

The Pilgrimage Herald



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The Church of the Pilgrimage
United Church of Christ - Congregational
8 Town Square, Plymouth
Massachusetts 02360

The Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter
Interim Pastor

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Rev. Gary L. Marks, Pastor Emeritus

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

December 2011

The Pastor's Column



Here's a Christmas story which is true. It happened to me years ago in my Falmouth church.

Christmas Eve is always a special time in our classic, white-steepled New England church, which overlooks our town's green. Each year our parishioners eagerly look forward to our Christmas Eve services, which have traditionally included Nativity tableaus, made up of young people in part. As those services progress, the overhead lights are dimmed. Our Advent wreath candles are successively lit. And tiny white lights glow from the huge Christmas tree which stands beside our chancel.

Those services are a magical time of darkness, light, and faith, as people pause from all their holiday preparations to ponder the deeper meanings of this season. At those services a hush comes over the packed congregation as the tremulous strains of "O Holy Night" are sounded, and a procession of costumed figures slowly make their way down the church's center aisle to "Bethlehem's stable" of straw scattered around a low, wooden manger. A teenage girl tenderly supported by her dark-bearded husband, shepherds carrying their crooked staffs, and wise men in their rich, flowing robes, all pass by, as if in a dream, to create the tableau before the congregation.

Years ago in the beginning of December, our Church Council had a gentle debate. It was a year when Christmas Eve fell on the same night of the week that "Alcoholics Anonymous" always held its large public meeting in our church's Fellowship Hall. Some Council members wondered:

*Shouldn't we ask A.A. not to meet that night?
If A.A. meets, will there be enough parking space
for people attending our service?*

(continued on page 2)

Meet A Member Paul MacDonald

Written by Gina Basler



Many of us know Paul affectionately as the "Amen" guy and when Paul is missing on a Sunday morning the service just isn't the same. But there is quite a bit more to Paul's story...

Paul grew up in Somerville with his sister and two brothers. He admits to being a bit wild. When he was older he began bartending, first at Pal Joeys, a notorious hangout for the "Winter Hill Gang" in South Boston, and later at Gino Cappelletti's Point After restaurant. Paul has quite a lot of stories from those days, but all of this came to an abrupt end.

On December 5, 1976, Paul was driving his car down Route 3, at what he admits was an excessive speed, when his car collided with the bridge at the Hanover exit.

Thankfully, God was not ready for Paul yet and he was pulled from the wreckage by a police officer he later had the opportunity to meet and thank. Paul was in a coma for 35 days and when he woke he found he had to learn

(continued on page 3)

**The Church of the Pilgrimage, UCC is an Open and Affirming Church
World Mission Emphasis-Heifer Project International**

Moderator - Allen Hoyt
Treasurer - Verna-Ross Hoyt
Clerk - Lois Post

Music Director - Kelley DePasqua
Organist - Michael Eaton
Office Manager - Shellie Souza

Collectors - Judy Mitchell, Doug Hagen,
Elizabeth Hughes-Campbell

Pastor's Column (cont.)

(continued from page 1)

In any case, won't A.A. participants be with their own families on Christmas Eve, instead of attending a meeting?

Other voices suggested that a meeting might especially be needed on such a holiday night, when parties and temptations to drink socially are so abundant in our society.

Our Council looked at this issue from many angles. Finally, though perhaps with reluctance on the part of some, a unanimous decision was made. A.A. could use our fellowship hall that night, even if it meant some inconvenience for those attending our 8 p.m. evening service.

That Christmas Eve finally came. Our sanctuary was quickly filling up. Our church parking lot was already overflowing. A.A. members streamed in one door. Parishioners streamed in another. Our pageant figures were passing between dressing rooms and restrooms as costumes, makeup, and beards were applied with great care.

Before donning my preaching robe, I also ducked into a restroom. There I encountered a young teenage boy, a stranger to me. He and an older man, also a stranger to me, were washing their hands in adjacent sinks.

