
THE PILGRIMAGE HERALD

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

www.8townsquare.org



THE REVEREND GARY L. MARKS,
SENIOR PASTOR
gmarks@8townsquare.org



CHURCH OFFICE

PHONE: 508-746-3026
FAX: 508-746-4362

office@8townsquare.org

Volume LXXIX, No. 37

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

December 13, 2009

Dear Friends:

I discern that the season of Advent is about the human capacity to hope more than anything else. Hope is a fragile thing. It improbably persists in a world which is often torn apart by violence, abuse, injustice, misunderstanding or indifference. It is the human capacity to endure amid the seemingly overwhelming odds which never tire of denying its very existence. Someone said that when the world says, "Give up," hope whispers, "Try it one more time." There is a gentle stubbornness about hope which belies its resilient delicacy. There is a murmur within the heart which calmly asserts itself to be more powerful than the rancorous noises of despair and defeat. Emily Dickinson in her lovely poem, "Hope," says in its first stanza:

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

Perhaps that is why the dove is not only the symbol of peace, but also of the Holy Spirit. Hope is a bird-like thing which tenaciously wings toward an undefined future. Hope flies against the adverse winds which want it grounded and even buried in despair.

Hope is never a delusional wish against impossible odds; it is a sigh, God given, resident within the human heart which knows a tune called "eternity" and patiently awaits the words which faith will teach it to sing. Hope knows the words will come; some part of the Word has sacredly and mysteriously descended into the heart to secure hope's confidence. Hope is a fluffy thing which flies when all other things are grounded.

Advent is the four-week period preceding Christmas which allows our spirits to sensitize themselves for the entry of God into the flesh of the world. The birth of Jesus proclaims that the Word, creative and mysterious, has been given definition in a human child born in poverty in a barn on a bed of straw. We can ready ourselves for the holy birth, but only to a superficial degree. The truth born on Christmas Day will always startle us with the magnificence of its redeeming power when something as mysterious as it is wonderful is awakened within us. Despite all the neglect the world forces upon the Christmas scene, the Word persistently speaks of hope in the tableau of mother, father and child in the stillness of the night. Sometimes that scenario of speechless silence speaks to our spirits with a clarity which assures us that nothing can ultimately bring on the death of hope. Strangely, that silent night gives words to the tune which hums longingly within our hearts.

Come, Jesus come! Help us to reown hope!

Love,

©The Church of the Pilgrimage in Plymouth, MA Inc., all rights reserved.

Moderator – Allen Hoyt; Treasurer –Elizabeth Hughes Campbell; Clerk – Lois Post; Collector – Tom Mudgett;
Music Director–Kelley DePasqua; Organist – Michael Eaton; Office Manager–Shellie Souza;
World Mission Emphasis–Heifer Project International; Church Building Telephone–508-747-1341

On Our Calendar

Dec 13-Third Sunday of Advent: Morning worship 10:00am, Rev. Gary L. Marks preaching. The Cherub Choir and Junior Choir will rehearse. Christmas caroling at Golden Living Center at 1pm.

Dec 14: Rev. Marks will be in the office at 9:30am. Shellie is taking a vacation day. Monday Meals of Hospitality in Allerton Hall, 11am.

Dec 15: Rev. Marks will be in the office at 9:30am. The Plymouth Area Interfaith Clergy Association will meet at noon at the Spiritualist Church in North Plymouth. The Board of Trustees will meet at 7pm in the JRC Conference Room.

Dec 16: Rev. Marks will be in the office at 9:30am. The Music Committee will meet at 6:30pm. Choir Rehearsal, 7:30pm.

Dec 17: Rev. Marks will be in the office at 9:30am. Shellie is taking a vacation day.

Dec 18: Rev. Marks will be in the office at 9:30am.

Coming Events:

Dec 20: Christmas Sunday/The Fourth Sunday of Advent. Morning Worship at 10am. Messiah Sing in the sanctuary at 4pm.

Dec 21: Shellie is taking a vacation day.

Dec 24: Christmas Eve (The Church Office will be closed).

Christmas Eve Family Service with Living Nativity, 7pm.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service with Lessons and Carols and Communion, 11:30pm in the sanctuary.

