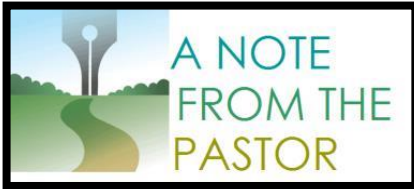


Pilgrim's Progress November 1, 2016 – Vol. 57 No. 9



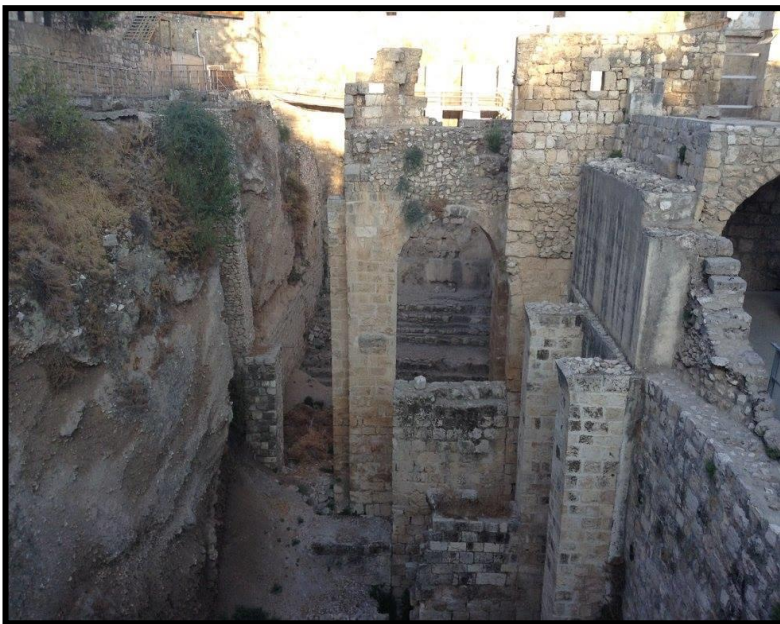
Over the next few months, I will be using my pastor's report to share theological reflections from my Sabbatical trip to the Holy Land. My hope is that these reflections will help us all contemplate our Christian faiths as we live into God's unique calls in our own lives. Thanks be to God!

John 5:2-6

Now in Jerusalem by the Sheep Gate there is a pool, called in Hebrew Beth-zatha, which has five porticoes. In these lay many invalids—blind, lame, and paralyzed. One man was there who had been ill for thirty-eight years. When Jesus saw him lying there and knew that he had been there a long time, he said to him, 'Do you want to be made well?'

When visiting the Holy Land, it's common to hear claims that an important event happened in a particular place. We recognize that people of faith may *commemorate* an event occurring in a particular place, though it's not always possible to verify the historicity. The Gospel of John has long been known as the "most spiritual and least historical Gospel." So when one hears the claim that an event occurred in a particular place from John's Gospel, well then one can't help but *really* doubt the claim!

A noted exception is the story of Jesus healing a man in John 5—a story that has archaeological connections to St. Anne's Church in Jerusalem. Scholars long believed this story to be 100% metaphorical. Yet in 1871 there was a restoration at St. Anne's Church and The White Fathers and archaeologists discovered the Sheep Pool (Beth-zatha) with a shrine to a healing god from Roman times. Many scholars rightly question the reliability of John's Gospel when it comes to information about the historical Jesus, but its author might have been an eyewitness to several events in the life of Jesus. At any rate, the author certainly knew about Jerusalem and this pool where healings were said to happen because it really did exist in the first century!¹



St Anne's Church stands above the Sheep Pool and is known for its amazing acoustics. The White Fathers encourage anyone to sing in the sanctuary (as long as it's a religious song!) And when you sing in the sanctuary, it's like an angel chorus echoing back your words. One morning I accompanied two new friends to Mass, and even though I'm an American Protest who was worshipping with two Australian Catholics (and the Mass itself was in French!) it was an incredibly moving experience. In the end and should we so choose, we can stick to a more metaphorical interpretation of John 5 (even knowing that the story's physical location was a real one during Jesus' lifetime.) Though the question Jesus asked that man in the story remains as important today as it was when John's author wrote it down: "do you want to be made well?"

