. While I could not recall mailing it, my unfruitful searching for it convinced me that it had been mailed long, long ago. It should have been. Had I left it in the hands of the church ladies, it would have been. It is

totally my fault that the enclosed thank you was not in your hands long, long ago. I apologize.

I had wanted to write to you to tell you of the impact that your generous gift has had on this church. You have helped us to realize that we are not alone, that we are truly one small portion of the Body of Christ. To use an olden expression, you gift "heartened" this little church. They have been tenacious in hanging on over the years. Now, once again, they are daring to dream of a future that will extend beyond the lifespan of the current membership. That has resulted in a subtle yet palpable change in tone. Not only did the front deck and steps receive their annual coating of preservative, but the inside received a thorough cleaning. A "who will care about this when we are gone" sentiment. Suddenly there are bulletin boards picturing "Congregational Stars" (pictures of those who have been in the news) and proclaiming "We are falling for Jesus" (decorated with fall foliage). Two younger families have begun attending regularly. We now hear voices of youth during our weekly object lesson during worship. Our calendars tell us that it is harvest time, but the air in this little church is filled with spring expectations. Your unexpected generosity planted these seeds of hopefulness. I wanted to convey to you how those seeds have germinated and are taking root. Thank you for being such a huge blessing to us.

Again my apologies for the delay in my writing to you. I have always prided myself on multi-tasking and on being timely. To my chagrin, I have discovered that during my mother's final illness a few months ago, many things were simply slid into folders, files and piles and left for later. I am now discovering how many things I left uncompleted during those days. There is probably a sermon about pride and humility in these events.

I remain. Your grateful friend in Christ, Jean Helmer

Call Us Friends

(taken from the UCC Bulletin Series dated May 21, 2006)

The population of Harding County, in the northwest corner of South Dakota, fell by 316 between 1990 and 2000. That may not seem like much of a drop, but it represented almost 25 percent of the people in the county. At 2,671 square miles, Harding is larger than the state of Rhode Island; yet it rants 3,1000 out of 3,140 U.S. counties in population. With one resident for every two square miles, the antelope outnumber the people.

In Harding County, and other places in rural America, young people are moving away, leaving their parents and neighbors to wonder what will become of their hometowns. Faced with questions like that, some people lose hope, and turn inward. But not the members

of the First Congregational Church in Buffalo, the county seat. There are four churches in Buffalo, population 380; Roman Catholic, Evangelical Lutheran, Assemblies of God, and United Church of Christ. First Congregational is known in the community as a church that reaches out. "Everyone is welcome here," they say, "because God loves everybody."

Jean Helmer, the licensed lay pastor who leads First Congregational, says there is something special about her flock. For them, the word neighbor is a verb. As long as there is a need in the community---and there surely is---you serve anyone who wants to be served." Only ranching, the principal livelihood in Harding county, takes precedence over church. During haying and calving seasons, Jean Helmer says, you don't see ranchers in church. The rest of the year, they will drive up to 25 miles to attend worship services.

According to the UCC Yearbook, First Congregational has 61 members. But Jean Helmer says that many of them have moved away from the county in search of employment. The remnant that remains will not give up, even though many of them are getting along in years. They take turns cleaning the old church building and making needed repairs. They gather the Bible for study every Monday. Above all, they care for one another. Neither five years of drought nor economic depression can stop these faithful people.

We pray for God's blessings upon the warm, giving people of the First Congregational Church in Buffalo, South Dakota.

Many thanks to the following people for donating coffee for the coffee hour in the coming months:

Helen Belcher
Meg Bross
Diane Flood
Pat Harper
Susan Healy
Alice & Ken Heckman
Janet Holmes
Verna Ross-Hoyt
Susan Miller
Ellie Neville
Rosalie Sinn