Dec 25: Christmas Day (The Church Office will be closed). The Meals for Hospitality will be providing a turkey dinner for those who have no place else to go.

Dec 28: Shellie is taking a vacation day.

CHURCH RECORD

Hospitalized: Helen Laine recuperating at home after a stay at Jordan Hospital. Barbara Triffletti recuperating at home after a stay at Beth Israel.

N O T E S

There will not be an issue of the Herald for December 27th and January 3rd because of the holiday schedule.

Christmas Bonuses: It's a secret! As in years past, the Board of Trustees will be collecting your contributions to our salaried staff's (Sr. Pastor and Office Manager's) Christmas Bonuses. On 12/13 please see Dawn Durmis, and on 12/20 please see Verna Ross-Hoyt. Thanks!

We thank the **Richards family** for leading the Advent Candle Service on December 6th.

The Advent Hanging of the Greens Service on December 6th was a productive one. The report of the Nominating Committee was accepted and the 2010 budget, with minor alterations, was approved.

Memorial Poinsettias: This is your last chance to purchase poinsettias to honor or memorialize loved ones, while adding to the beauty of our Christmas services. There will be an insert listing the donors and those memorialized or honored in the Christmas week Herald. Sign up in the lower vestibule following the December 13th worship service. 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.

Christmas Caroling! On Sunday, December 13th, we would invite all ages to join us in Christmas caroling at the Golden Living Center on Obery Street at 1:00pm! We would ask everyone participating to bring a bag lunch to church which we will have following coffee hour and the Cherub and Junior choir rehearsals. We will leave from the church and when we return, we'll join in a time of fellowship in Allerton Hall for refreshments-hot cocoa and popcorn. Please make sure to save the date and plan on joining us! Thank you, Marna Blomberg and Barbara Northrop.

The **Open House at The Church of the Pilgrimage**, a part of the town's Tree Lighting event, was very well attended. The sanctuary was sublimely decorated and lighted and presented a peaceful interlude amid the "fun" activities. Hundreds attended the Open House in Allerton Hall. The free hot dogs and hot chocolate were very well received. There were many volunteers who made the event the success it was. Thank you!

Gary thanks the Board of Trustees for **replacing the windows** in the Pastor's Study in the church building. The frames of the old windows were badly rotted and they were all but ready to fall out. The new windows should help greatly with heat loss in winter and allow fresh air to circulate during the hot summer months.

I hope you've seen the many **photographs of Thanksgiving Day** celebrations and festivities displayed on the ocean side of Allerton Hall. They were taken by **Bill Converse** who takes hundreds of photos of church activities. He is a fine photographer and I appreciate his work enormously. Gary.

Christmas Pageant Update: The sign up sheet will continue to be in Allerton Hall. Parent Helpers are still needed to help set-up. Costume fittings are December 13 in the balcony after the worship service. Rehearsal is on December 20th, meet in the sanctuary after choir rehearsal. If you cannot make any of these dates or if you have questions, please call Jenny Henrique at 774-208-4953 or email Jenny at jensjetta@yahoo.com.

Attention Senior High Youth! Our next youth group activity (Christmas caroling and party) is scheduled for Sunday, December 20th, from 4-6pm. Please call Joyce at 508-746-1077 by Wednesday, December 16th, if you plan to attend. We need to know who's coming in order to plan rides between Radius and Second Church.

Christmas Fund Offering

The Christmas Fund for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund will take place on Sunday, December 20th. For 107 years, the Christmas Fund Offering for the Veterans of the Cross and the Emergency Fund has been a way in which we, as members of the United Church of Christ and its predecessor bodies, have embodied Christ's compassion and care to those who serve our church. HOW THE FUNDS ARE USED... The generous gifts of UCC congregations and individuals to the Christmas Fund enabled the Pension Boards' Ministerial Assistance program to provide the following gifts:

- Some form of Ministerial Assistance to approximately 1,600 persons during 2009.
- Christmas Gift checks to approximately 900 persons in 2009. Of those who will receive checks, 20 are over 100 years of age. The oldest person is 107.
- Quarterly Health Premium Supplementation to 295 families.
- Emergency Grants to 39 individual and families during the first seven months in 2009.

