

Pilgrim's Progress

March 3, 2015 – Vol. 57 No. 3



And now we're in the Season of Lent! Lent was common in the early Church by 330 C.E. When we consider that the community was only granted religious toleration in the Roman Empire by 313, this becomes even more important. Christmas wasn't even universally recognized as a Feast Day until the Sixth Century! It's interesting to note that Lent was observed by our ancestors quite early in the development of Christianity, even though we'll never find "Lent" in our Bibles.

Easter is the most important day in Christianity, no competition. Every Sunday is considered a little Easter. This is why Sunday is considered a "cheat day" for people who are fasting during Lent. If you gave up chocolate, you are technically allowed to have that chocolate lava cake on Sunday. Though the truly Christian thing to do would be to share the chocolate lava cake with your pastor, just saying.

I love Lent not just for its history, technicalities, or place in the Liturgical Calendar leading up to Easter, but because it roots us in our faith and helps us to ask the tough questions. Lent is not a time of pretense. Lent helps us to get real and be honest with ourselves. Joan Chittister, who wrote the fabulous book, *The Liturgical Year: The Spiraling Adventure of the Spiritual Life*, reminds us:

Lent is a call to renew a commitment grown dull, perhaps, by a life more marked by routine than by reflection. After a lifetime of mundane regularity or unconsidered adherence to the trappings of faith, Lent requires me, as a Christian, to stop for a while, to reflect again on what is going on in me. I am challenged again to decide whether I, myself, do truly believe that Jesus is Christ—and if I believe, whether I will live accordingly when I can no longer hear the song of angels in my life and the star of Bethlehem has grown dim for me.¹

Because of its place between Advent and Epiphany and then Easter and Pentecost, Lent helps us to stop for awhile and reflect on what's going on inside all of us. Do we truly believe that Jesus can save us for new life? How does that look in our lives? How does that change the way I live?

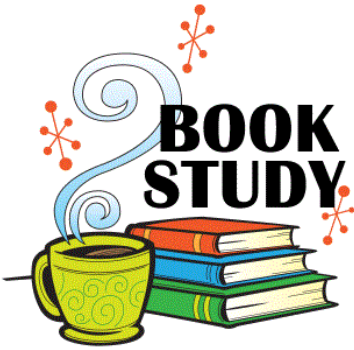
It's not every day or every season that we can easily ask these questions. To provide some space for reflection, Dan and I will once again offer two Lenten Vespers Services for our Pilgrim community. **Our Vespers Services will be on Wednesday March 4 at 7:30 PM and Wednesday March 18 at 7:30 PM.** During these services (lasting approximately 30-45 minutes), we sit in the Choir Loft for a more intimate setting. We sing several hymns together and pray a Psalm. We take Communion and sit in silence, listening to organ pieces. In the end, these services give us the time and space to just pause at the end of the day and check-in with God, to remember that we do not go through anything alone and that we belong heart and soul, body and mind to God.

May you have a blessed and meaningful Lent.

Grace and Peace,

Lauren

¹ Joan Chittister, *The Liturgical Year: The Spiraling Adventure of the Spiritual Life*, 111.



SAVE THE DATE FOR ONE MORE ADULT EDUCATION BOOK STUDY!

Lauren's final Adult Education Book Study for this program year will now be held on **Thursday May 14 at 11 AM**. We'll discuss Bart Ehrman's book *How Jesus Became God: The Exaltation of a Jewish Preacher from Galilee*.

Bart Ehrman is a historian and Biblical scholar who teaches at UNC Chapel Hill, and he wrote *How Jesus Became God* for secular audiences interested in the history of the early faith as well as for Christian believers. I won't pull any punches—this book is quite lengthy, as it took Professor Ehrman eight years to research and write!

Ehrman asks some interesting questions about the development of the Christian faith and how Jesus' earliest followers came to understand Jesus' humanity and divinity over time. He especially engages with the religious experiences of the disciples after the Resurrection. Much like our book study on *Zealot: The Life and Times of Jesus of Nazareth*, I doubt that we will all agree with his analysis! Though my hope is that by reading this historical work from Professor Ehrman and engaging with his skeptical questions, we'll be able to go deeper in our own Christian faiths. A display copy is on the Literature Table for those who may want to explore further.

Please save the date (Thursday May 14 at 11 AM) and happy reading in the meantime!

FROM LISA HULBERT

Your Mission, Should You Choose to Accept....

As children, many of us spent Lent giving up chocolate or video games as a symbol of Jesus' sacrifice for us. At Pilgrim we have decided to flip the script. Rather than asking our children to give up we would like to ask them to give. The Educational Ministries committee has partnered with the Mission Committee to organize a Lenten Mission for our Children.



Throughout Lent we will be collecting coins as a fundraiser. The money raised will be donated to The East End House and The Ray Tye Foundation. The twist, however, is that the children of Pilgrim will be competing with the adults of Pilgrim to have the most weight in coins. There will be a balance scale located in the narthex where you can deposit your coins. One bucket for the children and one for the adults. We are looking forward to a great competition!

After speaking with families I have compiled a list of challenges for families to include at home. One idea is to place a coin value on each mission and have your children earn their donation money in a faith based manner.

