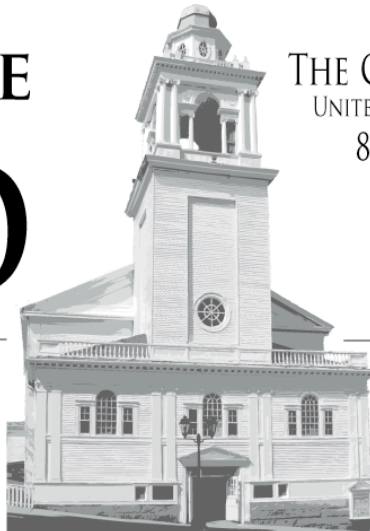

THE PILGRIMAGE HERALD

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Office Hours: Mon-Fri 8:30am-4:00pm

December 9, 2007

Dear Friends,

I don't remember just when I became aware of a simple Christian tradition regarding Advent Candles. I know for sure that they were not a part of my early church experiences and my family never had one in our home. I do know that I introduced the Advent Candle Service as part of our worship, but I can't recall the year. I also know that since our children were born we've always had such a wreath on our kitchen table and that we lit each candle on the appropriate Sunday with readings and prayers. I've read that Advent Candle Services are ancient, dating as far back as the fourth century, C.E. It is probably a part of my Puritan upbringing that such a lovely part of Christmas preparations was neglected on the basis of the fact that if it isn't in the Bible, it isn't useful. Though I was raised in The Christian Church, Disciples of Christ, the same aversion to "human inventions" was very much a part of my own early spiritual formation. I am glad to be liberated from some of the mentioned "aversions," while I am also grateful for the Puritan/Disciples tradition's caution that ritual for rituals sake can become empty.

Advent Candle Services, at church and in the home, have become an important aspect of my preparations for the birth of Christ and in my sensitivity to what God's eventual reign might be like. One candle at a time I try to set my priorities with regard to what Christmas can, and should, mean.

The name, or meaning, of each the Advent Candles varies from one church to another, or even within the same church! For instance, in our church worship service the Advent Candle Service calls the first candle "Hope." The cardboard Advent wreaths given to you by the church last Sunday names the first the Prophecy Candle. That's okay with me. Hope and Prophecy are related, after all. Both urge us to listen to what God has to say to us. As the cardboard wreath puts it, we should listen, for what God has to communicate to us is so important that finally God had to say it in person. "The Word became flesh" – a human being, the One whose birth we anticipate in Advent and celebrate at Christmas.

The Order for Lighting Advent Candles which we follow during this holy season is one which appears in The Book of Worship: United Church of Church of Christ. The introductory remarks remind us that the "theme of light is often used in the northern hemispheres because Advent is experienced at the darkest time of the year. Jesus is the Light of the World and thus brings God's hope."

Advent Candle Services are lovely rituals which, when properly understood and appreciated are able to enrich our spiritual journey to Bethlehem. May God bless us as we are drawn to the light of Christ.

Love,

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Clerk – Lois Post; Moderator – Steven Triffletti; Treasurer – Elizabeth Hughes; Collector – Debra Richters and Nate Davis;
Music Director-William B. Richter; Office Administrator-Shellie Souza; Sexton-Tony Nightingale;
World Mission Emphasis-Heifer Project International; Church Building Telephone-508-747-1341

ON OUR CALENDAR

Dec 9: Morning Worship at 10am, Rev. Heather Moody, preaching. The Advent Candle Service will be led by the Morrissy family. The Church of the Pilgrimage will host the Overnights of Hospitality, 12/9-12/15.

Dec 10: Monday Meal's of Hospitality, 10:30am-1:00pm. **Dec**

11: Rev. Marks will be in the church office at 9:30am. Rev. Moody will be in the church office at 9:30am. The Stewardship Committee will meet at 7pm in the JRC conference room.

Dec 12: Rev. Marks will be in the church office, 9:30am. Rev. Moody will be in the office at 9:30am. Evening Prayer in the sanctuary, 7pm. Choir Rehearsal in the sanctuary, 7:30pm.

Dec 13: Rev. Moody will be in the church office at 9:30am. The Membership & Evangelism Committee will meet at 7pm in the JRC conference room

Dec 14: Rev. Marks will be in the church office at 9:30am. Rev. Moody will be in the office at 9:30am. The Guild will hold their Christmas Party in Allerton Hall at 1:00pm.

Coming Events-

Dec 16: The Third Sunday in Advent. Toys for the Children's Holiday Fund will be dedicated during the service.

Dec. 21: Forefather's Day (The Mayflower landed at Plymouth on this date in 1620.

Dec. 23: Our Christmas Sunday Celebration, 10:00am

Dec. 24: Christmas Eve

- Family Christmas Eve Service in the sanctuary, 7pm
- Candlelight Christmas Eve Service with Communion in the sanctuary at 11:30pm.

CHURCH RECORD

In Memoriam: On December 3, 2007 Rev. Marks conducted funeral services for Kathleen Strickland. Our sympathies are extended to her family and friends.