Seeing that boy's face reflected in the mirror above the sink, I detected a sadness about him, as if, despite his youth, he had already been through a lot in life. Then, I heard that boy say to the man beside him, *I'm glad there's a meeting tonight. It's Christmas Eve; I didn't have anywhere else to go.*

In response, the older man simply shook his head in assent.

As that young boy left the restroom, I got a quick glimpse of his shock of brown hair, his baggy jeans, and his deep brown eyes which carried that hint of sadness. In an instant I was struck with this realization. That boy could easily have been one of our church's pageant figures carrying a staff or wearing the flowing robe of a wise man! But no, here he was on Christmas Eve, apparently struggling with the "hell" of his addiction. But, fortunately, in coming to our church, he was now in the company of some A.A. friends who could understand his struggle and perhaps give him some guidance.

I must admit that I walked into our sanctuary that night with moist eyes and a lump in my throat. Tender feelings welled up within me. I remembered our Council's discussions. And I remembered that young boy who had nowhere else to go that night.

I remembered those things, and I said a silent prayer of thanks in my heart to God, that on that Christmas Eve our church's "Inn" was not closed to those who really needed its shelter.

May you have a blessed and merry Christmas!
Yours in Christ's Service,



Christmas is coming, and for many of us it means new gadgets for our families. That also means that we will all be left with old or outdated gadgets that will no longer be needed. Here's something to do with those old gadgets.

Doug Post is hosting an online gadget drive through Gazelle to raise money for the Operating Fund of The Church of the Pilgrimage, and would love your support.

A gadget drive is a new way to fundraise that turns your used electronics (laptops, cell phones, MP3 players, digital cameras & more) into cash to support a cause. Contributing to this drive is simple. Just visit the drive webpage, find the value of the gadgets you would like to donate, and send them to Gazelle (shipping is free). The value will go to support The Church of the Pilgrimage.

If you would like to donate, please check out the drive's web page to learn more and track our progress. You will receive a confirmation of your donation by email, and I will be notified as soon as you make your donation.

<http://COTP.gazelle.com/>

Thank you for your support. Doug Post

The gift of a hymnal dedication

When we adopted our new hymnals in 2003, many members of the congregation and others chose to purchase, for \$25, a hymnal dedication plate in honor of a loved one or in memory of a loved one. There remain a handful of hymnals in the pews that still do not have a dedication, and this represents an opportunity to make this unique Christmas gift to both an honoree and our church. A list of newly honored recipients will be printed in the order of worship on December 25. For more information, call the church office or Bill Harting 507-746-4097, or email wharting@verizon.net

(continued from page 1)

everything over again, from talking and walking to even spelling his own name. His recovery was long and hard and, in some respects, still continues today.

Paul absolutely believes God spared his life that day and is quite devoted to taking the rest of his journey very close to God and Jesus. Most Sundays Paul attends the early service at the Second Church in Manomet before coming to The Church of the Pilgrimage for our service. Paul is very close to his nieces and nephews and his remaining brother, but is definitely sustained by his church families as well. We are lucky to have him as a member.

are eagerly awaiting the arrival of the remaining cards. With a goal of over \$190,000.00 we are confident that many more of our members and friends will answer our call of "Can you hear God calling you," with their answer of "Here I am, Lord!"

For those of you who have already pledged, we offer a great "Thank You" for doing your part as Stewards of our wonderful Church.

There are pledge cards on the table in the vestibule. If anyone has any questions please call the Church office or speak to one of our members during coffee hour.

Your Stewardship Committee,

Nancy Reed (508-746-2401), Sarah Barnicle, Barbara Quinn, Laura Curtin, Dawn Durmis



THE CHURCH OF THE PILGRIMAGE

UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

THE REV. DR. DOUGLAS K. SHOWALTER

INTERIM PASTOR

REV. GARY L. MARKS, PASTOR EMERITUS



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NOTICE

In accordance with the Bylaws of The Church of the Pilgrimage, a Business Meeting will be held on December 11, 2011, following the Service of Worship.

