



Pilgrim's Progress December 8, 2017 - Vol. 58 No. 10

A NOTE FROM KAREN GALE

Dear Pilgrim folks,

“Have yourself a merry, little Christmas” goes the traditional Christmas song. “May your hearts be light.” That's actually what I'm wishing for this year. I'd like a little Christmas, one that is more simple, more pared down and has less to do with gifts and glitter than with time spent thinking about love and the life Jesus lived. It's been a bit of a hard sell to my 8 year old and a bit like swimming against the cultural stream.

I purchased an Advent calendar with the little shaped chocolate pieces hidden under each day's door. And as we open the door each night I am encouraging my family to reflect on how each symbol relates to the birth of Jesus and his life. The candle was easy, the reindeer a bit more difficult. My son just rolled his eyes as I tried to make a connection to the train-shaped piece.

But I'd like a little Christmas, one that is more about watching for the light in the darkness and less about assuaging my anxiety about buying gifts. More about spending time with the members of my small family and less about making us look like the Hallmark advertisements.

I would like a merry Christmas, too. Merry means joyful or joyous. Sometimes we think it means overwhelmingly happy. But it doesn't. To be merry means experiencing the birth of Jesus as a joyful event. Not a happy or sentimental one. Merry means bringing true joy which means, in the words of Mary, hope for the hopeless, good news for the poor, comfort for the grieving, and relief to the oppressed.

A merry Christmas has room for all of us, no matter what we are feeling or experiencing during the Advent and Christmas season. For joy can come to us in the midst of grief or pain or happiness and enjoyment. Joy is a deep-seated emotion that assures us that God is very much with us and Jesus is coming to walk along our path, and that the Spirit will guide and fill us.

So have yourself a merry, little Christmas. I look forward to spending it with you through the next few weeks.

Peace,

Karen



ADVENT AND CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE AT PILGRIM



THIS SUNDAY!!! DECEMBER. 10TH – MITTEN TREE SUNDAY

This has become an annual celebration for us! Please bring new mittens, hats, and scarves to be donated to East End House in Cambridge. During the service, you will place your items on one of the Christmas trees located in the front of the sanctuary. If you prefer to make a cash donation, you can write a check to Pilgrim with *East End House* noted in the memo line.

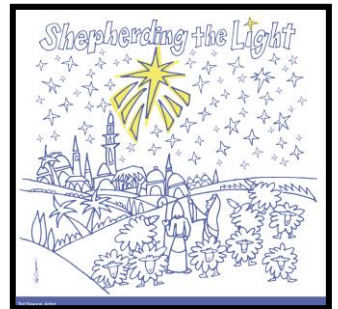


THE GIVING TREE

When Pilgrim decorates our church for Christmas, we put up a Giving Tree in the Sunroom. The tree is filled with notes requesting gifts for children who will be in Shriner's Hospital for Christmas. We want them to feel the warmth and generosity of Christmas by being able to get at least one special gift. We have asked Shriner's Hospital for a list of items that the children would like. Please look at the notes and select a gift you would like to purchase, purchase the gift and attach the tag, but **DO NOT WRAP THE GIFT**. Please put your gifts under the Giving Tree by **FRIDAY, DECEMBER 15TH**. Pilgrims will deliver the gifts to Shriners Hospital, and will make a child very happy for the holidays. If you need further info, please contact Matt Saradjian at msaradji@gmail.com.

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17th - UCC CHRISTMAS FUND OFFERING

The UCC Christmas Fund is a ministry that cares for the active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ through your participation in this year's Offering. Your gift to the Christmas Fund will not only assist pastors is need, but will also provide for the Supplementation of Small Annuities, Supplementation of Health Premiums, Emergency Grants, and provide Christmas "Thank You" Gift Checks next December to low-income retirees. Your gifts are needed more than ever to help the growing number of retirees whose low-income annuities make it difficult to meet increasing living costs. This is your opportunity to participate in God's promise of renewal by enabling this ministry of compassion and care.



PILGRIM CHURCH CHRISTMAS PARTY--DECEMBER 17TH

What do you get when you add a bunch of Pilgrims, great food, and a roster of carols--a great Christmas party! Come celebrate Christmas (a bit early) with the congregation. We will eat, sing and be merry. The lunch will be held downstairs in Fellowship Hall right after worship on Dec. 17th.

SERVICE OF THE LONGEST NIGHT--DECEMBER 21ST 7:30 PM

A contemplative service for those struggling with the holiday season and in need of a place to reflect on the promise of "God with us" during what can be a difficult time.



