

Pilgrim's Progress December 2, 2014 – Vol. 56 No. 10



Our book study on *Jesus is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered* is fast approaching (**Wednesday December 10 at 7 PM!**) I've greatly enjoyed reading Martin Copenhaver's book and trust that some of you have too. Perhaps one of the most poignant chapters is Chapter 10—"Questions About Who Jesus Is." In the Gospels, Jesus asks the disciples: "Who do people say that I am?" and then "But who do you say that I am?"

The first question is relatively easy to answer. It's a head question and we can go the academic route. We can quote scholars and come up with plausible definitions. During Jesus' lifetime, the disciples could quote other followers, the blind guy Jesus healed, the random person who heard from so and so whose second cousin said . . . you get the idea. The second question is harder—it's a heart question. No turning to scholars, no asking your smart neighbor, no phoning a friend. Jesus asks as piercingly today as he did of his first disciples, "But who do **you** say that I am?"

This question is a poignant one to ask during Advent: **who do you say that Jesus is?**

One of my go-to definitions to explain Jesus' identity is that Jesus is Emmanuel, God-With-Us. "O Come, O Come, Emmanuel" is one of my favorite hymns as you might imagine! I use Emmanuel for Jesus often in prayers, both personal and corporate, and find myself going back to the idea of Jesus as God-With-Us often. Because of the beauty of the Incarnation, that Jesus is God among us, we know that God gets us completely. And I love that. I'm a fan of ELCA Pastor Nadia Bolz-Weber who once wrote, "God is not distant at the cross. . . . God is there in the messy mascara-streaked middle of it, feeling as [bad] as the rest of us." In the same way, God is not distant at that stable in Bethlehem. God is there in the happy tears beauty of it, feeling as joyous as the rest of us. The belief that Jesus is God-With-Us, especially in the midst of our sufferings and joys, matters to me

Now maybe you're thinking, well **I** don't believe that at all! Okay, so how would you answer Jesus' question: **"but who do you say that I am?"**

Advent is such a time in the life of the Church that we can venture out into the depths of our faiths together and ask important questions.

Actually, Copenhaver shares in *Jesus is the Question* how some people (mostly theologians) have answered Jesus' question. Karl Rahner related Jesus is "a perfected human person," A.T. Robinson said Jesus is "the human face of God," Dietrich Bonhoeffer said Jesus is "the man for others," Jurgen Moltmann said that Jesus is "the crucified God," and Martin's daughter (at age four) proclaimed Jesus is "God's best friend."¹

So, who do you say that Jesus is?
(I would love to hear your answer!)

Grace and Peace,
Lauren

¹ Martin Copenhaver, *Jesus is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered*, 101-102.



December 7 Sunday 10:30 AM, SECOND SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Service on the theme of Peace and Communion.

December 14 Sunday 10:30 AM, THIRD SUNDAY OF ADVENT (MITTEN TREE SUNDAY)

Intergenerational Service on the theme of Joy. Please bring mittens, hats, and scarves for East End House Families.

December 14 Sunday 11:45 AM, CHRISTMAS PARTY

December 21 Sunday 10:30 AM, FOURTH SUNDAY OF ADVENT

Service on the theme of Love with UCC Christmas Fund Special Offering

December 21 Sunday LONGEST NIGHT SERVICE 7:30 PM

We offer a meditative service on the winter solstice. Christmas can be a time of great joy, but also can bring sadness for those who have experienced or are in the midst of loss, illness, or pain. Longest Night allows us to reflect on these myriad emotions with others in our quiet candlelit sanctuary. Extensive organ music and hymns are performed, and readings and prayers spoken. All are welcome to join in this restorative service.

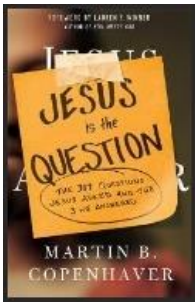
December 24 Wednesday CHRISTMAS EVE

We celebrate the birth of Jesus with two worship services at Pilgrim. An Intergenerational Christmas Pageant is geared toward families to experience the Christmas story first-hand. The early evening service ends with a Nativity tableau and candle lighting to welcome the Bethlehem baby. Our Candlelight Communion Service of Lessons and Carols offers extensive music from our Chancel Choir and the Sacrament of Communion. The quiet service ends with candle lighting and joyful thanksgiving for the gift of Christ.