The Purpose of the Meeting shall be:

- 1. To act upon the 2012 Budget of the Church.
2. To receive the report of the Nominating Committee and take any action thereto.

All Church Members are urged to attend this important Meeting.

Lois E. Post

Handwritten signature of Lois E. Post

Clerk

Guild News

Our first month's income from the polka dot piggy bank was about \$120, which has been deposited into our special kitchen account. We will keep you informed of our progress as the months go along.

Every little bit helps us to realize our goal of a full kitchen at the Robinson Center and we thank you.

Our Bake Sale was a great success and we sold out completely. Many thanks for the congregation's support and to our Guild bakers. I hope that everyone enjoyed their home baked goodies. The proceeds will allow the Guild to fund its charitable works for another year.

The December meeting of the Guild will be held on Friday, December 9 at 1:00pm in Allerton Hall. Join us for this Christmas Tea. Our guest will be Lt. Nicole Ross of the local Salvation Army. The Guild, as their custom, will make a donation to the Christmas Toy Fund. Also, if you plan to attend, we ask that you consider bringing an unwrapped toy or gift to be added to our donation. There is a particular need for gifts for teenagers, both boys and girls. Suggestions are gift certificates to the movies, music stores, etc., as well as sports items, jewelry, make-up kits and books. We hope that you can share in our Christmas Holiday celebration.

Diana Budge, President of the Guild

Stewardship Committee Update

Your Stewardship Committee has been busy calling and writing notes to anyone who has not yet sent in their pledge card. As of November 16th we have received 118 pledges. Knowing that we had 134 pledges in 2011, we

from the Board of Trustees

Progress is being made on the sale of the parsonage. A purchase and sale agreement has been signed and we hope to have the sale completed by the end of the year. The decision to sell the parsonage has been a difficult one, but it has been necessary in order to maintain the long term viability of the church. The buyers have indicated that they plan to renovate the property and bring it back to its previous condition, maintaining as much of the original detail as possible. More information will be forthcoming after the closing.

Christmas bonuses: As in past years, the Board of Trustees will be collecting your contributions for Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter; Shellie, our office manager; Brian, our sexton; Kelley, our music director; and Michael, our organist. Although not as visible at our Sunday worship, Shellie plays an important role in keeping the church on an even keel. Not only does she do the administrative work, she also has been able to negotiate lower prices with several of our contractors and has saved our church hundreds of dollars throughout the year. Brian continues to do great work maintaining the church properties both inside and out. He has recently started to repaint Allerton Hall. In the past this type of work would have to be contracted out so he also has been saving the church money. We all get to enjoy wonderful music and thought-provoking sermons every Sunday. This is your chance to say thank you. Norman Bingham-Maas will be accepting your contributions (either cash or checks made payable to The Church of the Pilgrimage with a memo note "bonuses") on December 4th, 11th, and 18th. There will be two envelopes, one for our minister and one for the support staff. Funds will be divided up based on the number of hours worked for the support staff.

from the Advisory Board

A Merry Christmas to all from the Advisory Board. Because Christmas Day falls on a Sunday this year, the Advisory Board has decided to schedule our Christmas Eve service for 11:00pm rather than 11:30pm. We will put out plenty of reminders between now and then, but

mark your calendars. For our service Christmas morning, Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter is planning an informal service featuring the singing of carols. Our earlier family service on Christmas Eve will be at its normal time of 7:00pm. Also, thanks once again to the students of Plymouth South who, each year, set up our lovely Christmas tree and hang out wreaths throughout the sanctuary.

Pastoral Search Committee

As of November 18, the Search Committee has received 40 candidate ministerial profiles. Twenty-two of the candidates are men, eighteen are women. Applications have been received from many states including California, Arizona, Florida, Nebraska, Ohio, and Virginia, as well as New England. The committee is reading each profile carefully and prayerfully. There are a number of very strong candidates and we are deciding which of the candidates will be invited for an initial interview, using Skype when necessary. During the next month, we will finish reading these profiles, as well as others that might arrive. We are starting to develop the list of questions we will ask each interviewee. Interviews will follow and we expect the initial interview process to take a number of weeks to complete.

