

THE PILGRIMAGE HERALD

THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMAGE
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST – CONGREGATIONAL
8 TOWN SQUARE, PLYMOUTH,
MASSACHUSETTS 02360

www.8townsquare.org

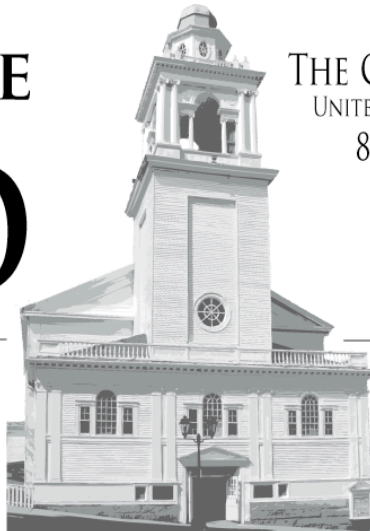


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Volume LXXX, No. 40

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

December 14, 2008

Dear Friends,

I write this letter in what some have called “the Middle Days of Advent.” We move deeply into the season of preparation, waiting and watching. I’ve spoken in those terms hundreds of times over the years, but often it isn’t clear to us in these obscure and opaque days just what it is for which we prepare, wait and watch. Today I want to name it: we prepare, wait and watch for hope to be defined and realized.

Last week I cited a book I’ve been reading, or rereading, with the simple title, Advent. It is a collection of readings around the various themes of this season. I quote from it again, this time from a reflection on hope written by Walter J. Burghardt.

*“You must be men and women of ceaseless hope,
because only tomorrow can today’s human and
Christian promise be realized; and every tomorrow
will have its own tomorrow, world without end.
Every human act, every Christian act, is an act
of hope. But that means you must be men and
women of the present you must live this moment—
really live it, not just endure it--because this very
moment, for all its imperfection and frustration,
because of its imperfections and frustration,
is pregnant with the future, is pregnant with
love is pregnant with Christ.”*

Our faith is defined by hope. It recognizes that, as someone put it, we can live longer without food than without hope. Emily Dickinson put it famously:

*“Hope is the thing with feathers
That perches in the soul,
And sings the tune without the words,
And never stops at all.”*

The middle days of Advent, 2008 suggests that we need that which keeps us going and nourishes our spirits. That is hope. There is so much hurt, perplexity and confusion in the world this Advent season. Hope is ethereal and lovely, delicate and fragile. It feeds our soul’s and sends us flying toward fulfillment. Hope protects us against despair, but we must protect hope against cynicism.

What purer form of hope is there than the feathery vision of a couple plodding toward Bethlehem anxious about a child’s birth, a child in whose life the hope of eons is bunched? That hope never stops at all!

Love,

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

ON OUR CALENDAR

Dec. 14: Morning worship 10:00am, Rev. Gary L. Marks preaching. Missions Fair featuring SERRV and Emancipation Network article for sale during the Coffee Hour. The Advent Study Group will meet in the JRC Conference Room, 11:30am-12:30pm. Christmas Pageant Sign-Up during the Coffee Hour.

Dec. 15: Monday Meals of Hospitality in Allerton Hall, 11am-1pm.

Dec. 16: Rev. Marks will be in the church office, 9:30am. The Board of Trustees will meet in the JRC at 7:00pm.

Dec. 17: Rev. Marks will be in the church office, 9:30am. Music Committee Meeting, 6:30pm, Allerton Hall. Evening Prayer Service in the sanctuary, 7:00pm-7:30pm. Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm in the sanctuary.

Dec. 19: Rev. Marks will be in the church office at 9:30am.

Coming Events:

Dec. 24-Christmas Eve: Family Service with Living Nativity in the sanctuary, 7:00pm. Candlelight Service with Lesson and Carols and Holy Communion in the sanctuary at 11:30pm.

Dec. 25: Merry Christmas! The church office will be closed on both December 24th and 25th. Our office manager, Shellie Souza, will be taking a vacation day on December 26th.

Dec. 28: Beginning on this date The Church of the Pilgrimage will be host to The Overnights of Hospitality Program.

CHURCH RECORD

Hospitalized: Bob Saunders is recuperating at home after a brief hospitalization. Gloria Johnson is now residing at The Golden Living Center.

In Memoriam: On December 9, 2008 Rev. Marks conducted a graveside service for Ashley Holmes.

Notes

It's Christmas Bonus time! Beginning Sunday, please see Jessica Hague with any donations you have for our staff's holiday bonuses. Please make sure all donations are in cash.

There was a little snow on Sunday last, but the attendance was pretty good. It was a wonderful service in which the Rev. Chuck Harper read from his new book of poetry, Sorting Things Out. We thank Chuck for helping to make it a memorable morning in Advent. I am sure he'd be happy to

provide and sign a book for you if you'd like one for a gift or for yourself.

We thank the **Coombs family** Mark, Susan and Michaela for providing the Advent Candle Service on December 7th.

The **flowers on the communion table** are in loving memory of Esther Surrey, Danielle McNeely, and loved ones. Given by Sandy Mann Santos and family. The **flowers on the right** are in loving memory of John Robinson. Given by Marie Robinson.

The **December 14th greeters** are Chuck and Joen Blanton.

Year to Date Financial Update (as of 11/30/08)

Total Income: \$133,452.16

Total Expenses: \$158,417.53

Variance(shortfall): \$24,965.37

Pledged % against Budget: 34.2%

Pledge % Goal for YTD: 41.7%

Variance: 7.5% (\$13, 650)

Please contact Elizabeth Hughes Campbell if you have questions (508-277-2473 or clowncargirl@yahoo.com).