5:00-6:00 PM Intergenerational Christmas Pageant

6:00-7:00 PM Coffee hour with Christmas cookies

7:00-8:00 PM Candlelight Communion Christmas Eve Service



UPCOMING ADULT ED BOOK STUDY: WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 10, 7 PM

On **Wednesday, December 10 at 7 pm**, we'll meet at church to discuss Martin Copenhaver's book, *Jesus is the Question: The 307 Questions Jesus Asked and the 3 He Answered*. Jesus is often depicted as the answer to many of our questions in life, but Copenhaver argues that Jesus is the ultimate Questioner and asks far more questions than he answers in the Gospels. The chapters contain questions about longing, compassion, identity, faith and doubt, worry, the reach of love, healing, abundance, who Jesus is, and the cross. Copenhaver also writes about the questions Jesus does answer and questions from the Risen Christ.

Jesus is the Question will provide a great chance for us to explore these important, timeless questions of our Christian faith together during Advent.

Hope to see you on December 10, and happy reading as you finish up the book!

Lauren

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CHRISTMAS EVE PAGEANT FROM LISA HULBERT

The season of Advent is here! With that comes our Christmas Eve Pageant. Children, youth and the young at heart are invited to participate in this long standing tradition. If you would like a speaking role or just to be part of the Christmas scene, please see Sara Carabbio. The Pageant rehearsals are scheduled for **December 7 and 21**, and the pageant itself will take place on Christmas Eve at the 5 PM service.

Please e-mail me with any questions or concerns.

Lisa Hulbert



PILGRIM CHURCH
CHRISTMAS PARTY

Sunday, December 14 following worship.
Festive attire encouraged! Lunch will be served.
Hosted by Vitality and Educational Ministry. We look forward to seeing you!

WEEKLY PRAYERS

- Brooks and Yolanda Taylor and their children Kyle, Ashley, Kaden, and Arden
- Duncan Todd, Sarah Carothers, and Kendall Todd
- Lisa Urben

JOYS AND CONCERNS

- Jim Munkres asked for prayers for the family of his dear cousin, Patricia, who died recently
- David Nuss asked for prayers for his co-worker who died, leaving behind an 8 year-old boy.
- The Kimball family asked to pray for Nancy Hall Young, who died on Thanksgiving after being on hospice
- Halley Suitt Tucker asked for prayers for Jackson who recently suffered a bike accident in California
- Anita Bradley asked for prayers for Darren Wilson
- We continue to pray for empathy and understanding in Ferguson, Missouri
- Sylvia Ferrell-Jones asked for prayers for all those who are homeless as the weather is colder.



STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

"God doesn't want us to be shy with God's gifts, but bold and loving and sensible." 2 Timothy 1:7

STEWARDSHIP UPDATE

On Sunday, November 16 we concluded the formal portion of our 2015 Stewardship Campaign. As of November 30, we have received pledges totaling \$191,318. This represents approximately 92% of our pledge goal for 2015. To date, individual pledges increased an average of 4%. Thank you to everyone who has submitted their pledge forms and pledged so generously this year!

Each of us on the Stewardship Committee sees pledging to support the church financially as a responsibility. We hope all of you share that view, as it is only with your stewardship dollars that we can continue to grow in our Christian faith by funding the ministries and programs of our church. So if you haven't had an opportunity to submit your pledge form yet, it's not too late to help us meet our goal. If you've never pledged before, we strongly encourage you to consider doing so. As you complete your pledge form, please consider giving boldly, as if your faith depended upon it, because in so many ways it does, and so does Pilgrim Church.

Pledge forms are available on the literature table in the Narthex or you can simply email our Assistant Collector, Derek Gardiner at derek.gardiner.02420@gmail.com indicating the amount of your pledge. If you have any questions concerning the pledge campaign or would like to speak to someone on the Stewardship Committee before you submit your pledge, please contact Derek Gardiner. We will provide a final update on the Stewardship Campaign in the coming weeks.

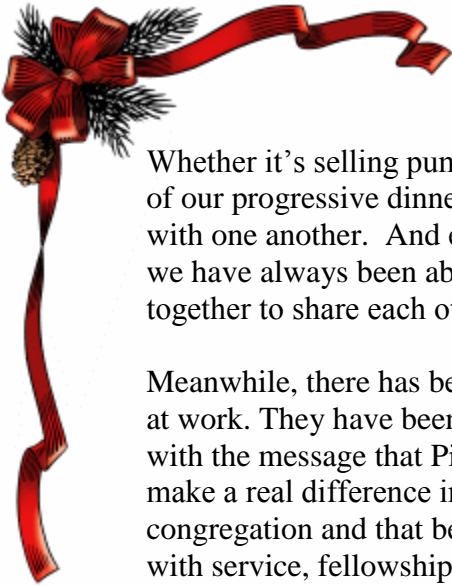
The Stewardship Committee



ORDER YOUR POINSETTIA!