Caroling at the Newfield House

Mark your calendar and plan to join us on December 11th at 2:00pm for caroling at the Newfield House. Please bring a bag lunch and meet us downstairs in Allerton Hall following the Annual Budget meeting. We will then head over to the Newfield House at 1:45pm to begin caroling for the residents promptly at 2:00pm. We look forward to joining our voices in traditional Christmas hymns and songs (music and accompaniment will be provided). If you have other plans prior to 2:00pm, please plan to meet us at the Newfield House, if you are able. We know it's a busy time of year, but we cannot emphasize enough how meaningful this experience is, not only to the residents, but also for those of us who take a moment to share with others in this special way during the holiday season! Thank you. Marna Blomberg and Barbara Northrop

Hymn Answers from November Herald

OGOHIAPOHFYTC
 Our God, Our Help in Ages Past
 TIMFWATMLE
 This Is My Father's World
 ICTTGAWTDISOTR
 In The Garden
 WMGTSMHACMJCBP
 When Morning Gilds the Skies
 SSOGBTTWCAF
 Spirit, Spirit of Gentleness
 CYTPCRTSOHH
 Come, Ye Thankful People, Come
 ISTMPOGTMTMR
 I Sing the Mighty Power of God
 CTLIRTAMTAASA
 Christ the Lord Is Risen Today
 ATBABACGAS
 All Things Bright and Beautiful
 GOGAGOGOYPPYP
 God of Grace and God of Glory
 MHLBTFMBHSLTFB
 Morning Has Broken
 ITBTIAFITSAA
 In the Bulb There Is a Flower
 GBWYTWALCGUY
 God Be With You Till We Meet Again
 IWAIWOUTSHJTSDCFTD
 I Wonder As I Wander
 OLMGWIIAWCATWTHHM
 How Great Thou Art

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 on December 4 and December 11. In the December 18 Sunday bulletin there will be an insert listing the donors and those memorialized or honored. The suggested donation for a poinsettia is \$15, although a donation of any amount is welcome. Volunteers are needed to deliver poinsettias to our shut-in after the service on December 18. Poinsettias may also be picked up after the Christmas Eve services or the following Sunday.

December Flower Schedule

- Dec. 4 In loving memory of deceased Guild members. Given by the Guild.
- Dec. 11 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 side are in loving memory of John Robinson. Given by Marie Robinson.
- Dec. 18 Christmas poinsettias are given in memory of relatives, friends, and loved ones. Names will be included with the December 18 bulletin.
- Dec. 25 In loving memory of Grant (Rusty) Axford. Given by his parents, Barbara and Grant Axford.

Congratulations Jeff Donn



On October 27, 2011, Jeff Donn received from The Associated Press its highest journalism award. Jeff has completed 25 years as National writer for The Associated Press.

Jeff, his wife Judy, daughter Leila and son Austin are members of The Church of the Pilgrimage.

NEW YORK (AP) — National writer Jeff Donn and senior field producer Rob Celliers were honored along with 11 other Associated Press staff members who won the news organization's 2011 Oliver S. Gramling Awards.

Donn, based in Boston and a member of AP's national investigative team, won one of two \$10,000 Gramling Journalism Awards at a dinner Wednesday night for his investigative pieces on the Gulf oil spill, Japan's nuclear crisis at Fukushima and the alarming state of aging nuclear plants in the United States. The other Journalism Award went to Celliers, based in Durban, South Africa, for his video skills, ingenuity and courage in gathering historic footage of the Middle East unrest.

You may also be interested in seeing:
http://www.democracynow.org/appearances/jeff_donn

Donation of Wireless Microphones

We thank the donor (who wishes to remain anonymous) who provided our church with two wireless microphones. They are very helpful in our worship services.

Missions and Outreach News

Matthew Moore, Herald Reporter

We hope you all had a wonderful and spiritual Thanksgiving this year. The Missions and Outreach committee is very thankful for all of the members and friends of our church and the contributions you have made.