- Say the Lord's Prayer once each day for a week.
- Create a family prayer concerns poster. Use this poster during your bedtime prayers
- Pass the peace each day in the household. Work on really meaning it when you say "Peace be with you" to each other no matter what has gone on that day.

LENT 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.

Wednesday March 4th - Vespers Service—7:30 PM. 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.

Wednesday March 18th - Vespers Service—7:30 PM. Dan and Lauren will offer a second Lenten Vespers Service. Please plan on joining us.

Sunday March 29th Palm Sunday—10:30 AM. 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 April 2nd 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 April 3rd 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)

Easter Celebration Service – Sunday, April 5th – 10:30 AM. A glorious celebration of the resurrection of Jesus Christ.



Holy Week



A NOTE FROM DAN SCHMIDT....

Please do something for me - think about your most favorite song.....

How does that song make you feel? Maybe it makes you smile, or feel relaxed, or helps you focus. Maybe it gets you through a long car commute, gym routine, helps you deal with the ice damn on the roof, or provides a dance party for the kids on a snow day!

Do you know what my favorite song happens to be? I don't have one. And I don't have one because all music makes me feel. It makes me feel inspired, it makes me feel angry, it makes me feel sad, it makes me feel connected but most importantly, it makes me feel.

If you ask any of the choir members why they sing, you might hear "because I was asked to join", but more than likely you'll hear them talk about what they get out of it and how it makes them feel. That is why I do what I do. I direct the choir because I know that every individual has a different reason for participating, but I also understand that it fulfills feelings for them. I have never requested that everyone be trained in music to participate, because training is not needed to be able to sing. Our rehearsals are repetitive for a reason - it allows us to learn the notes and absorb the words - which leads us to feel. As we head into March, we will be having another Music Sunday. The handbell group will play and the choir will be featured. As we hear many times at Pilgrim - it is good to give of your money, but also your time and talents. Please think about how these individuals are giving of their time to provide music for the church services. They are doing this almost every Sunday from September to May. They aren't doing it because "we've always done it this way" or because "I was told to show up", they are doing it because they feel something specifically because of the music.

I hope that what we do makes you feel as well. And if that feeling moves you to join the handbell group or choir, I would be grateful! If it moves you to offer other talents that you have in music, that is wonderful as well.

Thank you for taking the time to feel. And thank you to our wonderful musicians for giving us the opportunity to feel during our worship.

Dan



WORSHIP AND COFFEE HOUR SURVEY RESULTS



Over 80 of you responded to our recent survey about Worship and Coffee Hour! Thank you for making your voice heard!

The majority of the congregation voted for keeping the Worship time as is - 10:30 a.m. start time from September - June. The second highest vote getter was for moving the start time to 10:00 a.m. But, when those who voted for the earlier start time were asked if they would attend worship more frequently if it was moved to 10:00, the answer was a resounding "No". It seems that while a significant minority would prefer an earlier start time it wouldn't make any difference in their actual weekly attendance. As a result, the decision was made to make no change.

Similarly, the congregation voted to keep Coffee Hour as is - one gathering time immediately following worship. There was no "close second" and almost everyone wanted to see no change to our current format.

What was perhaps most interesting, however, was the richness of the commentary that many of you took the time to share in the "comments" section. We have collected all of the comments and shared them with Council as well as Worship and Music. As always, all comments that were submitted remain anonymous.

If you would like to see a copy of the results there will be a hard copy on the literature table in the Narthex. Thank you again for taking the time to let us know your thoughts, ideas and opinions regarding Worship and Coffee Hour.

Jeanne DeSanto, Co-Chair of the Vitality Committee

WEEKLY PRAYERS

- Elizabeth Chen, Dick Edmiston, and Grace Murnaghan
- Son-Mey Chiu
- Carol and Milan Chytil and their children Hana, Matthew, and Lenka

JOYS AND CONCERNS

- We ask for prayers for Elizabeth Chen's sister Donna undergoing cancer surgery and 6 months of intensive chemotherapy.
- We also pray for peace in our world.

DEADLINE FOR PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Please note that the deadline for the April issue of Pilgrim's Progress will be March 27th. Thank you!

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



Dan Schmidt and the Worship & Music Committee would like to invite any and all young (or old!) musicians in our congregation to share their talents during worship services. Many people in our congregation enjoy hearing our children grow on their path musically and love to provide words of encouragement. Children learning an instrument (or voice) often master a piece and then move on, never having the opportunity to share what they have worked so hard on. We would love to see our youth be more involved in the preludes, postludes and offertories on any Sunday, not just a Sunday dedicated for our children. The pieces do not have to be long or advanced, we welcome all children and youth on all stages of their musical journey. Please talk with Dan or Carol if your child (or you!) would be interested.



Carol Chytil
Chair Worship & Music Committee



BELL CHOIR MEMBERS NEEDED – NO EXPERIENCE NECESSARY!!