Where might we need healing and restoration? And will we say *yes* when God offers us new life?

Grace and Peace ~Lauren

¹ John J. Rousseau and Rami Arav, *Jesus & His World: An Archaeological and Cultural Dictionary*, 155-157.

NOVEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 6: ALL SAINTS SUNDAY**

We will commemorate All Saints Day, a time in the Christian calendar where we honor those we have loved and lost over this past year. Communion will be served.

- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 13: CONSECRATION SUNDAY**

We will hear from our final Witnessing Steward, Rev. Lauren will preach the Stewardship Sermon, and our pledges will be blessed during worship to formally conclude our 2017 Stewardship Campaign.

- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 20: THANKSGIVING SUNDAY**

This service will be centered on giving thanks for God's abiding presence and all the gifts we have in our lives. Gratitude may well be one of the most important spiritual practices we can embody. What are we truly grateful for this year?

- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 27: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**

Advent begins on the last Sunday of November this year. Our theme for the First Sunday of Advent is Hope as we begin this holy season of waiting, watching, and hoping.

LEXINGTON INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT PILGRIM: TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 22 AT 7:30 PM

Pilgrim will be hosting this year's interfaith Thanksgiving Service led by the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association! As a continuation of town-wide conversations and initiatives, the service will focus on our appreciation for the simple gifts of Lexington. The simple gifts of hospitality, caring for our children and youth, and service/striving for justice. Featured speakers will be Lexington High School Principal Laura Lasa, Founders of Lex Eat Together Harriet Kaufman and Laura Derby, and leader of Lexington's MLK Day of Service Sam Zales. All are welcome! We hope that you will attend and bring a friend. Refreshments and conversation will follow the service.

Pilgrim has not hosted for a number of years and this evening will be a great opportunity to welcome the town into our church home. We will need volunteers from the congregation to make this evening a success for our many guests! The Vitality Committee will help coordinate the reception. In the meantime, here's what we need from you:

- At least 4 ushers who will greet our guests, pass out bulletins, and collect the offering
- People willing to provide a dessert to share for the reception
- Servers and a clean-up crew for the reception

If you are willing to help with any of these items, please let Beth Kurth know so she can help organize our volunteers! Thank you! (hughzhoney@gmail.com)

FROM THE STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

This year's pledge drive is an opportunity for us to "go and do likewise" as Jesus taught us in the Parable of the Good Samaritan. In this parable, a man travelling the dangerous road from Jericho to Jerusalem was beaten by robbers. Passersby chose to look the other way and traversed on the other side of the road...

"But a certain Samaritan, as he travelled, came where he was. When he saw him, he was moved with compassion, came to him, and bound up his wounds, pouring on oil and wine. He set him on his own animal, and brought him to an inn, and took care of him. On the next day, when he departed, he took out two denarii, and gave them to the host, and said to him, 'Take care of him. Whatever you spend beyond that, I will repay you when I return.' (Luke 10:33-35)

Pilgrim Congregational Church UCC helps each of us practice the art of compassion and care for our neighbors near and far. Your pledge and gifts help Our Church offer a welcoming and supportive environment, a creative educational program for all ages, and strong mission opportunities focusing on community outreach.

In the coming weeks, you will hear from several Pilgrims who will speak about their own experiences and what Pilgrim means to them. As you consider your own pledge, please think about what Pilgrim means to you, and give as generously as you are able so that we may together "go and do likewise" as Jesus taught.