This November was a fantastic month for the Missions committee. The UCC's Mission 1 goal of over one million meals/food items was exceeded! Our church contributed over 100 food items donated on November 6th, specifically for Mission 1. Our Monday Meals program provided over 100 meals (including sandwiches) to needy people on November 7th. On November 11, at Sanctuary in Marshfield, three members of our Missions Committee teamed with volunteers from the area to package some 5400 meals in one hour as part of Kids Care. Some 50,000 meals were packed and delivered to food pantries and warehouses on our area. In other news, thanks to all who gave so generously to our Monday Meals offering. We collected over \$1500 which should enable the program to finish the year, taking some of the financial burden off those who prepare the food.

Many thanks to those who responded to the call to aid the family who was relocating to Plymouth from a homeless shelter. Numerous household items were gathered and delivered in a short time to help our "neighbor in need."

Thanks to Jenny Healy and her Sunday school class for the turkey dinner they provided for Monday, November 14th. We would also like to thank the Christian Education Committee and all others who helped organize and carry out our church's own food drive culminating on Thanksgiving Sunday, November 20th. Our youth certainly can and DO make a difference!

Thank you to those who bought our Equal Exchange coffee and chocolate and who purchased items at the SERRV sale. These sales help support farmers and craftsmen throughout the world.

It has been a very successful fall and we are grateful for your support. We wish you all happy holidays.

Missions 2012 At-a-Glance

January: Support our church's homeless program. We will be asking for gently used blankets, or give some of your time by preparing a meal or staying the night as a chaperone for our guests.

February: Support The Mahlon Walker Fund for the Homeless by making a monetary donation. Also, we ask again this month that you prepare a meal or stay as a chaperone for our guests.

March: One Great Hour of Sharing

April: General Missions Offering

May: Heifer International

June/July/August: Collect school kit supplies.

September: Monday Meals of Hospitality

October: Habitat for Humanity

November: Neighbors in Need Offering

December: Christmas Fund (collection for Retired Clergy)

Christmas Help

Every year, we conduct a toy drive to help our neighbors in need in the community. And we will be doing that again this year. But we wanted to make sure that we were not neglecting the needs of someone within our own church family. If you or someone you know within our church family needs some help with Christmas this year, please speak to Rev. Dr. Showalter. All requests will be kept confidential.

Monday Meals Information

A big thank you to the 4th & 5th grade class, led by Jenny Healy, Suzanne Anderson, Marna Blomberg, and Laura Curtin, for preparing a complete dinner on November 14. More than 63 people came in to enjoy the delicious meal, the largest attendance to date.

Monday Meals will again offer dinner on Christmas Day. Last year some 30 people attended.

We very much appreciate the generous support of the congregation. Over \$1500 was raised in the recent special offering for Monday Meals.

News of Christian Education

THANK YOU 4TH AND 5TH GRADERS! This class did a great job preparing a meal that served over 60 people that attended our Monday Meals program on November 14th. Thank you also to the parents who were able to donate food for this endeavor. And one last thank you to a few of the moms who were able to bring some relief to the usual Monday crew, by coming to serve the guests who came to eat. A job well done all around. And we hope for a repeat performance later in the winter and maybe in the early spring.



On October 30th the entire Sunday school gathered to share what each class had learned during our Good Samaritan lessons. Offerings range from the dramatic (grades 4&5 and 6&7 did performances) to the philanthropic (backpack drive and handmade autumn decorations handed out to all) to the artistic/creative (movie posters with slogans like “May the help be with you.”) Everyone seemed to enjoy the get together so much that we plan on doing it again at the end of our next session, Messengers of the Covenant, on December 18th.



Thank you to the whole congregation for your overwhelming generosity during our Thanksgiving food drive. Together we will fill many hungry bellies.

December is full of audience participation opportunities! The greening of the sanctuary will have already taken place by the time you read this, but there is still plenty left in store.

