

Pilgrim's Progress March 7, 2017 – Vol. 58 No. 3

These last few months have marked a time of many transitions at Pilgrim Church. The congregation welcomed Devin Shmueli as our new Christian Education and Youth Ministry Director to begin the program year. I resigned at the end of January--accepting a call to serve as the Pastor of The Colchester Federated Church in Colchester, Connecticut--and will end my ministry here on April 30. Diane Murphy left as our Nursery Care Provider in February. And as you will read a little later in this edition of Pilgrim's Progress, Dan Schmidt has resigned as Pilgrim's Music Director. To have this many staff transitions all at once may feel overwhelming. It's a lot of change. Our church staff has varied reasons for why we are leaving--though we are certainly united in wishing the congregation well both now and into the future.

Change, as disorienting as it may feel at times, is a constant in life. Sometimes the times of the most change also hold the most potential for growth. There's a classic book that addresses change called *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes* by William Bridges (an English Professor turned expert in the field of Transitional Management.) Bridges maintains that transitions are about letting go of an old situation, suffering the confusing nowhere of in-betweenness, and then launching forth again in a new situation. Sometimes we may be tempted to let go of the old and launch forth into the new as soon as possible--doing our best to avoid the in-between space because it's hard, let's face it! But Bridges cautions that transitions are a natural process of disorientation and then reorientation that mark turning points on the path of growth. Basically, if you truly want to grow--you can't move past the in-between space (he sometimes uses the term "the neutral zone") and not engage with the issues and questions you will discover in that space.

"In keeping with our mechanistic bias, we have tried to make do with 'recharging' and 'repair,' imagining that renewal comes through fixing something defective or supplying something that is missing. But it is only by returning for a time to the formlessness of the primal energy that renewal can take place. The neutral zone is the only source of the self-renewal that we all seek. We need it, just the way that an apple tree needs the cold of winter."

(William Bridges, *Transitions: Making Sense of Life's Changes*, 141-142.)

Pilgrim Church will soon be in the neutral zone after Dan and I both leave by the end of this program year in June. The congregation will have the opportunity for real self-renewal. Just as the apple tree needs the dormancy of the winter months, so Pilgrim Church needs to spend time self-reflecting in the in-between space to contemplate who you are and who God is calling you to be in the future. Over these next two months I will do all that I can to say goodbye to you well. I know by now that one of my gifts in ministry is Preaching--this was affirmed by the congregations with whom I interviewed during my recent Search and Call process and preaching is something I continue to feel passionate about in ministry. It's interesting to think that over these six years as your pastor I've preached 220+ sermons and now have just 8 more to preach before moving to Colchester. There are still some scripture texts to explore, still some lessons to be learned, still the life, ministry, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ to engage with together in this holy time of the church year. And so I look forward to seeing you in worship and wishing you all the best before the end of April.

Grace and Peace,

Lauren

UPCOMING LENTEN WORSHIP SERVICES

We have a number of Lenten worship services we 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.

LENTEN VESPERS SERVICES - SAVE THE DATES!

During Lent this year, Dan and Rev. Lauren will offer five Lenten Vespers services on Tuesday evenings at 7 pm. The dates are:

- **March 7**
- **March 14**
- **March 21**
- **March 28**
- **April 4.**

Vespers is the sunset evening prayer service and is celebrated by Christians throughout the world. Sometimes called “keeping the daily offices” or “observing the divine hours,” fixed-hour prayer (alongside honoring the Sabbath and celebrating Communion) is among the oldest and most authentic forms of Christian spiritual practice we have in our tradition. Come to pray, hear beautiful organ pieces, and receive Communion in our candlelit sanctuary. All are welcome, and that means you.



Sunday April 9th 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 13th 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 14th 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)



A NOTE FROM DAN SCHMIDT

Dear Pilgrims,

I wanted to let you know that I have given my notice with intent to resign from my position as Director of Music June 15, 2017. Although I absolutely love working in a church and with such wonderful people, I am finding that having a full time job and a part time job to be too much, particularly as I am taking on more in my full time role. I know the music program will be in good hands moving forward and look to making a smooth transition. If you have any questions, please don't hesitate to contact me.

Warmly,
Dan



MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR CAROLYN BECKWITH

Just a reminder that the memorial service for Carolyn Beckwith will take place this **Saturday, March 11 at 2:00 pm at Pilgrim Church.** Thank you.

MEMORIAL SERVICE FOR BETH ROGERS

Please save the date for Beth Rogers' memorial service on **Saturday, April 1 at 2:00 pm at Pilgrim Church.** Thank you.