You can submit your pledge in several ways:

- November 13 – bring your pledge envelope to worship and participate in the Consecration of pledges;
- Mail your pledge or place it in the offering plate next time you are in church;
- E-mail your pledge to our Collector Susan Carabbio:
s.carabbio@comcast.net



Sincerely,

Your Stewardship Committee: David Nuss, Michael Scott Morton, Elizabeth Chen, and Susan Carabbio

THE PAGEANT IS COMING!! SUNDAY, DECEMBER 18TH DURING WORSHIP

Going back many years, the pageant was traditionally held on the 4th Sunday of advent. After much thought, the Educational Ministries Committee decided that having the Christmas pageant during worship on the 4th Sunday of Advent was the best option for this year. The Committee wanted to be sure that all families are able to participate, especially those who miss Christmas Eve at Pilgrim due to family travel.



Of course participation in the pageant is not limited to children. The pageant will be a traditional pageant this year and if you or your children are interested in participating in any capacity, please contact Devin or one of the Committee members. Following the pageant there will be a pot-luck Christmas Party. We hope everyone can join us! More information on rehearsal dates forthcoming!

Lisa Boehm, Lesley Morrison, Mary Mackie, Steve Van Evera, Elena Zorn, Beth Kurth, and Devin Shmueli



At the October Church Council meeting, the Council decided to fill the moderator position in a novel way. For the final six months of the 2016-17 term year, a different Council member will serve as moderator. Each moderator will then assume full responsibilities of the position for one month.

Church members are encouraged to contact the moderators with any questions, concerns or suggestions. This model offers the six Council members an opportunity to experience the moderator's role, thus offering each the possibility to consider becoming the permanent moderator in the future.

The lineup of monthly moderators is as follows: Mary Mackie: November, Ed Bond: December, Doug Johnston: January, Dick Edmiston: February, and Derek Gardiner: March.

FROM THE PASTORAL RELATIONS COMMITTEE

Dear Pilgrims,

The Pastoral Relations Committee is a standing three-person committee at Pilgrim that seeks to support and maintain an open and healthy relationship between our Pastor, our staff and members of the congregation. The PRC meets regularly with Lauren, serving as an advisory group and sharing ideas, hopes, expectations, and concerns of the congregation. The PRC also helps interpret functions, roles, and the needs of the Pastor to the congregation.

The three members of the PRC are chosen by the Pastor and Moderator with approval by Church Council, and typically serve three year terms on the committee. The current members of the PRC are Beth Kurth (chair), Steve Van Evera and Jeff Boehm. It is the hope of the PRC that if you ever have questions, concerns or feedback you will reach out directly to any of us and engage us in a dialogue about your concerns. We are here to listen.

In recent months a few families have chosen to leave Pilgrim. This happens in any church from time to time. In a larger church it is less noticeable, but in a smaller church we feel the loss more acutely. Lauren, Jill, the Pastoral Relations Committee, and Council have reached out to these families and continue to be open to conversing with them. We have learned a lot from this experience and hope to use what we've learned to enhance communication in the future. It has also made us aware of the need for all Pilgrims to take part in the caring for our church family members and offering each other a place of compassion, respect, and acceptance. No one person is responsible for the health and future of our church. This is a group effort!

In an effort to encourage more dialogue, the PRC would like to welcome you to join us in an Open Forum after Church on **Sunday, November 6th**. We hope that you will come and share any concerns or questions about the church and recent changes, as well as your hopes for the future. If there is enough interest, we will make these "Meet with the PRC" meetings a regular event. Together we can be the sanctuary we long for in this crazy world.

The Pastoral Relations Committee

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



**MESSAGE FROM DEVIN
HIGH SCHOOL YOUTH GROUP CORNER**

At our last meeting, the decision was made to meet twice a month, with one meeting being an outing each month. The next couple months are busy with Holidays so I do not think we will be able to meet twice a month until January.

A few of the meetings and/or outings coming up are:

Sunday, November 13th - Lazer Tag: If you all have a place you like to go, let me know. After some research, it seems like LazerCraze in Woburn is our best bet. They close at 8:00 and 2-3 hours should be best. More details to follow!

Saturday, December 17th to Sunday, December 18th - Lock In: We'll be having a Lock In on Saturday Night to help prepare coffee hour for the Pageant on the 18th. We'll have fun, too! Come with games, ideas for games, sleeping bags, etc. More details to follow!

