

# The Pilgrimage Herald

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

The Rev. Dr. Douglas K. Showalter  
Interim Pastor

[dougshowalter@8townsquare.org](mailto:dougshowalter@8townsquare.org)

Rev. Gary L. Marks, Pastor Emeritus

[www.8townsquare.org](http://www.8townsquare.org)  
[office@8townsquare.org](mailto:office@8townsquare.org)

Church Office  
Phone: 508-746-3026  
FAX: 508-746-4362



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January 2012

## The Pastor's Column



When you receive this newsletter we will be moving into the Christian Church's season of Epiphany, which completes the observance of Christmas. It's a good time to reflect upon Jesus' Nativity.

Following our Sunday worship services and coffee hours on January 8 and 15, I will lead discussions on the New Testament Nativity stories and show slides of Bethlehem, which Chris and I have visited twice now.

In the meantime, here are my answers to questions people sometimes ask me about Christmas.

### 1. Is it disrespectful to write "Merry Xmas"?

Many people assume so, but it is not inherently disrespectful. Some people also assume that writing "Xmas" is necessarily a way of trying to take Christ out of Christmas. But that's a mistaken notion. For that "X" is the Greek letter "Chi," which has long been used in the Christian Church as a symbol for Christ. In fact, the word for Christ in Greek [*xpistos*] begins with that X. It's been said that even as far back as the Medieval Age, monk copyists used Xmas in their writings. In my seminary days, we commonly and with respect, used Xtians, Xtianity, and Xmas in our note-taking and writing about our faith.

**2. When was Jesus born?** Many modern scholars believe Jesus was born between 8-6 B.C. It is known

*(continued on page 2)*

## Meet A Member / Peggy Jewett

Written by Gina Basler



Peggy Jewett has been coming to The Church of the Pilgrimage since she relocated to Plymouth four and a half years ago. One of the big draws for her was our fantastic choir and she lends her voice to the choir whenever she is in town.

If you don't see much of Peg in the fall, it's due to her rather interesting job. Peg is the Associate Regional Director of Development for Notre Dame University. Her work base is in Pennsylvania, however she is often found on campus in Indiana, particularly during football season. Peg helps to keep the football program and the University well funded.

Peggy recently completed her Masters of Business Administration Non-Profit at Notre Dame and her master's thesis is a must read for any stewardship committee member. Peg's four children and step children are scattered around the country, with one of her daughters located here in Plymouth. Peg also has two grandsons whom she adores. Having family here gives her a good reason to call Plymouth home and it's a bonus for us that she calls our Church home as well.

*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)*

that King Herod, who appears in the Nativity account of the *Gospel According to Matthew* actually died in 4 B.C.

**3. Was Jesus really born on December 25?** There's no biblical reason to assume he was born then. If anything, Luke's portrayal of Jesus' birth taking place while shepherds were out at night with their sheep, likely suggests a spring birth for Jesus. There seem to be two basic reasons why early Christians chose December 25 as Jesus' birth date. First, it was believed back then that the Creation of our world took place on the Spring Equinox. Thus, it seemed logical that the "new Creation," which the birth of Jesus represented, must have taken place on the Winter Solstice. And, the Julian calendar used in that early period placed the Winter Solstice on December 25. Second, that Winter Solstice date had long been associated with pagan Sun festivals and the births of numerous pagan gods. By associating the birth of Jesus with that date, early Christians invested it with a new and highly significant meaning, which eventually replaced those old meanings in people's thinking and Solstice holiday practices.

**4. Is Christmas the most important Christian holy day?** All four of our New Testament Gospels focus strongly on the death and resurrection of Jesus. Easter itself was widely celebrated as a special holy day by Christians as early as 120 A.D. In contrast, only two of our New Testament Gospels contain a story of Jesus' birth. And Christmas, originally known as "Christ's Mass," was not widely celebrated by Christians until about 370 A.D.

Given the deep significance of Jesus's sacrifice on the cross and all the martyrdoms which took place in the early Church, there was a tendency among early Christians to focus on the dates when people died, not on their birth dates. That may explain, at least in part, why early Christians were slow to celebrate

Jesus' birth in addition to his resurrection. I suspect that if there had been no resurrection, very few people would likely have been interested in Jesus' birth.