FLOWERS: In loving memory of Esther Surrey, Danielle McNeely and loved ones. Given by Sandy Mann Santos and family. On the left are flowers in loving memory of John Robinson. Given by Marie Robinson.

GREETERS: Edmund & Cynthia Marks

THANK YOU TO THE THAYER FAMILY

We thank the Thayer family, Glen, Brenda, Lindsey and Brianna for conducting our First Sunday in Advent Candle Service on December 2nd.

GUILD

The Women's Guild will meet on December 14th at 1:00 for their Christmas Party. Members are asked to bring a \$5.00 wrapped gift for a Yankee Swap as well as non-perishable food items for the Plymouth Food Warehouse.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP

The Women's Fellowship Christmas Dinner will be Monday, December 10th, at 6:30pm, at the Mayberry Parsonage. We will enjoy each others cooking with a potluck dinner. There will be a yankee swap gift exchange of \$8-\$10 value. Please call Kathy Marks (508-747-3738) and register what you will bring for food. We're looking forward to being together again this Christmastime. Please join us, just because...because it will be a good time and we want you to be there. Please, even if it's

your first meeting, come. Just call and let us welcome you. Join us for good food and good fellowship.

OLD CHURCH WINDOWS

Ever wonder what happened to the old window panes? Our own Don Moore has beautifully leaded and etched individual panes, and they are available for purchase at \$100 each or \$200 for 3, with all proceeds to go towards replacing the rest of sanctuary windows. Each pane comes with a copy of our church covenant and Chuck Harper's "Church Windows" poem. Orders will be taken via a sign-up sheet in Allerton Hall on Sundays in December by Jessica Hague (who will have a sample for viewing). Please note that the process to create these panes is quite time consuming, so the actual dates of delivery will be staggered throughout the winter and spring. These windows are gorgeous, and we hope you strongly consider taking one or more home!

CHRISTMAS GIFTS FOR STAFF

Please see Jessica Hague if you would like to participate in this year's gifts for our Pastors, Sexton and Office Administrator.

"PRACTICING FOR A VISION"

The members of the Visioning Committee invite you to enter Advent as a time of intentional prayer and reflection (sometimes known as discernment) on the ways that God is calling our church to live out our ministry in the future. The Committee asks that you use the "Prayer for Discernment" below as a daily practice, and will have prayer cards available in worship.

Following this time of spiritual practice, the Visioning Committee will hold three Listening Sessions during the first three Sunday of January from 11:30-1:30 to reflect as a congregation on the ways that the Spirit is moving in our Congregation. More information can be found on the church website (<http://www.8townsquare.org>), and by contacting a member of the Visioning Committee (Christina Borel, Marna Blomberg, Mark Coombs, Jessica Hague, Jeanne Lane, Connie Lawn, Nate Moore, Tom Mudgett, and Trace Sears.) We hope that you'll join us as we continue to practice for a vision!

PRAYER FOR DISCERNMENT

Oh God, Eternal Spirit, you have called us from east and west and north and south. You have made us one people in this place. We gather mindful of many others not present who are part of your Body throughout the earth. We thank you for this opportunity to make new friends and discover new partners in the work of your Church. As we prepare to reason together about the concerns before us, grant us hearts open to the leading of your Spirit and to one another. Give us ears to hear the deeply felt yearnings of those gathered here. Call forth from us a compassionate spirit that sees one another. Give us ears to hear the deeply felt yearnings of those gathered here. Call forth from us a compassionate spirit that sees one another's good as our own. Let us be as Christ in whose Body we are one. Amen.

SENIOR HIGH MINISTRY NEWS

We invite all 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders to join us for an experiential approach to youth ministry. We're meeting the 2nd, 3rd, and 4th Sundays of the month from 10:15-11:15a.m. This means our next meeting will be this Sunday, December 9th. Come to the beginning of the worship service in the sanctuary before going to the JRC's youth room for the day's youth ministry experience. This month we're exploring faith, film,

and popular culture. Our theme is **YourTube: is there a message in the media?** We hope you'll join us! Also in the works: a Senior High Mission Trip to Tarboro, North Carolina to work with Habitat for Humanity in building homes in a hurricane-ravaged area. The trip will be June 22nd-27th, 2008. The cost of this trip is \$450 per person. We will be working on planning some fundraising activities to reduce this cost.

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH MINISTRY

We invite all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders to join us! **Our next Junior High activity will be Sunday, December 30th.** Meet after church at 11:45a.m. for pizza and a movie, as well as planning for our trip to New York City on **March 1st-2nd**. The cost of this trip is \$110 per person. We will be working on fundraising plans to reduce this cost at our Dec. 30th meeting, so plan on attending the meeting if you want to go on the trip! For this trip, we'll join other junior highs from the Mass Conference to journey to the Episcopal Cathedral of Saint John the Divine in New York City for NightWatch. For more information, go to www.macucc.org/youth/nightwatch.htm

CONFIRMATION NEWS

Our next Confirmation Meeting will be this Sunday, December 16th from 11:45-1:15p.m. Confirmands, be sure to meet with your Mentor to watch the December movie: *Amistad*. Rev. Heather has a copy of the movie that you can borrow if you need it. If you haven't watched October's movie (*Contact*) or November's movie (*Dead Poet's Society*) with your mentor, please do so ASAP.

