



# Pilgrim's Progress March 1, 2016 - Vol. 58 No. 3

# FROM THE PASTOR

This is a holy time of year. Holy Week is on the horizon! A week full of mixed emotions and all sorts of beautiful and difficult moments. And it's easy to skip from Palm Sunday over to Easter without setting foot in church the rest of the week. Though my seemingly annual call is that you show up in the middle. Because we can't fully celebrate the resurrection of Jesus Christ if we don't acknowledge his betrayal on Maundy Thursday and death on Good Friday.

The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in the Old City of Jerusalem has a wonderful tradition where the devout wait for religious leaders to emerge from the tomb with the "Holy Fire" in the wee hours of Easter Sunday morning. Once the priests emerge, it's chaos as people ring bells and cheer and strain to have their candles lit from that Holy Fire. The fire spreads quickly throughout the church and it's taken out into the city and beyond, even on planes (with unlit candles then, of course!) to faithful Christians throughout the world. The ritual dates back at least 1,200 years and it's considered a miracle, the spreading of that Holy Fire from The Church of the Holy Sepulchre in Jerusalem out into the world. Last Easter, a minister friend of mine was in Jerusalem and brought home a candle for me that was lit from the Holy Fire. The thin taper candle resides at the parsonage near my beloved icon of Mary Magdalene and reminds me of the joyful celebration in Jerusalem, connecting me with Christians all over the world as we unite in our celebration of Resurrection every Easter.



In my heart of hearts, I believe that we have to acknowledge the pain and sadness of Holy Week if we truly want the joy and new life of Easter to transform us. After all, life is full of highs and lows, mountains and valleys. If we never find ourselves wandering, sad, lonely, scared, feeling all sorts of heavy emotions in the valley, we can't fully appreciate when we feel triumphant on top of the mountain, full of love and gratitude. Holy Week and the great swing of emotions we feel when we observe it fully brings this home to us as people of faith. Those faithful Christians in Jerusalem can greet the Holy Fire in the wee hours of Easter morning with the ringing of bells and shouts of joy because they have walked through the valley of the shadow of death.

So I hope that you will join us for our observances of **Maundy Thursday** (Thursday March 24 at 7:30 PM) and **Good Friday** (Friday March 25 at 12 PM) at Pilgrim Church--knowing that your Easter will be transformative if you do.

See you in church,



#### LENTEN AND HOLY WEEK WORSHIP SERVICES

We have a number of Lenten worship services we'll offer throughout this season. Easter Sunday is always more meaningful if we journey with Jesus and the disciples through Lent and Holy Week, and these services will help us make that spiritual journey.

<u>Wednesday March 2- Vespers Service—7:00 PM.</u> Dan and Lauren will offer a Lenten Vespers service. Vespers is the sunset evening prayer service in our faith tradition and is celebrated by Christians throughout the world. Come to pray, hear beautiful organ pieces, and receive communion in our candlelit sanctuary.

<u>Wednesday March 9 - Vespers Service—7:00 PM.</u> Dan and Lauren will offer a second Lenten Vespers Service. Please plan on joining us.

<u>Sunday March 20 - Palm Sunday—10:30 AM.</u> Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem with folks waving palms and crying, "*Hosanna! Blessed is the one who comes in the name of the Lord!*" (John 12:13) We will process into the sanctuary waving our palms to begin Palm Sunday, and the service will be intergenerational.

**Thursday March 24 - Maundy Thursday—7:30 PM.** Maundy Thursday marks the night Jesus gave the disciples a new commandment, *"I give you a new commandment, that you love one another. Just as I have loved you, you also should love one another."* (John 13:34) Maundy Thursday is also the night of the Last Supper and ends with the arrest of Jesus in the Garden of Gethsemane. (Communion will be served.)

**Friday March 25 - Good Friday**—**12:00 PM.** Jesus' journey to the cross, from the time of his arrest and trial to his crucifixion, are the events that help us observe Good Friday. Good Friday is also the day that the Church intercedes for the world, knowing that sin and death never have the final say in God's story. *"Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in Paradise." (Luke 23:43)* 

<u>Easter Celebration Service – Sunday, March 27 – 10:30 AM.</u> A glorious celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



#### PILGRIM JOYS AND CONCERNS

- We pray for Sylvia Ferrell-Jones as she recovers from knee surgery she had on Thursday.
- Beth Kurth asked for prayers for her friend Jessica whose father died last week
- Deborah Burger asked for prayers for friends Elaine and Gary as Gary will have a liver biopsy on Tuesday
- Anita Bradley asked for prayers for her friend Marion who is being treated for colon cancer.
- Betty Bradshaw asked for prayers as she is moving to Lowell to live with her daughter and family. Prayers for a peaceful transition.
- Joe Carabbio asked for prayers for his father as one of his shipmate's passed away on Saturday.