- Dec. 10 Second Sunday in Advent
- Dec. 17 Third Sunday in Advent with a special music presentation by Pilgrim's Choir
- Dec. 24 Fourth Sunday in Advent--A family friendly, intergenerational service
- Dec. 24 Christmas Eve, 4pm--Celebrating the birth of Christ with a pageant and candlelight service followed by a time for cookies and conversation in Pilgrim Hall
- Dec. 31 Christmas Hymn Sing--A family friendly service with carols sung by request from the congregation. A joyful way to sing out the "old" year and get ready for the new.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR SYLVIA FERRELL-JONES

Sylvia's Memorial Service will be held at Old South Church in Boston on **January 6th at 1pm**. If folks want to carpool to the event, the office can coordinate a list. The family suggests in lieu of flowers that folks make a donation to the *YW Boston Sylvia Ferrell-Jones Fund*. Sal really appreciates all the cards and outreach folks have done to Sylvia and the family through this tough time.

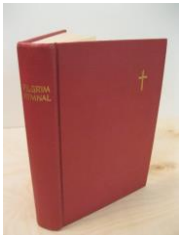
Click [HERE](#) to access the Pilgrim Church Calendar.



Please note that the office will be closed Friday, December 22 and reopening on Tuesday, January 2. Happy Holidays!

RECENT SERMONS

Please feel free to watch recent sermons on our website. [HERE](#) is the link to the most recent sermon.



OLD PILGRIM HYMNALS AVAILABLE

Pilgrim recently received a gift of new-to-us red Pilgrim hymnals that replaced our more worn out copies in the pews. There are a few of these replaced hymnals available to take home if anyone would like a copy. They are in the Coat Room.

ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

Thanks to all the people who gave altar flowers this fall. Now there are LOTS of open slots in the New Year! If you would like to celebrate a special occasion or to commemorate someone, select the date and let Beth Kurth (hughzhoney@gmail.com) or Diane Blair (admin@pilgrimcongregational.org) know. Alternatively, there will be a signup list on the round table in the narthex for the next few Sundays. Thank you!

LOST COAT!

If anyone has inadvertently taken a black down coat, size small that was in the coat room, please let me know asap. The owner hopes to have it back as soon as possible. Thank you!

Diane admin@pilgrimcongregational.org



HONORING OUR VETERANS

L. Mannert Abele
Bruce Boehm
Joseph Carabbio Sr.
Edwin Gale
Donald K. Nuss
Carl Poleschner
Leavitt J. Scofield
Erika Struble
Ralph Wesinger
Dexter Whittinghill



ALL SAINTS DAY

Ruth and Bob Allen
Carolyn Beckwith
Dolores Fagerstrom
Evan, Anna Fay
Carol Fricke
Fred Johnston
Margot Hakes
Esther and Chester Maxwell
Mary Scott-Morton
Jim Nagle
Vincent Natale
Caroline Nijenberg
Evelyn & Donald Nuss
Marty Pitts
Tessa Porterfield
Bill Salmon
Leavitt Scofield
Allen Starling
Elizabeth Sara Rogers
Ralph and Kay Wesinger

God is still speaking,
**UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST**



UCC STILLSPEAKING DAILY DEVOTIONAL

St. Nicholas
By: Mary Luti
December 6, 2017

“He had to be made like his siblings in every way, so that he might become a merciful high priest...
for we do not have a high priest who is unable to empathize with our weaknesses..”

-Hebrews 2:17, 4:15

Continue reading [HERE](#)

UPDATE FROM HANCOCK CHURCH REGARDING PUERTO RICO

Dear Friends,

It is with joy that we report to you that the shipping container that your faith communities helped Hancock Church to fill for people in need in Puerto Rico has been delivered safely. Generators running and being shared neighbor to neighbor, providing electricity where none is available. Clean water is available, both in bottles and through the filtration systems that we sent. 400 solar lanterns provide light at night. Rice and beans and milk are being eaten. Medical and first aid supplies are put to immediate use. And two boats have put a cooperative fishing venture back to work at sea. Additional funds have been provided to the two churches in Aguadilla and Cabo Rojo, and are being used to meet the most critical needs. It's all a joyful success, and we are so grateful to all of you. In all, in excess of \$50,000 was contributed, and every dime is making a difference in Puerto Rico.

Now here's a bit more detail, for those interested in the longer story. Hancock Church members Carmen Ramos-Kalsow, Susan McClements and Robin DiGiammarino met the container when it arrived in San Juan. It was good that they were there. There is no customs process, as PR is a part of the United States. But there is tax that is usually collected, and the failure to pay the tax can keep containers sealed tight at the port. Through persistence, pleading and prayer, Carmen was able to get the authorities to waive the tax, and liberate the container, a process that earned Carmen a nickname: The Velvet Hammer.