SUNDAY SCHOOL OFFERING

This year, instead of collecting money, we are inviting our children to bring a non-perishable food item each week for their offering. This offering will go to the Plymouth Food Warehouse which in turn supports numerous food banks throughout Plymouth as well as neighboring communities. Please see the Missions announcement about what you can donate.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT INFORMATION

Sunday, December 9th: Costume Fitting. All those who are participating in the Pageant are invited to stay after church to be fitted for their costumes.

Sunday, December 16th: Pageant Rehearsal. Following the worship service, there will be a Pageant rehearsal in the sanctuary. It is important that all who plan on participating attend this rehearsal.

Monday, December 24th: Christmas Eve Family Service, 7:00p.m. Children participating in the Pageant need to arrive at the church by 6:30p.m. to get dressed in costume and ready for the Pageant.

ADVENT WORKSHOP—A GREAT SUCCESS!

Approximately 50 people gathered in Allerton Hall this past Saturday, December 1st, for a wonderful intergenerational event. Children, youth, and adults made several different kinds of ornaments and wall hangings, decorated cookies, and created beautiful Advent wreaths and door garlands out of fragrant evergreen boughs. We enjoyed a delicious potluck meal with a bounty of tasty homemade dishes. We also listened to an

impromptu performance of three members of our Junior Choir, who charmed us with their enthusiastic singing of some Christmas carols. It was a splendid way to begin the season of Advent! My thanks to the members of the Christian Education Committee who prepared supplies and activities, helped to set up, provide guidance for the activity stations, and cleaned up afterwards. Thank you, Jackie Williamson for baking the cookies, making the frosting, providing the cookie decoration tools, and helping people enjoy the fun of making a tasty treat. Thank you, Ruth Fry, for journeying to Boston to acquire the supplies for creating Advent wreaths as well as gathering a florist shop's worth of fresh evergreen boughs. And thank you to all who made delicious food for the potluck. If you didn't manage to make it this year, do plan on coming next year

A WORD OF THANKS FROM SERRV

Thank you so very much for hosting the SERRVice Mission Mart this November 2007. We thank the hardworking Missions and Outreach Committee for its support; the congregation for its purchases of the artisans' products we sell to benefit people in developing regions of the world; and your Senior Minister, the Rev. Gary Marks for his support of this mission.

MISSIONS & OUTREACH NEWS

Holiday Toy Drive Our annual children's toy collection is happening now! Please bring a new, unwrapped gift for children to church with you. Leave the toys in or near the basket in Allerton Hall. These toys will be dedicated and donated on December 16.

Rae Brightman, a local Girl Scout, is collecting **school supplies for homeless children in Plymouth County**. She is collecting new or excellent condition backpacks, as well as binders, notebooks, calculators, pencils, pens, crayons, markers--any school supplies appropriate for students ages 4 through 18. The Missions Committee is now one of her sponsors! Please see Carol Johnson or Janet Synott if you can help provide above items in bulk or multiple sets or would like to make a donation. *"For I was hungry and you gave me something to eat, I was thirsty and you gave me something to drink, I was a stranger and you invited me in..." Matthew 25:35*

Overnights of Hospitality: The first week of overnights sponsored by the Church of the Pilgrimage is December 9-16. As we have in the past, we will provide hot meals and warm shelter. **If you can help us serve meals for any of these overnights**, please talk to Gordon Campbell or Meg Bross or any other member of the Missions Committee.

Monday Meals of Hospitality are a free hot meal for anyone who is in need. If you would like to prepare a meal, help serve, or assist in any way, please sign-up in Allerton Hall after church or call coordinator Diane Flood at 508-209-0266.

The Plymouth Food Warehouse Donations: The following items are needed at the warehouse: **canned tuna, chicken, and ham**, macaroni & cheese, pasta and sauce, canned vegetables or **fruit**, beans, baby food & formula (with current dates), condiments such as ketchup, mustard, mayonnaise, peanut butter, jelly; **hearty soups** and chili, crackers, cereal, juice, coffee & tea. *Did you know that 1.3 pounds of food can provide enough food for one meal for a family of four?*

HYMNAL DEDICATION

A hymnal dedication is a significant and lasting gift to a loved one and to the church. Hymnals can e Please consider giving a hymnal dedication. A hymnal can be given in honor as well as in memory of a loved one. Call the office for information 508-746-3026.

MEMORIAL 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 next 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.

ANOTHER CHANCE!

We are an active and growing Church. There are new members and others who were not able to have their photographs and/or directory listings in our new Directory. We are sure that there are also a few errors present. To address these issues, the Membership and Evangelism Committee is planning to produce a **Directory Addendum** with photos and directory information that will be distributed within the next several weeks. If your photograph is not included in the current Directory and you wish to be included, there will be a **ONE-TIME opportunity to have your picture taken**. There will be a photo studio set up in Allerton Hall following the service of worship on Sunday, December 9th. No appointment is necessary, and there is no cost or obligation involved. Please help us make our Directory as complete as possible.



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