#### WELCOME TO OUR NEW MEMBERS!

Here is a bit of info about the newest members of Pilgrim Church. Please be sure to give them a welcome when you see them.

**Chris Murray** lives in Lexington with his wife Cynthia and children Emma and Jack. Chris works in Technical Operations and Supply Management in the Pharmaceuticals and Biotech Industry and enjoys piano, golf, hiking, and camping.

**Cynthia Murray** lives in Lexington with Chris, Emma, and Jack. Cynthia is currently a stay-at-home mom and has a background in pediatric occupational therapy. She enjoys quilting and sewing, reading, music, dance, hikes, and bike rides.

**Daniel Schmidt** lives in Woburn with his husband Julien. Dan works at MIT's Lincoln Laboratory in their Human Services Department and is Pilgrim's Music Director. Dan enjoys coffee, walking his dog, gardening, and Skyping with friends and family around the country.

**Sandra Schwartz** lives in Lexington with her sons Justin and Brendan. Sandy is a physical therapist and enjoys running, yoga, crossfit, and biking

#### NEXT ALL CHURCH EDUCATION

We will be having our next all church education class on **Sunday, March 6, 2016 at 9:30 am**. We will be discussing the two Sacraments in the UCC – Baptism and Communion. Have you experienced God while participating in Baptism and Communion?

Diane will be here early to provide childcare should your family need her help.

See you on Sunday! Lauren

#### FROM LISA HULBERT

It's hard to believe we are half way through the program year at Pilgrim. This year the CE committee defined three initiatives that would be the focus for the year. We expressed a need to close the gap between upstairs and downstairs worship, we launched a new middle school curriculum that put faith in to action and we overhauled the church school curriculum to fit the needs of our students.

As we continue the year we are learning and adapting our vision to meet the needs of the church. Family Sundays have been enjoyable for many but has also been a challenge for some. We have decided that, although our ideas were fantastic some logistics need to been more closely examined. We are going to continue to offer the early education courses for adults beginning at 9:30AM. During this time child care will be provided by our nursery teacher Diane Murphy. Communion Sundays will return to the traditional model of children beginning in church school at 10:30AM and joining the congregation during communion.

Our Mission Kids, Middle School program has been a great experience thus far. They will continue to explore faith in action this spring. Kicking off the season by talking about what faith is to them and God's impact on their everyday life. The spring will also bring great opportunity for the Mission Kids to explore lessons of caring for the earth that God has created for them.

The church school curriculum has also proved to be a great source of growth for both our students and teachers. The children are enjoying the new hands on rotation approach to church school. They are able to explore Bible stories through art, science and video. This method has created some challenges for teachers. The new lesson plans are similar to past curriculum but employ more creative methods of teaching Bible stories. In order to ensure teachers comforts and expectations of the classroom I will be hosting a teacher training on April 24<sup>th</sup> following worship. This training is open to current and perspective teachers. The training is intended to explore the curriculum a bit more in depth and look to next year's calendar to plan the church school year. Please sign up via email if you plan to attend: education@pilgrimcongregational.org

We look forward to expanding and improving upon our three initiatives as the program year continues.

Blessings,

Lisa Hulbert Director of Christian Education & Youth Ministries

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#### LEXINGTON INTERFAITH CHOIR CONCERT SATURDAY, APRIL 10 AT 3 PM

**REMINDER**: Rehearsals for the interfaith choir concert will take place after church **THIS SUNDAY March 6**, as well as March 20, and April 3 from 11:45-12:15. April 10 rehearsal is at 2 at St. Brigids with the concert at 3 pm.

Please see Dan to add your name to the participation list. If you aren't able to participate on the 10<sup>th</sup>, we hope you'll come enjoy the concert!

Thanks. Dan Schmidt

#### **READING GROUP AT PILGRIM CHURCH**

Keeping alive the momentum of Lexington's recent celebration of Martin Luther King, Jr. Day, you're invited to join a reading group on The Legacy of Slavery in the U.S. We'll ask you to commit to at least February-June. We are planning to meet the 2nd Thursday of each month at 7:00 pm at Pilgrim Church For the denser books, we can split up the chapters so as to make possible reading and meeting monthly. We will start discussing the first book on March 10.

If you are interested, please contact Judy Otto at otto.judy@gmail.com

Below is the initial reading list:

Sacred Hunger by Barry Unsworth

The Half Has Never Been Told: Slavery and the Making of American Capitalism by Edward E. Baptist The Warmth of Other Suns: The Epic Story of America's Great Migration by Isabel Wilkerson Complicity: How the North and South Promoted, Prolonged, and Profited from Slavery by Farro, Lang, and Frank, (journalists of the Hartford Courant)

This project is an outgrowth of a recent Racial Dialogue series held at Pilgrim Church, attended by a racially balanced group of Lexingtonians. You'll be seeing other initiatives to increase awareness of the need for racial justice from members of this group.