PILGRIM JOYS AND CONCERNS

- Mary K. Reaske asked for prayers of thanks that her sister and brother both have undergone open heart surgery and are now recovering.
- Martha Wood asked for prayers for her cousin Marlene also recovering from open heart surgery.
- Marty Saradjian asked for prayers for Al Lavender who was killed in a plane crash recently.

CHURCH-WIDE BIBLE READING PROJECT

Each week, I have had copies of the Children's StoryBook Bible available for you to take home and borrow with a sheet that includes discussion questions and activities to consider during the week as time allows for you and yours. For March, we will focus on Moses' stories and the Exodus from Egypt. We'll read about Moses' family and friends as well as his role in the liberation of the Israelites from oppression. We'll be thinking about how these stories influence and guide us in our world today while reaching out to one another in our Pilgrim community to discuss these connections. We will make connections in our lives: to God, to our families, to our friends, and to our church. In April, we will think about the Easter story and learn more about the stories that are a part of Holy Week, too. If you have any questions or requests for stories, please e-mail devin.shmueli@pilgrimcongregational.org!

This week, we are reading about Baby Moses. As part of our bible study, we will focus on Moses' relationship with his sister. His sister, Miriam, is actually responsible for changing the course of history because she intervenes to save his life at a critical time. Her decisions and choices ensured that the little baby Moses would be safe and grow up to do great things. We will be reading about them from Exodus 2:1-10 in the Spark StoryBible which can be found on pages 66-71.

Wondering Questions for All

What does Miriam do? What would you have done in her shoes? Do you think that she changed the course of history? (We'll be reading future stories from Moses' life but you may want to peek ahead!) Do you think Miriam could have intervened in other ways? What would that look like?

Where do you think God was in this story? What do you think this story could teach you about God?

Where was God's presence?

What role does justice play in this story? Who is acting in a justice-oriented way?

This Week's Challenge

During coffee hour or throughout the week, reach out to another church member or family and talk about justice and saving others. Share a story of a time where you helped someone. What impact did your help have on their life? What about other people in their lives?

Bonus: Can you think of stories in history where someone helped another person? Did that person go on to do great things? What do you think that meant to the helper?

VOLUNTEERS NEEDED FOR CHILDREN'S CHURCH

We are in need of three volunteers for Children's Church starting Sunday, April 2nd. Please, let Devin know if you are willing to join Children's Church for the months of April, May, and June (until the 25th). Each week, you will receive a session plan by Thursday evening and Devin will be available to work through any questions you might have about it. You will never be responsible for supplies, everything will be provided for you. If you are interested in being a blessing for our youngest pilgrim's education, let Devin know by e-mailing him at devin.shmueli@pilgrimcongregational.org.



SUMMER CAMP INFORMATION SESSION

On **March 19th at 1:00** in Pilgrim Hall, we will be hosting four camps for a fun and interactive information session about the local camps connected to our denomination, the United Church of Christ. This hour long information session will include:

- learning some traditional camp songs
- playing traditional camp games
- Snapshots and Q&A with representatives from the UCC camps in New England
- and an opportunity to get more information from each camp during a table session



You'll learn about kids' camps, family camps, adult camps, art camps, and so much more. It will be a great time. To get a preview, of the different camps out there visit: <http://www.uccnecamps.org>. Refreshments will be provided!

PILGRIM CHURCH 2017 BOOK SALE



For many, many years a couple from this church has been going to the village of Flores, Honduras about 3 times a year. Their mission has been to improve the health and the lives of the people of Flores. First they funded this with their own money. Soon this church found ways to help them. Later, they started a yearly Book Sale to raise money. I knew that I probably would not be traveling to Flores, Honduras. But I could help them by running the Book Sale!

This year the book sale will be held on only ONE Saturday and ONE Sunday after church. Those dates are **Sat. May 6th from 9am to 4pm, and after church on Sun. May 7th**. And there may also be a poetry reading.

The proceeds will be donated to the charitable organization that this couple set up. That 501c charitable organization is called Esperanza For The Children. The website is <https://esperanzahftc.com> -- Esperanza means Hope.

Now what I am asking you to do is find books that are in good condition which you can donate to Pilgrim. Put them in a bag labeled Book Sale and leave them in the coatroom. Please read e-notes which is where I will be asking for specific help later on. Thank you for anything you can do.

THANK YOU FROM THE MISSION COMMITTEE!

The Mission Committee wants to thank all of you who have donated so very many sheets, pillow cases, towels, wash cloths, kitchen linens, comforters, blankets and more. We have delivered a **whole car load!**

MAHomeless.org wishes to express their sincere thanks!!! Later in the year we expect to again collect these items that are so necessary for those who are just emerging from homelessness.