Sunday, January 8th - Gathering at the Church: We'll make plans for the next two months, eat pizza (or whatever else might interest you), have fun, and catch up.

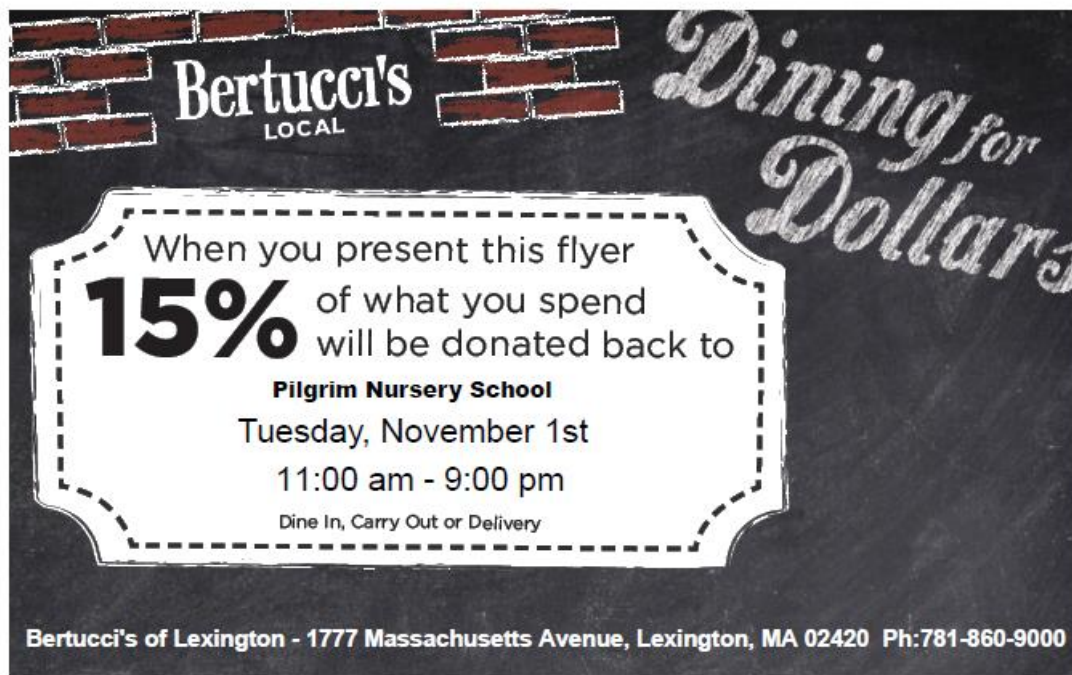
That's just until the start of 2017 for the big events and meetings. Next semester, we can look forward to Paintball in the spring, White Water Rafting with Hancock Youth Group, and going to King's Bowl, too.

In the end, please mark your calendars, let me know if there is something you like other than pizza, and if your April vacation is a good time to go on a mission trip. If so, we need to start planning for that.

devin.shmueli@pilgrimcongregational.org.

Peace,
Devin

HELP SUPPORT PILGRIM NURSERY SCHOOL – TODAY – NOVEMBER 1!!





First Parish in Lexington
presents

The Second Annual Concert
of Traditional and Modern

Folk Music

Sunday, November 6, 2016
at 3:30 p.m.



Featuring the nationally known folk duo John Kirk and Trish Miller, the First Parish sanctuary and children's choirs, an ensemble of guitars, fiddle, banjo, accordion, string bass, piano, mandolin, and other folk instruments. Songs will include Appalachian fiddle tunes, Irish and Scottish folk songs, and more.

Suggested Donation \$10-\$20
(more if you can, less if you can't)

FIRST PARISH IN LEXINGTON
UNITARIAN  UNIVERSALIST

7 Harrington Rd., Lexington, MA 02421
(781) 862-8200 • www.fplex.org



INTERESTED IN VOICE LESSONS?