So now you have heard Pilgrim's Revived Bell Choir 3 or 4 times since this past fall. Did you know that Dan is trying to put together a Bell Choir to play on a monthly basis? We need you!! Playing bells does not require any musical talent at all - in order to play bells, you need to be able to wear a pair of cotton gloves, hold the bell, count to 4 repeated times and ring the bell when it is your turn! It is that easy! You do not need to read music - the music is actually marked with a blue or red circle around your note. As you are counting 1-2-3-4, 1-2-3-4, you will see a blue note circled, maybe on the number 3. That means you play your left bell on the 3rd count. When you see a red note circled (red means "right hand") on, for example, beat 2, then you play your right hand bell. The incredible beauty of the bells is that when everyone plays on their beat, a beautiful song emerges! We would love to have some more older youth or adults join our inter-generational bell choir. Rehearsals are generally right after church on Sundays (after you have gotten a quick cup of coffee) and then at 9:30 on the morning of the Sunday that Bells are performing. The next few Sundays that Bells are playing are **February 22, March 29, April 26, and May 31.** Please contact Dan (daniel.schmidt@pilgrimcongregational.org) or Carol (carol.chytil@gmail.com) if you are interested or have questions. I promise you, we need you and anyone can play!

Carol Chytil
Chair Worship & Music Committee



REMEMBER TO ORDER EASTER FLOWERS

Easter tulips, daffodils, and mini daffodils from Wilson Farms will decorate Pilgrim church on Easter Sunday, April 5. If you would like to place an order, please fill out the form below and send it to the church office by Monday, March 30, with a check made payable to Pilgrim Congregational Church. Tulips, daffodils, and mini- daffodils are \$8.00 per 6" pot.



HONDURAS HAPPENINGS

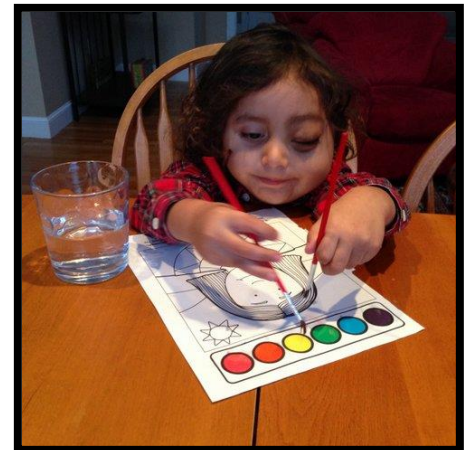
Thank you all for the warm welcome to Ostin and Karla. We had the opportunity to visit with the church school and then Ostin spent the rest of the morning in the nursery. What a nice surprise to see the bulletin board at coffee hour, filled with the children's drawings and introducing themselves to Ostin by writing their names under "me llamo es" (my name is).

The following day Ostin had a doctor's appointment with his eye surgeon and he was able to remove the drainage tube which was located next to his eye. It is much easier not to have that added concern. We learned Ostin will need to be under anesthesia for a steroid injection prior to his next surgery scheduled for March 25th.

Ostin will return to NYC for the next surgery and a team of doctors will focus their efforts on his cheek and chin areas. We will return 10 days later to have the stitches removed. The doctors will then decide when to schedule the next steroid injections.

We have no idea the length of time Karla and Ostin will be living with us...it is rather a "wait and see." Thank you for your interest and support.

Emily and Tom



LAPTOPS NEEDED

Once again, we are looking for used laptops for students in Honduras. Recently we were introduced to 17 year old Josue, a patient at Shriners Hospital. Josue suffered electrical burns as a child and has traveled six times to the US for medical care. He is a very smart young man, enjoys school and is looking for a computer. This would not only help his with his studies but truly offer him possibilities he doesn't currently have.

If you have a laptop you're able to donate to Josue or another student, please contact Emily Collins at emily@esperanzahftc.com. Thank you!





ONE GREAT HOUR OF SHARING

The One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS) special mission offering of the United Church of Christ involves you in disaster, refugee/immigration, and development ministries

throughout the world. When a disaster strikes or people are displaced or made refugees by violence or extreme poverty, you are part of the immediate response and of the long-term recovery. Through OGHS you engage in holistic development programs including health care, education, agriculture, food sustainability, micro-financing and women's empowerment. Because the UCC relates in mutual partnership to churches and organizations through Global Ministries and worldwide response & recovery networks, your contributions to One Great Hour of Sharing put you in the right place at the right time for the relief, accompaniment and recovery of the most vulnerable. You meet immediate needs and you address the underlying causes that create those needs in the first place. We will collect the offering for OGHS on **Sunday, March 15.**

COFFEE HOUR SCHEDULE

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/Van Evera
April 12		Roy	Council
April 19		Saradjian	Carabbio
April 26		Honduras Coffee Hour	Mission
May 3	Communion	Mission	R Litchfield
May 10		Stevens	Taylor
May 17		All Church Brunch	Vitality
May 24		Council	
May 31		Ramacciotti-Mahiou	
June 7	Communion	DeSanto	LoBuglio/Royer
June 14			
June 21			



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Number of plants

_____ Daffodils @ \$8.00/ea. = _____

_____ Tulip – Assorted Colors @ \$8.00/ea. = _____

_____ Mini Daffodils @ \$8.00/ea. = _____

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 by the Care Committee after the service to someone who is housebound.

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