Sandy Gardiner

**SAVE THE DATE!
LET'S GO TO THE THEATRE!**

I propose that we go as a group to see **The Graduate** at the Arlington Friends of the Drama on afternoon of **Sunday, May 21 at 4 pm**. We would meet in Lexington and then carpool because parking can be difficult.

You would deliver a check for \$22 per seat to me by Monday, April 24th. I will purchase a block of seats. The cost is \$20 plus a handling fee for the group. (The seats are non-refundable.)

Questions? Email Sandy Gardiner at sandra.gardiner.02420@gmail.com.



ALTAR FLOWER DATES AVAILABLE

As we head towards Spring, there are open dates available for altar flowers. If you would like to give them, get in touch with Beth Kurth or Diane Blair and get your name on the list! They are a great bargain at \$40 for a beautiful bouquet that you can take home after the service.

LITURGISTS, GREETERS, AND COFFEE HOUR HOSTS NEEDED TOO!

Thank you so much to those who participate in our service every week. As we continue through our church year, we continue to need to fill open dates. Please use [this link](#) to sign up to be a liturgist, greeter, or to host coffee hour.

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.



LEXINGTON COMMUNITY COALITION OPEN HOUSE
THURSDAY, MARCH 9TH, 7:00 PM
AT THE LEXINGTON COMMUNITY CENTER

In 2015, with your help, the Lexington Community Coalition Youth Initiative identified three key community concerns to address using a coalition approach:

Reduce Alcohol and Substance Abuse
Reduce Atmosphere of Academic Competition
Decrease Youth Experience of Loneliness, Depression and Suicidal Thoughts.

Strides have already been made in these areas, but we need your help again to make a deeper impact. Join us on March 9th to learn about the Coalition's current volunteer needs within each goal. Examples include:

Work as part of a team to develop a technology and communications plan for the Coalition
Help determine outreach strategies for middle school children related to the dangers of substance abuse
Determine strategies for engaging extracurricular organizations (sports, dance, enrichment) in conversations about youth stress
Explore new programs to support K-12 social-emotional education
And so much more!

We hope to see you there!

LEXINGTON INTERFAITH CLERGY ASSOCIATION EVENTS

Please take note of the flyers at the end of Pilgrim's Progress regarding the Lexington Choral Festival on March 19 and the Holi Festival of Colors on May 13. These events are both sponsored by the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association. Check them out!

DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME BEGINS ON SUNDAY, MARCH 12

Don't forget to turn your clocks ahead before going to bed on Saturday, March 11!



12th Annual Lexington Choral Festival

SUNDAY, MARCH 19TH
★ 3:00 p.m. ★

FREE ADMISSION

Hosted by Hancock Church
1912 Massachusetts Ave, on the Green

Join us for a spectacular afternoon of choral music sung by various faith communities across Lexington: Christian, Jewish, Unitarian, and Hindu!

★ RECEPTION TO FOLLOW ★

Bhakti Center of Lexington
Church of Our Redeemer Episcopal
First Parish Unitarian Universalist

Hancock United Church of Christ
Lexington United Methodist Church
Pilgrim Congregational Church
Sacred Heart Catholic Church

St. Brigid Catholic Church
Temple Isaiah
Trinity Covenant Church



The poster features a vibrant background of a temple and a crowd celebrating Holi. The word 'HOLI' is written in large, stylized letters, with the 'O' containing a globe. Below it, 'Festival of Colors' is written in a bold, red font. A red circular badge in the top right corner states '\$5 entry includes a packet of color'. A yellow banner across the middle lists activities: 'Multinational. Music. Yoga. Henna. Veg Fest. Fun.' Below the banner is a collage of images showing people throwing color, hands painted with various colors, a bowl of food, and a group of people posing. The bottom section contains event details in yellow and white text on a dark background.

HOLI Festival of Colors®

\$5 entry includes a packet of color

Multinational. Music. Yoga. Henna. Veg Fest. Fun.

Sat. May 13 at Hastings Park, Lexington, MA
12pm - 3pm

Entry fee: \$5 online (\$8 at gate). Includes one packet of color. Kids under 5 free
Featuring vegetarian specialties from American, Mexican and Indian cuisines at reasonable prices

Color Throwings Every Half Hour. See Website for more details

For More Info & Online Registration: <https://www.facebook.com/FestivalofColorsMA>
Organized by Bhakti Center of Lexington. PHONE: (781) 215-3566
In association with Indian Americans of Lexington and Sewa Intl.