In Christian tradition, every Sunday or Lord's Day is thought of as a "little Easter," not a "little Christmas." Yet, Christmas is still a very important day for Christians. It's important because it reminds us that God loves us humans so much, that God even sent God's own son to us in our human flesh. Also, as I John 4:10 notes, in that great love God sent us Jesus to be "*the atoning sacrifice for our sins.*"

**5. Are the Nativity accounts in the Gospels according to Luke and Matthew true?** I share the view of many biblical scholars, that the Nativity stories should be read as they were written, as documents of faith. One should not attempt to read them as detailed, 100% accurate, eyewitness reports. Though based on a real event in history, those two different biblical accounts use story and poetic forms to relate great spiritual truths which are of eternal significance to us.

Come join us on January 8 and 15 as we look more closely at those Nativity accounts.

Yours in Christ's Service,




The multitude of the heavenly hosts awaits their cue to enter. *Christmas Eve Family Service 2011*

## Stewardship Committee Update

We are so pleased to announce that as of December 14 we have 129 pledges totaling \$181,540.00. This amount, coupled with the continued support of the people who do not pledge, will allow us to carry on the many traditions and missions of our beloved Church. A heartfelt "Thank You" goes out to everyone who "Hears God Calling" and steps up time after time, as we strive to not only keep our Church on even financial footing, but also plan a bright future for generations to come. We are truly being "Good Stewards" of our beloved Church of the Pilgrimage.

Your 2012 Stewardship Committee,  
Nancy Reed, Sarah Barnicle, Barbara Quinn, Laura Curtin, and Dawn Durmis.

## Monday Meals News

We have much to be thankful for. So many volunteered to help during December. On December 12, Jim and Jeanette Jamieson prepared meatballs, and sausages, and the most delicious meat sauce for over 47 people. We could hardly keep up with the requests for takeouts and seconds. A total of 80 servings were provided.

Mike Morway, Chef and Manager of T-Bones restaurant again prepared a complete turkey dinner for our guests on Christmas Day. More than 40 people came to enjoy the treat. The Mays, Wilsons, Floods, and volunteers from local churches were there to help serve. We thank Mike for his generosity. This is the third year that he has provided a dinner on Christmas Day. Ann Motyka and Deb Cheney brought a festive sheet cake to top the meal. The Monday after Christmas, Al Hoyt brought in his always-popular homemade soups. Confirmands Adam Brown, Owen May, Colin Scally, and Valerie Tarr, along with mentors Mark Coombs and Jennifer Bingham-Maas, friends, and families (some 22 in all) took over the kitchen and serving--an energy filled day!

The Anderson family has generously offered to prepare the entire dinner for the Monday following New Years. We especially thank the volunteers who routinely and faithfully supplied food and served over the past months. It has been wonderful. From Team Leaders: Meg Bross, Rosa Cook and Lynnette Lancaster, Pat Mudgett and Gloria Souza, Gay and Diane Flood.

## Crib Room Help Needed

Crib room volunteers are needed. If you can help, a sign up sheet is on the crib room door. If you have any questions, call Suzanne Anderson at 508-747-6460 or email [suzander735@earthlink.net](mailto:suzander735@earthlink.net).

## Guild News

We hope that everyone enjoyed their holiday. We would like to prolong the festivities by inviting the women of the church to our January Guild meeting in Allerton Hall on Friday, January 13 at 1:00pm. Our speaker will be our own Rev. Dr. Doug, who will present a program entitled "Travels to the Holy Land." We are looking forward to it and would like to share it with everyone. As is usual, a lovely tea will follow the program. All are welcome.

We are very thankful for all the "Koins for the Kitchen" donations which have helped to fill our polka-dotted pig. The Guild has added over \$1000 this past year and our bank book shows a balance of over \$3000 so far. Our weekly "piggy donations" have added to our coffers and, along with some individual gifts and our fund raising efforts, we are making progress. Our piggy bank will continue to greet you on Sunday mornings, and we urge you to save your loose change. We have also received the donations from the Thanksgiving open house. In addition, the Membership and Evangelism Committee has stepped up to our suggestion that each committee of the church sponsor a fundraiser to help with the kitchen project. They donated the free will offering from the tree lighting.. It is a church project, not just a Guild project, and we are grateful for all church participation. Keep up the good work.

This past Christmas, the Guild made its annual donation of toys and a check to the Salvation Army's fund drive, which has become our custom. Your support of the bake sale a few weeks ago made this possible. Thank you.