The devastation to the island is every bit as complete as you might have imagined. Many buildings are leveled entirely, and nearly all are damaged. There is still no electrical power for more than half the island, and it may be well into the new year before it reestablished in the mountainous interior. Main highways are passable, but many roads remain damaged and cannot be navigated. Many homes still have temporary roofs, and some are open to the sky.

The supplies we sent were unloaded with haste, and put to immediate use. The churches have been cooking meals for families without power; each family brings what they have, and the food is shared with all. They expect to continue this process for many months. Schools are slowly reopening, though books, paper and necessities are in short supply.

One sad note. On the day we packed the container, the Rev. Jose Luis Torres, who was pastor of the Third Presbyterian Church in Aguadilla suffered a stroke. He lingered for several days but soon passed away. The church community is grieving, as you might guess, compounding their struggles. Please remember Rev. Torres, his family and congregation in your prayers.

We hope to have a short video posted to the internet soon, and when that happens, we will forward you the link to share with your congregations. Please know that we at Hancock were honored and pleased with the support of all your congregations. What a joy to work beside you on projects of this magnitude!

All are invited to Hancock at **11:00 on Sunday the 10th** for a talk and slide show given by the three Hancock members who have just returned from ensuring the safe delivery of the goods to PR.

May the blessings of the season be upon all of you.

Peace,

Paul Shupe and Barbara Callaghan

LEXRAP WINTER COAT DRIVE TO SUPPORT REFUGEE FAMILIES WAS A HUGE SUCCESS!

The Coat drive was mammoth! Folks collected mountains of coats and delivered 80 bags of coats to IINE. The picture here is just part of the many car loads that were delivered. Plus, 11 bags of “non-coat” warm items which were given to Friends of Children in Jamaica Plain.

IINE is hoping for a new wave of refugee arrivals later this year or early next year. They will also need the warm clothes for their existing clients. So save your coats, gloves, mittens and hats for the next time they are needed.

Many thanks go to all those in Lexington, Concord and some from other surrounding communities who collected, sorted, bagged and delivered the coats. Youth groups from St. Nicholas Church and Church of Our Redeemer in Lexington helped sort this massive haul.

Note IINE works closely with LexRAP and other local agencies that work to help Refugees. Those who arrive are first helped by IINE to get health exams and legal assistance. Then the local organizations such as LexRAP get involved. The initials IINE stand for: The International Institute of New England, a nongovernmental, not-for-profit, New England-based organization dedicated to addressing the needs and rights of refugees and immigrants.

The next meeting of LexRAP will be on **December 14th** at **7:15 pm** at Temple Isaiah in Lexington. Thank you for your generosity!



Sandy Gardiner

NEWS FROM LEXEAT TOGETHER

If you know a high school student who would like to volunteer to set up (3 pm to 4:30 pm) or clean up (6:15 pm to 7:30 pm) please send them to (lexeattogether@gmail.com)! It is a fun way to volunteer and earn community service credits as well. Please visit their website at: <http://www.lexeattogether.org>.

So far this year there have been 5,000 meals served, there have been 2,100 volunteer hours given, there have been an average of 64 guests per week, and there have been 800 lbs. of fresh produce served!

Merry Christmas

✧ Karen ✧ Devin ✧ Sean ✧ Dot ✧ Diane ✧

HEARING DEVICES AVAILABLE

If the resonant acoustics of our sanctuary sometimes make it difficult for you to understand the spoken word, cheer up—help is available. We now have some new and improved individual hearing devices that work wonderfully well. Each consists of a little wireless receiver that is tuned to our sound system, with a cord and an ear plug. The sound is adjustable according to personal preference. You can find them in a basket on the name tag table in the narthex.



If you borrow one for use during the service, please be sure to return it at the end of the service, and to **TURN IT OFF**. (Otherwise, the battery runs out quickly.)

Happy listening!

PLEASE WEAR YOUR NAME TAGS!

Please wear name tags to make it easier for Karen, Sean, Dot, and any new folks to get to know us all. If you need a new name tag, please let Beth or Diane know! Thank you.



PILGRIM IS NUT FREE



Please remember that Pilgrim is a **NUT FREE** space. Please refrain from bring anything with any nuts for Coffee Hour, Events or activities! Thank you!

Additionally, as a new feature at Coffee Hour, a platter of goodies will be placed on a table for our elder members and coffee/beverages will be brought to you so you don't have to navigate around the kiddos!