#### **REMINDER TO ALL REGARDING THE FRONT DOOR**



If you have a key to Pilgrim Church, PLEASE remember that the front door is to remain locked at all times. If you are stopping in, please ensure that you lock it behind you so that you do not forget to lock it when you leave. We have had a few instances of the door being unlocked recently and according to our Safe Church Policy as well as that of Pilgrim Nursery School, that is a violation. Thank you!

#### **VOLUNTEER SIGN UP NEWS**

Thanks to everyone who has hosted coffee hour so far! We continually need to fill the calendar. Please use <u>this link</u> to sign up. And don't forget - we also need greeters and liturgists too! As a reminder, to donate altar flowers, please contact either Beth Kurth at <u>hughzhoney@gmail.com</u>, or Diane at <u>admin@pilgrimcongregational.org</u>.

Without all of you, our friendly welcome at the door, beautiful scripture readings during Worship and a delicious cup of coffee afterwards would never happen. Thank you for all you do to keep Pilgrim Church the special place that it is.

With Gratitude, The Vitality Committee



#### INTERFAITH GARDEN LAUNCHES 7th SEASON

Join us growing fresh produce for the Lexington Food Pantry! No gardening experience needed. Just have a willingness to get your hands dirty and experience the blessing of working with others, for others!

It's hard to imagine this all started 6 years ago, but a lot of satisfaction, good food, fun conversations, and garden learning have transpired. We expect more of the same in our next season! Twelve faith communities and a lot of community volunteers support this project. With their help, over 8,750 pounds of fresh produce has been grown and donated to the Lexington Food Pantry. We are also growing community and strong relationships - between Lexington's faith communities and volunteers working beside one another in the garden.

The Interfaith Garden reopens mid-March (weather permitting, Sat 3/19) and will be up and running thru October. Come join us Tuesday afternoons and Saturday mornings. All are welcome and no gardening experience required. To sign up or get more info, contact Barbara at <u>barbjim.munkres@verizon.net</u>. To learn more about the Garden go to the website: <u>www.interfaithgarden.org</u>





## Homes for Low-Income Families... do we care enough?

Sunday, March 13, 2016, Forum Talks: 2:30-4:30 PM Meet homelessness and housing organizations leaders: 1:45 to 2:30 PM Trinity Episcopal Church, 81 Elm St. Concord, MA

Twelfth Annual Forum on Family Homelessness Sponsors: The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness & Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries. Co-sponsors: Episcopal City Mission, Citizens Housing & Planning Association (CHAPA), Mass Coalition for the Homeless, and the UU Mass Action Network

• Over 200,000 families in Massachusetts are at risk of homelessness, spending more than 50% of household income on housing. Why? Not enough housing units are available and wages have not kept pace with housing costs.

• A family of three, with an income of 30% of the area median income, can afford to pay \$636 a month on housing. A fair-market two-bedroom apartment in Metro-Boston is \$1,454 a month.

#### **Speakers Include:**



Chrystal Kornegay, Undersecretary, Department of Housing & Community Development

> Deborah Goddard, Former Managing Director, Policy & Program Development, Massachusetts Housing Finance Agency



### **Program Highlights:**

- FAMILY HOMELESSNESS 2016. Remarks by Chrystal Kornegay on the critical need for more lowincome housing and the Governor's 2017 budget.
- *LEGISLATIVE INITIATIVES FOR LOW-INCOME HOUSING.* Remarks by State Senator James Eldridge highlighting legislation for Housing Production with a focus on Multifamily Housing.
- *COMMUNITY ISSUES WITH LOW-INCOME HOUSING*. Remarks by Deborah Goddard on Multifamily Housing and Community acceptance.
- OUR ADVOCACY CAN HELP HOUSE HOMELESS FAMILIES. Remarks by Citizens Housing & Planning Assoc, Mass Coalition for the Homeless, and The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness.

Directions: <u>http://www.trinityconcord.org/</u> Free and open to the public. Refreshments will be served. For more information about *The Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness*, visit www.endfamilyhomelessness.net



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  - School Improvements -
    - School Bands -
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# **Order Your Easter Flowers**

Easter tulips, daffodils, and mini daffodils from Wilson Farms will decorate Pilgrim church on Easter Sunday, March 27. If you would like to place an order, please fill out the form below and send it to the church office by **Monday, March 14**, with a check made payable to Pilgrim Congregational Church. **Tulips, daffodils, and mini- daffodils are \$7.00 per 6'' pot.** 

Number of plants	
Daffodils	@ \$7.00/ea. =
Tulip – Assorted Colors	@ \$7.00/ea. =
Mini Daffodils	@ \$7.00/ea. =
Enclosed is my/our check in the amount of \$	
(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 by the Care Committee after the service to someone who is housebound.

I will take my plant(s) after the service.