We hope to see you at our January meeting.  
Diana Budge, Guild President

from the Board of Trustees

The Board of Trustees would like to thank everyone who attended the annual budget meeting on December 11, 2011. A motion was approved to use \$50,000 of the funds from the sale of the parsonage to cover our past due and current bills and to use the remaining \$300,000 from the parsonage sale along with approximately \$225,000 from the church's endowment to pay off the mortgage on the John Robinson Center. This will eliminate our debt service and should result in us not having a deficit at the end of 2012. The Board of Trustees welcomes your thoughts and suggestions as to how to strengthen our financial position going forward. One thought has been to hold a capital campaign once we have a settled pastor, with the goal to pay back the endowment and/or to raise funds for the kitchen in the John Robinson Center.

from the Advisory Board

During the summer, when the church held its first meeting to kick off the search process for the new settled pastor, one of the principle concerns raised by the congregation was how to better improve communication at the church. Toward that end, the Advisory Board has recently formed a bylaw review committee with the aim of changing the Church's governing structure. The principle idea that the committee is considering is a church council form of government made up of representatives of all the major boards and committees, with the Moderator taking on the role as the primary lay leader. This structure would ensure communication between committees and have a higher degree of accountability than our current, more loose arrangement. The members of the bylaw review committee also believe that this will be a more democratic system in that it will be made up of representatives of all the standing committees of the church. Sometime in February we plan to have an informal meeting after worship. We will keep you posted. If anyone has any questions, comments or suggestions feel free to talk to one of the members of the committee. --Don Jennings, Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter, Carol Taylor, Peter Causton, and Trace Sears.

A Harvest Fair Thank You

A special thank you to all who helped make our annual Harvest Fair a smashing success! We could not have had done it without the many hands and hearts that help out in their own way by coming together for one weekend to help our Church. Our grand total this year was \$10,910.00. Thank you again to everyone that helped make this possible!!

Love, Laura Curtin

Church Record

On October 5, 2011 Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter conducted a graveside service for Helen Brown.

On October 30, 2011 Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter baptized Benjamin Paul Whipple, son of Heidi (Robinson) & Jason Whipple of Plymouth. Benjamin's sponsors are Peter Robinson of Duxbury and Jillian Whipple of Plymouth. Kitsy Mayo of Duxbury and Kim Robinson of Plymouth are his maternal grandparents and Patricia & Paul Whipple of Plymouth are his paternal grandparents. Benjamin's maternal great grandmother is Marie Robinson of Plymouth and his maternal great-great grandmother is Eva Topazio of Plymouth.

On November 13, 2011 Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter baptized Emily Louise Moreno, daughter of Ann Marie (Mello) & Jonathan Moreno. Emily's sponsors are Kathleen Naughton of Ireland and Anthony Moreno of Agawam. Eleanor Melia and Michael Melia, both of Whitman, are her maternal grandparents and Jacquelyn & Victor Moreno of Granby are her paternal grandparents. Emily's maternal great grandmother is Eleanor Kay of Pembroke and her paternal great grandmother is Mary Scott of Agawam.

On November 20, 2011 Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter baptized Rex Henry Hurstak, son of Emily (Murphy) & Kevin Hurstak. Rex's sponsors are Kyle Murphy of Washington, D.C. and Kara Castagna of Brooklyn, NY. Rex's maternal grandparents are Kevin & Kathy Murphy of Plymouth and his paternal grandparents are Stephen & Linda Hurstak of Buzzards Bay. Robert & Helen Jeter of Nashville, TN are his maternal great grandparents.

## Pastoral Search Committee

We are starting the initial round of interviews. We have 13 confirmed candidates to interview with perhaps a few more to be added. Some are local, and we will meet them in person. Others are far away, and we will use Skype. We hope to be finished with this stage of the process by late March. As we noted at the recent budget meeting, there are challenges finding a strong candidate within the proposed budget guidelines. Our congregation is very accustomed to strong pastoral preaching and leadership, and we know we must find an energetic, dynamic person with strong preaching and leadership skills. We seek nothing less. This costs money. Now that there is no parsonage offer, we must provide a significant housing allowance. Depending on the candidate's personal circumstances, health insurance can be a major cost. We must balance the amount remaining among salary, annuity, social security offset, mileage reimbursement and various miscellaneous expenses. We urge all those who have not yet pledged to do so, as candidates will be very interested in an accurate picture of our church's financial strength. They will ask us about it, and we want to be able to give a positive response.

