



**PILGRIM**  
Congregational Church

**UNITED CHURCH**  
OF CHRIST 

## Pilgrim's Progress January 3, 2018 – Vol. 59 No. 1

### A NOTE FROM REV. KAREN GALE

Dear Pilgrim folks,

Right now we are in the liturgical season of Epiphany. This is the period of time after the 12th day of Christmas, January 6th, until the first day of Lent. The theme of the season is looking at how the light of Christ spread after his birth, first to the magi, then in his baptism, the calling of the disciples and the beginnings of Jesus' ministry.

As Christians, we believe that we all carry the light of Christ within us. We receive the light as a great gift at Christmas and then help spread the light to others much as we lit candle by candle in worship on Christmas Eve.

Spreading light is our job, really our primary job, as Christians. As we follow Christ's message of love, inclusion, justice seeking, and peacemaking, we share the light. Sometimes it is rewarding work. Sometimes it is just plain hard.

Recently I heard an interview with the creator of the TV show *The Good Place*. The show's creator talked about the genesis of the show. He was driving around LA and kept seeing people's bad behavior. He started assigning points: minus 8 points to the man who cut him off while driving, minus 5 points for the pedestrian who tossed her napkin on the ground instead of in the trash. And so on. Enough "good points" and you get into "the good place." Enough bad ones and well....

I've been mulling this over. (I haven't seen the show). But the premise stuck with me. I certainly see enough bad driving. But should I operate out of my frustration and assign points? Or is there another way? How could I instead shed light?

I've taken to praying for those engaging in bad behavior, at least bad behavior I can't do anything about. I can pray for the car that cuts me off. What is going on inside that driver? Bad day, bad life, distraction, anger at a recent loss...I don't know. Prayer sheds light, I think. At least it sheds light for me on the path to compassion. Prayer almost always changes us more than others anyway.

Sharing light also takes action. Recently I wrote a letter to a political leader to thank them for their support of immediate mental health access for all veterans. I disagree with this leader on almost everything else they stand for. But here on this point we come together in trying to serve the 20 veterans who die each day from suicide. Mental health care is light for these servicemen and women. And I am called to help spread the light.

It can get really hard sometimes. One of the ESL students I serve is in an abusive marriage. The situation is complicated and she risks deportation or loss of her children depending on what action she takes. I can advise her. And I can offer resources. But mostly all I can do is listen. But by listening I cast light. I offer her the hope that I care. I care enough to listen deeply to her suffering.

Think about the ways in which you can shed light in your life. Be it on your daily commute, in your workplace, with those strangers you interact with every day, with friends or neighbors. How can you share light with them, the light of love and hope and peace? The light that promises no matter what, Christ is there. We are not alone.

Peace,

*Karen*



### CALL TO ANNUAL MEETING

To all Pilgrim Church Members and Friends. Pursuant to our Bylaws, Article VII, Paragraph 2, you are invited to a Congregational Meeting of the Church **on Sunday, February 4, 2018 11:45 am** following the Service.

Agenda:

- 1) Congregational approval of minutes of prior meetings.
- 2) Presentation of written committee reports, distributed in advance of this meeting.
- 3) Presentation and adoption of the fiscal budget for 2018.
- 4) Any other pertinent matters that may arise.
- 5) Necrology, remarks, and a prayer by the pastor.

Everyone is invited to attend; only members may vote. Child care will be provided.

Respectfully submitted.  
Duncan Todd, Clerk

### MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR JIM COWAN

A memorial Service will be held for Jim Cowan at Pilgrim Church on **March 17th at 2pm.**

If you are able to help with the post-service hospitality reception, please contact Diane in the office. [admin@pilgrimcongregational.org](mailto:admin@pilgrimcongregational.org). Thank you!

### CONGREGATIONAL CONVERSATIONS--PILGRIM PAST AND PRESENT

Come join a facilitated, small group discussion of Pilgrim's past. Together we will create a timeline of Pilgrim's successes and challenges across its history. We will look at themes and patterns and how they inform our understanding of the congregation and what gifts we might look for in a settled pastor. There will be two identical sessions: **Jan. 21 and Jan. 28** with space limited to 25 people in each session. The meeting will last an hour. Another one will be scheduled if needed. You can sign up on the pink sheet in worship or email Diane in the office [admin@pilgrimcongregational.org](mailto:admin@pilgrimcongregational.org). Thank you.

### DEGREENING OF THE CHURCH

Please note that the degreening of the church will take place on **Saturday, January 13 at 9 am.** Thank you!

## ALTAR FLOWER DONATIONS

We are into a new year and that means lots of opportunities to donate the beautiful floral arrangements we have every week in our worship service. If you would like to celebrate a special occasion or to commemorate someone, select the date and let Beth Kurth ([hughzhoney@gmail.com](mailto:hughzhoney@gmail.com)) or Diane Blair ([admin@pilgrimcongregational.org](mailto: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!

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



### UCC STILLSPEAKING DAILY DEVOTIONAL

#### Sibling Empathy

By: Mary Luti

January 9, 2018

When my mother turned ninety, she entered her funeral instructions on a form entitled, 'In the Event of My Death,' a phrase she found amusing, as if death were something that might happen, or might not.

Continue reading [HERE](#)

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



Please note that the office will be closed Monday, January 15 in observance of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day.