CONFIRMATION NEWS

Our next Confirmation meeting will be Sunday, December 21st from 11:45-1:15p.m. Confirmands & Mentors, if you haven't yet watched and discussed the movie *Contact*, you need to do so right away!

JUNIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP OVERVIEW

We have a fantastic activity planned for this month! Join us **Sunday, December 14th** following worship for pizza and a great movie in the Youth Room in the John Robinson Center. The movie will help you experience the real reason for this wonderful season we are in! This movie does a wonderful job of portraying all of the familiar events that led to Jesus' birth as told in Luke and Matthew. The film includes vivid visual details and powerful storytelling. In the words of one reviewer, "One of the incidental points of the film, particularly powerful, is that doing the right thing isn't easy, even in the face of divine assurance." We hope all 6th, 7th, and 8th graders will join us and bring a friend!

SENIOR HIGH YOUTH GROUP OVERVIEW

Last Saturday, 5 Senior Highs gathered at the Plymouth Food Warehouse to receive, sort, weigh, and organize hundreds of pounds of non-perishable food items that were being collected that day as part of a Plymouth area food drive. They also prepared bags of groceries for delivery through the Council on Aging to Plymouth senior citizens in need. With our current climate of economic uncertainty and the increase in the cost of food, we were glad to be able to do something that will help make a difference in people's lives. Even so, we were surprised to learn that shelves now bursting with canned goods would become empty within a few weeks. Looking ahead to future Senior High activities, in January we will gather for food, conversation, and a movie. In February, we will gather on the morning of Monday, February 16th (Presidents' Day) to prepare the food for the Monday Meal of Hospitality served at our church in Allerton Hall. We hope all 9th, 10th, 11th, and 12th graders will join us and bring a friend!

MISSIONS & OUTREACH NEWS

Christmas Fund Offering (formerly Veteran's of the Cross)- December 21. For 106 years, the Christmas Fund Offering has been a way in which we, as members of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor bodies, have shown Christ's compassion and care to those who serve the church. Your generous giving to the 2007 Christmas Fund Offering enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance Program, on behalf of the United Church of Christ, to provide \$1,571,050 to individuals and families in need.

HOW THE FUNDS ARE USED...

The generous gifts of the UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance Program to provide:

- Some form of Ministerial Assistance to over 1,500 persons during calendar year 2008.
- Monthly pension supplementation to 458 persons.
- Quarterly health premium supplementation to 280 persons, totaling \$151,601 per quarter.
- Emergency Grants to 32 individuals and families, totaling \$37,900, in the first seven months of 2008.

- Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks to approximately 900 persons in December 2008. Of those who will receive checks, 20 are over 100 years of age. The oldest person is 106.

Missions Christmas Fair. The Missions Committee will be sponsoring a Christmas Fair in Allerton Hall following the service Sunday, December 14th. We will be proudly selling gifts from both SERRV (Sales Exchange for Refugee Rehabilitation and Vocation) and the Emancipation Network (dedicated to fighting human trafficking and modern day slavery). We will also be selling Equal Exchange coffee, chocolate, and hot chocolate mix. As many of you already know, all of these organizations provide wonderful gifts for justice-minded givers and recipients. The majority of gifts are reasonably priced and very special.

Time to look through your Linen Closets! The Missions Committee needs clean sheets for single beds (pillow cases, top sheets, fitted sheets—anything you no longer use!). Please leave donated linens behind the piano in the back of Allerton Hall. These will be used by the homeless men during our Overnights of Hospitality week at the end of December and in 2009.

Overnights of Hospitality. We need YOU! The Missions Committee needs members of our congregation to overnight host or to make desserts and salads for our next week of Hospitality (Dec. 28-Jan. 2). Please call Meg Bross at 508-830-9745 (megbross@verizon.net) or Sarah Barnicle at 508-747-5531 (SeasideEditing@gmail.com) if you'd like to volunteer. If you would like to know what working with the homeless men of Plymouth is like, we would be happy to answer your questions and address your concerns.

Kayak Raffle. The Plymouth Taskforce for the Homeless is raffling a new Old Town Cayuga 130 Kayak. The kayak retails for over \$939, but tickets are only \$15 (2 for \$25, 4 for \$50). Only 500 tickets will be sold. The drawing will be held when all tickets are sold or June 4, 2009. For more information, call Judy Erikson at 508-747-0022 or pick up the entry form and addressed envelope on the bulletin board near the Crib Room.

To view the canoe, go to:
www.oldtowncanoe.com/kayaks/recreation_touring/cayuga_cayuga_130.html.

FOOD COLLECTION

All types of non-perishable food are needed for the Plymouth Food Warehouse. The following food basics are especially needed: canned items such as fruit, vegetables, tuna, chicken and ham; macaroni & cheese; pasta & sauce; rice, beans; baby food and formula; condiments such as ketchup, mustard, mayo, peanut butter, jelly; hearty soups and chili; crackers, cereal; juice, coffee tea. Thank you for your donations of food each Sunday.

CHRISTMAS PAGEANT INFORMATION

Sunday, December 14th Costume Fitting: All those who are participating in the Pageant are invited to stay after church to be fitted for their costumes.

Sunday, December 21st: 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.

Wednesday, 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.



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SUNDAY WORSHIP – 10:00 AM
CHILDCARE AVAILABLE



Periodical
Publication
U. S. P. S.
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