## Christian Education News

This year's Christmas Pageant went off beautifully! It was a new one, based on one that Rev. Dr. Showalter had done at a past church, which we modified to fit our needs. We added speaking parts for several kids (and, yes, we will add a microphone next year) which were performed wonderfully! Many asked for more speaking parts next year; we'll see what we can do. We hope you enjoyed it, and we welcome your feedback on how it might be improved for next year.

COMING SOON. . .

Feb. 4 (10 am to 2pm): Food drive with Ann Motyka and Deb Cheney at Stop & Shop on Samoset Street in Plymouth. This will be our third year, and we are hoping to grow the number of kids participating. Last year we floored the folks at the food warehouse when we delivered 1270 pounds of food from that one food drive! Let's do it again!

February is blanket month! As we did last year, this February in Sunday school we will make blankets for Project Linus, an organization that distributes security blankets to children who are terminally or chronically ill. We are seeking volunteers to pair up with a classroom to help make this happen. Not much with a needle and thread? We are accepting donations of new fabric which can be used to make these blankets; fleece is always great as it is very easy for the little ones to make blankets with this material. If you can offer your time for any of the Sundays (minus Communion Sunday) in February, please see Jenny Healy to get matched up with a classroom.

## January Flower Schedule

- |         |  |
|---------|--|
| Jan. 1  | In memory of loved ones. Given by Joyce Ashley.  |
| Jan.8   | In loving memory of their parents, brother Jack, and nephew Kevin. Given by Ray and Barbara Quinn. |
| Jan. 15 | In honor of her mother and grandmothers. Given by Jenny Healy.                                     |
| Jan.22  | In memory of his father George and daughter Kelleyanne. Given by Trace Sears.                      |
| Jan. 29 | In loving memory of his sister Ashley Coppola. Given by Michael Coppola.                           |

## Time & Talent Auction/Luncheon

Our Time and Talent Auction will be on February 12. Sign-ups will begin soon for its delicious luncheon, only \$4 per adult, \$2 per child, max. \$12. Also, be thinking about your donation(s) of time and/or talent. Forms will be available in Allerton Hall after church. *Baking or boating, tours or tortellini, poetry or pies, tickets or tea, weeding or window washing, babysitting or brownies, weekend getaways or watercolors. Or for something new: REQUEST a service, such as being taught to knit, having a basement or yard cleaned, having a porch swing sanded and polyurethaned, receiving ride to and from Sunday service, having a pile of wood split.* Don't hide your light under a bushel! Your church needs YOU! For more information, please call Judy Mitchell at 508-746-3959.

## Missions and Outreach News

We wish everyone the best of luck in the new year, and we hope you all had a wonderful Christmas holiday.

**A change in our use of money given to missions through our pledges.** Eleven percent of the monies pledged to the church come to the Missions and Outreach Committee for distribution. We have been sending 66% of that money to the UCC for their use in missions. With the increase in the number of needy in our own area, and the increase in the cost of providing for them, we felt that more of our monies should be under our control. Therefore, at our December meeting, we voted unanimously to reduce the percentage of missions funds we send to the UCC to 50% beginning January 2012. This 50/50 split falls within the current UCC guidelines. Rest assured that we will continue to support worthy state, national, and world causes as well as the local ones. If you have any questions or concerns, please speak with Joyce Ashley or Rosalee Sinn.

**About our homeless program.** We thank everyone who has helped out in previous years and invite others to join and experience this great opportunity to give. This year we will be hosting the weeks of January 29 to February 4 and February 26 to March 3. Please consider signing up in Allerton Hall to either provide a meal or act as an overnight host. On Sunday, January 15, Peter Wilson will be holding a training course for hosts in the Stewart Room at 11:30am. This meeting will go over the basics of hosting the homeless and the expectations of the Church as well as of our guests. If you are not able to host or prepare meals, please consider donating new or gently used blankets. These are given to our homeless guests to keep. We appreciate all your donations and help towards this program.

## From the Church Office

Pledge statements for 2011 will be prepared soon. They will be made available in Allerton Hall and will remain available until April 15, at which time they are destroyed. If you would like your statement mailed, please call the office. Statements will not be automatically mailed out. Also, pledge envelopes for 2012 are available in the upper vestibule for those who requested them.

## Gadget Drive

Now that you have received all sorts of new gadgets for Christmas, what will you do with your old gadgets? We have a solution for you!

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

## Christmas Bonus Thank You

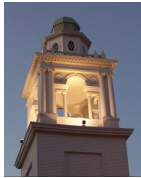
Our church staff is most grateful for the Christmas bonuses they have received from our congregation. Those bonuses are a wonderful way of affirming our congregation's caring and appreciation of the dedicated service our church staff gives to our church. Doug, Shellie, Brian, Kelley, and Mike wish to express their deep thanks to all who made those bonuses possible. Thank you and may you have a wonderful New Year!