1. Christmas Caroling (see page 4)
2. Toy drive--a collection and presentation to the congregation on December 11.
3. Christmas pageant sign up: The pageant will look a little different this year, based on a service that Rev. Dr. Showalter did at his church in Falmouth similar to the Easter pageant. It will be a shorter service overall, a better match for its intended audience, but still full of meaning and music. Look for sign ups in Allerton Hall the first week in December and more information in upcoming bulletins.

New Members

We welcome (l-r, front to back rows) Rev. Bill McCoy, Laurie Bibby, Rev. George Frobig, Pam O’Brien (and her husband, Rev. Mike O’Brien), and Joan Frobig. Look in the January issue of the Herald for a few words about each of our new members.



Columbarium News

We are thrilled to announce that the first columbarium was installed in the memorial garden and will soon be ready for use. Bruce Delle Chiaie of Watertown Cremation Products in Whitman did a great job for us and matched the granite used for the columbarium to the granite foundation of the church. We still have eight niches available for sale in this unit, with our sights set on building a second, small columbarium once the funds are raised. We dedicated the columbarium at the conclusion of the November 27th worship service.



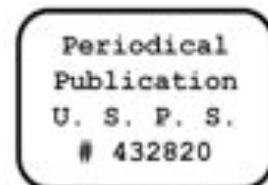
Please stop by and visit the garden if you're in the area and thanks for all of your support.

Linn Peterson, Judy Mitchell, Pat Mudgett, and, of course, Kathy Marks



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10:00 AM
CHILDCARE AVAILABLE





The Pilgrimage Calendar

◀ November	~ December 2011 ~						January ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
				1 Christian Ed Committee Mtg 7pm Marks Rm	2 Town Tree Lighting beginning 6pm	3	
4 <i>Second Sunday of Advent</i> Morning Worship 10am w/ Rev. Dr. Showalter Jr & Cherub Choir reh	5 Monday Meals of Hospitality Allerton Hall 11am Shellie is taking a vacation day	6 Search Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm	7 Missions & Outreach Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm Sanctuary Choir Reh 7:30pm	8 Membership Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm	9 Guild 1pm Allerton Hall	10	
11 <i>Third Sunday of Advent</i> Morning Worship 10am w/ Deacon Trace Sears Budget Meeting after worship Caroling @Newfield 2pm Jr & Cherub Choir reh	12 Monday Meals of Hospitality Allerton Hall 11am	13 Search Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm	14 Board of Trustees Mtg 7pm Marks Rm Sanctuary Choir Reh 7:30pm	15	16 Shellie is taking a vacation day	17	
18 <i>Fourth Sunday of Advent</i> Morning Worship 10am w/ Rev. Dr. Showalter Jr. & Cherub Choir reh PFC Messiah Sing 4pm	19 Shellie is taking a vacation day	20 Search Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm January Newsletter Deadline PAICA Mtg	21 Music Com Mtg 6:30pm MarksRm Sanctuary Choir Reh 7:30pm	22	23 Church Office Closed	24 Christmas Eve Family Service 7:00pm Christmas Eve Communion Service 11:00pm (note new time this year)	
25 <i>Christmas Day</i> Morning Worship 10am Rev. Dr. Showalter will lead us in a Christmas hymn sing. No Jr. or Cherub Choir reh today.	26 Church Office Closed	27 Search Com Mtg 7pm Stewart Rm Advisory Board Mtg 7pm Marks Rm	28 Sanctuary Choir Reh 7:30pm	29	30	31	

The Pilgrim Festival Chorus

presents

Messiah *Sing*

DATE: Sunday, December 18, 2011

TIME: 4:00 PM

LOCATION: Church of the Pilgrimage
8 Town Square

Plymouth, MA 02360

COST: \$10

Scores available or bring your own

YOU are the Chorus!

Directed by William B. Richter

Accompanied by Elizabeth Chapman Reilly, Organist

SNOW DATE: Monday, December 19, 2011

7:00 PM

Church of the Pilgrimage ♦ 8 Town Square
Plymouth, MA