### RECENT SERMONS

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

### MARTIN LUTHER KING, JR. DAY OF SERVICE – MONDAY, JANUARY 15

On **Monday, January 15 2018**, the Town of Lexington will commemorate Martin Luther King, Jr. Day with its fifth annual family-friendly day of volunteer activities supporting the underserved. We expect it to be a fun and meaningful day.

Last year, almost 400 volunteers made a difference in the lives of more than 2,000 people. It felt great!! And, it's amazing what a community can do together! Events begin at 9:00 am with a Community Discussion about Race at Grace Chapel (59 Worthen Road, Lexington). The discussion is sponsored by the Lexington Human Rights Council (LHRC). For more info and details on all of the events, please visit <https://www.lexingtonmlk.org>.

## A NOTE FROM MONA ROY

Dear Pilgrim friends.

On Monday, MLK Day, we will be having our annual Community Conversation on Race. The topic is suspended education — specifically the disproportionate amount of time that African American and disabled children spend outside of the classroom due to discipline. As just one stark example, in recent years, African Americans were suspended at 5x rate and disabled children at a 3.5x rate (vs white non-disabled children) — this is in the LEXINGTON public school system — not a statistic that you would expect in our socially conscious town. Last September our local paper

(<http://lexington.wickedlocal.com/news/20170913/lexington-schools-to-survey-parents-about-discrimination-in-town>) wrote an article regarding a parents' survey. Since then, the Lexington School Committee unanimously approved the survey's goals:

1. To solicit feedback from parents of African American/Black students and/or students on an IEP/504 plan (K-12) on their perspective and experience of the handling of discipline issues by school officials.
2. To increase access to education by reducing the amount of time that students are removed (e.g. suspension, detention, time in guidance) from the classroom.
3. To reduce the number of suspensions (particularly of African American/Black and IEP/504 plan students) by studying the feedback and working with LPS faculty, staff, parents, guardians, and students to move towards non-exclusionary disciplinary responses.

On January 15, the Lexington community will gather to talk about what each of us can do to ensure that all of our children have equal opportunities to learn and that their civil rights are protected. Dan Losen, Lexington resident and co-author of *Suspended Education in Massachusetts*, will kick-off the conversation with a keynote address. Dan's presentation will include historical school discipline data which quantifies the historical disparity in school suspension rates in Lexington and will address how racism, ableism and associated low expectations from faculty and staff work to diminish the opportunity to learn and exacerbate the achievement gap.

There are many layers to this discussion and no matter what the topic this is an important time to engage with our fellow community members. On a personal note, I would be grateful to see as many Pilgrims there are possible. While we may not have the largest congregation, I know that we have some of the biggest hearts in town and our voices need to be at this community gathering. Attached is the flyer and I would appreciate it if people would both attend and spread the word. Pilgrim is an important community institution and I know through our work on Mission, we always seek to protect the vulnerable.

On a super personal note, my son Paulak will be saying a few lines so some supportive faces in the audience would be most appreciated. The social justice side of him wanted people to understand that education is a fundamental right and that it is morally wrong to deprive someone of education.

Mona Roy





"Our lives begin to end  
the day we become silent  
about things that matter."

Martin Luther King, Jr.

*2018 MLK Day  
Community Conversation  
on Race*

**JANUARY 15, 2018**  
***CREATING A SAFE AND JUST SCHOOL  
ENVIRONMENT IN LEXINGTON & BEYOND***

Missing out on instruction time can have a devastating impact on educational outcomes for students, particularly time lost due to suspensions. Research has demonstrated that losing instruction time can affect reading achievement and that suspensions are an important predictor of graduation rates and involvement with the juvenile justice system.

Disparity in suspension rates, as found in a review of historical school discipline data, is just one example of how in Lexington, black students and students with disabilities bear the brunt of this loss of opportunity to learn.

[The Lexington Human Rights Committee](#) invites everyone in the Greater Lexington community to bring your hearts and minds to this conversation on racial justice and discipline disparity. This is an opportunity to talk to your neighbors about what each of us can do to ensure that all of our students have equal opportunities to learn and their civil rights are protected.

Doors Open at 8:30 am  
Free Coffee and Pastries

Key Note Speaker:  
Daniel J. Losen,  
co-author of  
***Suspended  
Education in  
Massachusetts***

Program Starts at 9 am  
and ends at 10:30 am

Make Friends of  
Strangers and  
Build Coalitions for  
Change

All Ages Welcome

**GRACE CHAPEL**  
**59 Worthen Rd.,**  
**Lexington, MA**

Ample Free Parking

Handicapped Accessible

## 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](mailto: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!

## 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 whenever possible. If you need a new one, please let Diane in the office know. [admin@pilgrimcongregational.org](mailto:admin@pilgrimcongregational.org).



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## PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

JANUARY 10, 2018

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Sunday Worship and Church School - 10:30am  
Summer Worship - 9:30 am - Pilgrim Hall  
Choir Rehearsals: Thursdays at 7:30pm

Rev. Karen Gale, Interim Pastor  
Devin Shmueli, Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministries  
Sean Watland, Director of Music  
Dot Bowe, Organist  
Diane Blair, Church Secretary  
Dan Conley, Church Sexton  
Leslie Beatrice, Director of Pilgrim Nursery School