OPEN AND AFFIRMING REVISITED

As most of you are aware, more than one year ago, the Advisory Board appointed a five-member Discernment Committee to research and study whether or not this congregation should join the UCC's initiative with regard to being an "Open and Affirming" congregation. After a year-long series of meetings and opportunities to listen to members of the church family, they submitted their final report and recommendations. Subsequently, the Advisory Board after long discussion, voted to present the question to a full congregational meeting scheduled for January of next year. Prior to that meeting their will be one more opportunity to ask questions, offer opinions and listen for Jesus to help us along the way. The members of the congregation will receive a copy

of the committees final report and the Advisory Boards recommendations well in advance of the "refresher" meeting which will be held after church on January 10, 2010 in Allerton Hall followed by an official congregational meeting to take up the question on Sunday, January 24, 2010.

A decision on this matter has long been delayed, and we need to reach a consensus on this issue. We all will approach this with open minds and hearts, and respect for everyone's opinion as we struggle to know God's will.

The Advisory Board For information, please contact:
Diana Budge (508) 746-4514
Doug Post (508) 224-7294 E-mail: doug@mayflowerweb.com

Monday Meals Update

When the Monday Meals of Hospitality program was begun some years ago it consisted of several faithful members of our congregation putting together a delicious hot meal for a dozen or so of Plymouth's homeless and hungry guests. This same program has burgeoned to the point where 40-60 meals are served each week. The kitchen is filled with tempting aromas and up to 12 scurrying volunteers; Allerton Hall is the warm and welcoming place where upwards of 35 people enjoy one another's company and our efforts. We are frequently told that The Church of the Pilgrimage serves the best meals in town. After closing for the summer, our doors opened on the 2nd Monday in September. We thought you might be interested in the following statistics:

- On 2 Mondays in November we had over **40** guests.
- To date this season we have served a total of **541** meals (including bagged lunches that some folks take for later in the day).
- The cost of this outreach program amounts to over **\$800** thus far this season.

Thanks to our beloved and generous Mahlon Walker and his fund for the homeless, and thanks to our wonderful Missions Committee, our volunteers may be reimbursed for expenses if they desire. Any contributions you can make to either of these funds would be greatly appreciated.

Would you like to lend a hand? We have recipes available; the menus are simple and are usually set several weeks ahead. One of us would be happy to pick up your menu item if you can't bring it to church on Sunday or Monday morning. (Because of the aerobics class, the kitchen opens to us at 10:30 a.m. on Mondays.) If you don't enjoy cooking or creating a salad, perhaps you could supply rolls and/or cold cuts for the bagged lunches. You may contact one of the following people if you would like us to call you for assistance:

Diane Flood, Meg Bross, Rosa Cook, Lynnette Lancaster

Advent and Christmas Worship Services

Join us for worship each Sunday morning at 10:00 am. The table to the right is a preview of upcoming worship services and other seasonal events at The Church of the Pilgrimage.



Date	Service	Preaching	Worship Leader
December 13 10:00 am	Third Sunday in Advent Regular Worship and Sunday School	Rev. Gary	Peter Causton
December 20 10:00 am	Christmas Sunday – Family Worship No Sunday School	Rev. Gary	Jenny Healy
December 24 7:00 pm	Christmas Eve – Family Service Lessons and Carols with Living Crèche	-	Rev. Gary TBA
December 24 11:30 pm	Christmas Eve Midnight Service Lessons and Carols with Communion	-	Rev. Gary Trace Sears
December 27 10:00 am	Regular Worship and Sunday School	Rev. Gary	Diana Budge

Taken from the blessing tree displayed in November:

- “I am blessed with a treatment for Breast Cancer”
- “Thankful for a great marriage, wonderful family, and good health”
- “A new job for my daughter”
- “I am thankful for my mom and dad”
- “Socks and pickles”



THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMAGE
8 TOWN SQUARE,
PLYMOUTH, MA 02360

SUNDAY WORSHIP – 10:00 AM
CHILDCARE AVAILABLE