Poinsettias will decorate the church on two Sundays, December 21 and December 28. If you wish to order a poinsettia plant, fill in the form in the back of this issue or in the narthex and send it to the church office by **Monday, December 8** with a check made payable to Pilgrim Congregational Church.

Poinsettias are **\$8.00** per plant for a 6 ½" pot.



THE NEW VITALITY COMMITTEE

Whether it's selling pumpkins on the front lawn together or sharing a meal in the home of one of our progressive dinner hosts and hostesses, Pilgrim is a place where we like to spend time with one another. And each month, thanks to the tireless efforts of our Fellowship committee, we have always been able to count on something happening at Pilgrim that will bring us all together to share each other's company and friendship.

Meanwhile, there has been another group - the Membership committee - who has also been hard at work. They have been finding ways to reach out both within and beyond our congregation with the message that Pilgrim is a special place. That this is a place where, together, we can make a real difference in each other's lives as well as in the wider world beyond our congregation and that becoming a part of Pilgrim opens the doors to a field of opportunity filled with service, fellowship and education.

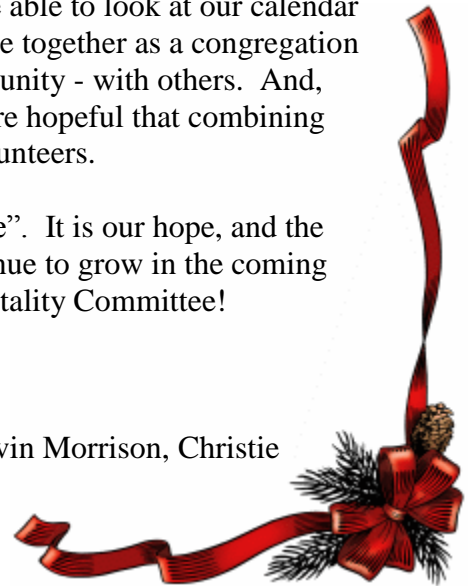
What better way to share the gift that is our congregation than by combining these two groups?!

With Membership and Fellowship coming together we will now be able to look at our calendar of activities in a way that maintains all that is special about our time together as a congregation while keeping an eye on sharing what we have to offer - our community - with others. And, since so many of our activities require lots of time and effort, we are hopeful that combining groups will help to spread the workload across a wider team of volunteers.

This new combined group has been named the "Vitality Committee". It is our hope, and the mission of this new group, that we remain vital, relevant and continue to grow in the coming years. We look forward to your ideas and involvement with the Vitality Committee!

Co-Chairs Jeanne DeSanto and Beth Kurth

Bob Beckwith, Susan Carabbio, Joe Carabbio, Ruth Litchfield, Kevin Morrison, Christie Murphy, and Marge Saradjian



To access the calendar for Pilgrim Church, please click [here](#). Thank you.



A reminder that the church office will be closed Thursday, December 25 and reopen on Monday, January 5.

Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year to all!

MISSION NEWS



Thanks to the generous donations of the congregation, the Mission Committee is pleased to announce that Pilgrim Church delivered 25 Turkey Vouchers and more than 30 bags of groceries last week. The staff at East End House said they were especially grateful for the Vouchers. We look forward to continuing Pilgrim's tradition of spreading holiday hope and cheer with our next event for East End House — the ever popular **Mitten Tree Sunday on December 14**. See you then!

Submitted by the Mission Committee

THE GIVING TREE

Our annual gift collection for the patients at Shriners Hospital is located in Pilgrim's sun room. There are gift tags (with specific requests) hanging from the branches. Please leave unwrapped gifts under the tree by **Friday, December 19**.



Thank you from the Mission Committee

CHRISTMAS EVE OFFERINGS



Christmas Eve Offerings

This year's offerings will be divided between two local organizations, The Ray Tye Medical Aid Foundation (www.rtmaf.org) which provides funding for in-hospital lifesaving treatment and surgeries for those who do not have medical insurance or financial resources and Shriners Hospital for Children (www.shrinershospitalforchildren.org) which provides free care to children with neuromusculoskeletal conditions, burn injuries and other special health care needs. Pilgrim Church is actively involved with both groups, and they have provided medical care to many of the patients we have brought here from Honduras, including Noel and Astrid who will be celebrating Christmas at Pilgrim.

Thank you!