## Pilgrim District Women

All are welcome to attend the Winter Meeting of the Pilgrim District Women, Tuesday, January 24, 2012 at Christ Church Congregational in Brockton. For reservations contact Elaine Henrickson at 781-334-0789.

## Mass Conference Super Saturday!

Saturday, March 3, 2012 / 8am - 3 pm / Ludlow, MA  
The event will feature excellent worship led by Patrick Evean, Assistant Professor of Sacred Music at Yale Divinity School. The day will also include 33 workshops on a variety of subjects impacting the local church, a bookstore, a marketplace, lunch and opportunities for networking. Register at [www.macucc.org/supersaturday](http://www.macucc.org/supersaturday) before February 22.



# The Pilgrimage Calendar

◀ December	~ January 2012 ~						February ▶
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat	
<b>1</b> <i>New Year's Day</i> Morning Worship 10am w/ Rev. Dr. Showalter	<b>2</b> Church Office Closed <b>Monday Meals of                      Hospitality 11am                      Allerton Hall</b>	<b>3</b>	<b>4</b> Missions & Outreach Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm <b>Sanctuary                      Choir Reh                      7:30pm</b>	<b>5</b> Christian Ed Com Mtg 7pm Marks Rm	<b>6</b> <i>Epiphany</i>	<b>7</b>	
<b>8</b> Morning Worship w/ Communion 10am w/ Rev. Dr. Showalter <b>Adult Ed/Nativity after                      coffee hour Allerton                      Hall</b> Confirmand will meet after worship	<b>9</b> Monday Meals of Hospitality 11am Allerton Hall	<b>10</b>	<b>11</b> Board of Trustees Mtg 7pm Marks Rm <b>Sanctuary                      Choir Reh                      7:30pm</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b> Guild Mtg 1pm Allerton Hall	<b>14</b>	
<b>15</b> Morning Worship 10am w/ Rev. Dr. Showalter <b>Adult Ed/Nativity after                      coffee hour Allerton                      Hall</b> Training Meeting for Overnights of Hospitality Stewart Room	<b>16</b> <i>Martin Luther                      King Jr. Day</i> <b>Church Office                      Closed</b> Monday Meals of Hospitality 11am Allerton Hall <b>Confirmands at                      the MLK                      Breakfast at PSHS</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>18</b> Music Com Mtg 6:30pm Marks Rm <b>Sanctuary                      Choir Reh                      7:30pm</b>	<b>19</b>	<b>20</b> <b>February                      Herald Deadline</b>	<b>21</b>	
<b>22</b> Morning Worship 10am w/Deacon Peter Causton preaching. <b>Confirmands will meet                      after worship.</b>	<b>23</b> Monday Meals of Hospitality 11am Allerton Hall	<b>24</b> Advisory Board Meeting 7pm Marks Rm	<b>25</b> Sanctuary Choir Reh 7:30pm	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	
<b>29</b> Morning Worship 10am w/ Rev. Dr. Showalter <b>Overnights of                      Hospitality Allerton Hall</b>	<b>30</b> Monday Meals of Hospitality 11am Allerton Hall <b>Overnights of                      Hospitality                      Allerton Hall</b>	<b>31</b> Overnights of Hospitality Allerton Hall	<b>Notes:</b>				

## Membership and Evangelism News



Our Church was used by the Plymouth Kiwanis Club as the centerpiece for the tree lighting on December 2. Santa held forth in the John Robinson Center, and refreshments were served in Allerton Hall.

Members of the Membership and Evangelism Committee should be congratulated for coordinating the refreshments for that event. Over 500 children and their parents were served a menu of hot chocolate, cider, hot dogs, cookies, and other culinary delights. A good time was had by all. It was nice to have our Church in the Christmas spotlight.

Two wisemen.

*Christmas Eve Family Service 2011*



## Nativity Discussion

Rev. Dr. Doug Showalter will lead discussions on the accounts of the Nativity found in the Gospels of Luke and Matthew, following our worship and coffee hours on the Sundays of January 8 and 15. He is compiling a commentary on those biblical texts. To reserve your copy, whether you attend those sessions or not, please contact our church office.



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

SUNDAY WORSHIP - 10:00 AM  
CHILDCARE AVAILABLE