HONDURAS HAPPENINGS

The gift of giving

Once again, Fritz & Gigi (The Children's Shop in Concord, MA) has generously donated clothing for the folks in Honduras and our patients being treated locally. Fritz & Gigi have been faithful supporters of Esperanza for the past several years. Yesterday, when I was picking up their donations, I relayed this story about the impact of their previous gifts.

A couple of years ago, I received a call from the shop that they had clothing to pass along to children in need. Among their donations was a winter snowsuit for an infant. Within 15-20 minutes of me receiving their donations, I was introduced to a baby boy who was in need. Coincidence? I don't think so...

This has happened to me too many times. Throughout the year we receive clothing, medical equipment, school supplies and more. There have been multiple occasions when we have a request for an item just as we have been given the same thing. Call it what you will, but it gives me faith knowing there is much goodwill that goes around and we are thankful to all who give so willingly.

We appreciate Pilgrim's support of our continued ministry in Honduras. Wishing you all health and peace in the coming year.

Tom and Emily

Clothing Needed!



We are looking for shirts & pants for 2 children (girl's size 12-14 and boy's size 14-16), winter jackets, snow pants and boots (girl's size 3 and men's size 7). Two Honduran children will be arriving here on December 18th. Kindly leave donations in the coat room before the 17th.

Thank you.
Emily

DEADLINE FOR PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Please note that the deadline for the January issue of Pilgrim's Progress will be December 22. Thank you!

Holiday Open Studio SALE

Clayful Expressions, Teresa Deible

Invites you to her ceramics
studio at Blake Block,
14 Springs Rd. in Bedford, MA

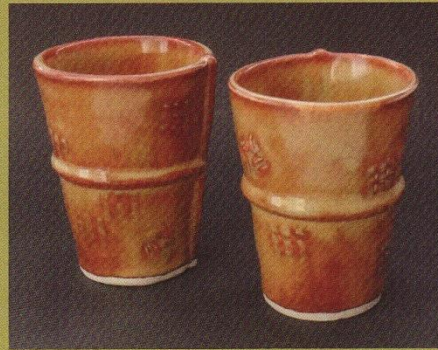


Dec. 4-7, 2014

Thurs. - Sat.

10am-8pm

Sun. Noon-5pm



Pottery, earrings,
whimsical gifts

Beth Dilorio
Mixed Media



Accessible parking in rear of Blake Block off Fletcher Rd.



POINSETTIA ORDERS

Poinsettias will decorate the church on two Sundays, December 21 and December 28. They will be from Wilson Farms, and are especially beautiful and full this year. We are lucky to be getting them for almost 25% below retail cost. If you wish to order a poinsettia plant, fill in the form below and send it to the church office by **Monday, December 8** with a check made payable to Pilgrim Congregational Church. Poinsettias are **\$8.00** per plant for a 6 ½" pot.



I/We would like to order _____ poinsettia(s) for the Christmas services.

Enclosed is my/our check in the amount of \$ _____.

Name _____
(please print)

Optional: "In memory of

"

"In celebration of, In honor of, etc. (Please circle one)

"

Please check one:

_____ I would like my plant(s) to be delivered to a homebound friend by the Care Committee (it will be delivered sometime that week after the service on the 21st).

_____ I will take my plant(s) after the service **either December 21st** _____
or December 28th _____.



UPDATED COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE 2014 – 2015

2014 – 2015		Hosts	Hosts
November 2	Communion/All Saints Day	Burger	Todd/Carothers
November 9	Special Music Sunday	Chytil	Kurth
November 16		Chen/Edmiston	Clark/Moffitt
November 23		Johnston/Fagerstrom	Council
November 30		Clarke	Dayton
December 7	Communion/Advent I	Gardiner	German
December 14		Fellowship	
December 21		F. Johnston/Sylvia F.	Jeff Boehm
December 28	Hmn Sing	Munkres	
January 4	Communion	Greene	Vega
January 11		Hopkins	Hutson
January 18		Mission	
January 25		Kimball	Collins
February 1	Communion	Labbe/Clark	Lawler
February 8		Birthday Sunday	Lisa H
February 15		LoBuglio/Royer	
February 22		Mason	McClave/Shore
March 1	Communion	Carabbio	Mitchell
March 8		Moir	Morrison
March 15		Munkres	Murphy
March 22		Nuss	O'Brien
March 29		Porter	Ramacciotti-Mahiou
April 5	Communion	Reaske	Rogers
April 12		Roy	Council
April 19		Saradjian	Carabbio
April 26		Velis	Schwartz
May 3	Communion	Litchfield	Mission
May 10		Stevens	Taylor
May 17		Snipe	Carabbio
May 24		Council	
May 31		Ramacciotti	
June 7	Communion	DeSanto	