Ever wished you could sing with more confidence, power and stamina? **Elena Snow**, one of your choir section leaders and soloists, is now accepting voice students for her private studio.

Elena is a graduate of the New England Conservatory with a degree in opera and a concentration in vocal pedagogy. She has taught students from ages 5 to 80, at all different skill levels-absolutely no experience necessary! Lessons can be held in your own home, at church or at her private studio in Boston. Say hello to her after church or email her at snow.elena@gmail.com.



HONDURAS HAPPENINGS

WATER IS LIFE

Last month we traveled to Honduras for the dedication of the well in Mira Flores. Since we first began our mission work, one of our greatest goals has been to bring clean water to people without access to life's basic necessity.

It has been an incredible learning process for us as we have lived beside people who spend hours of their days walking with containers, to stand in long lines, waiting at spigots for the water to slowly drip.

The more we learned, the harder it became. Unlike our neighbors, we have read the reports at the local health center which states the "potable" water is filled with e-coli and "not fit for human consumption." We witnessed the devastating effects of drinking contaminated water including malnutrition, vomiting, diarrhea, parasites and even death. We tried to educate the community to kill the bacteria by chlorinating or boiling the water only to learn they couldn't afford chlorine, wood or electricity. And our inner struggle would continue of how unjust it was that we could return to our home which is always stocked with a five gallon jug of purified water.

We have spent years meeting with community leaders, town officials and experts within country and the U.S., and put many of their recommendations into practice. Progress would be made and then another obstacle and set back would occur. We'd struggle with cultural differences and expectations and question ourselves if we were being good stewards with Pilgrim's money and if this project was realistic. Just when we thought we had exhausted all efforts, our eyes were opened to a new opportunity which seemed obtainable with the remaining resources from the Foundation for the Future fund.

Last November we met with the folks in the barrio of Mira Flores which had no access to water. At that time, we asked the community if they would be interested, and willing to be involved, in constructing a well. We had the opportunity to see people step forward and assume leadership roles so that their neighborhood could seek independence and legally form their own "Patranato" (governing body) Board.

We were fortunate to contract an engineer with 40 years of experience who kept us informed and involved with every step from selecting the site, deeding the land, obtaining permits, working with the electric company, constructing the platform for the holding tank and digging the ditches for the pipes. We traveled to Honduras in February and June so we could be directly involved and our presence insured the community that this project was real.

In September, we were invited guests to the dedication of the well. The community took pride in putting on a full affair with dignitaries invited, a mariachi band hired, refreshments served, and a ribbon cutting and ceremonial plaque displayed. After an opening prayer and the church choir performing, the history of Mira Flores' development was read. This was followed by the Honduran national anthem. As we sat looking out to the crowd, tears welled in our eyes. It was more than just a dream come true.



The people had come to express their appreciation to us, and the people of Pilgrim Church. We looked back at them with the greatest sense of awe knowing the commitment, determination and grueling work they willingly offered to make this happen. They truly valued the importance of clean water and knew their health (and their children's) would significantly improve, and generations would benefit. We'd like to take this opportunity to thank Pilgrim Church for supporting us in being "conduits" to helping the impoverished people in Honduras. Our lives have been so enriched by knowing people who face insurmountable obstacles on a daily basis with such faith, resiliency and gratitude. How true the words are "it is in giving, you receive"...we have received the greatest gift from our brothers and sisters in Honduras, our "purpose in life."

As we move along from Pilgrim, we hope our paths will continue to cross both locally, and you're certainly welcome to join us in Honduras, as well.

Tom and Emily Collins



PILGRIM JOYS AND CONCERNS

- The Van Evera/Rogers family asks for your prayers as Beth travels to Washington DC this week in an effort to join a clinical trial at the NIH National Cancer Institute for a promising anti-cancer immunotherapy drug.
- We ask for prayers for Mona Roy and her family as Aloke tries a new treatment plan.



On **Sunday November 6** we will commemorate **All Saints Day**, a day in the Christian calendar when we acknowledge the loved ones in our lives we have lost over the past year. You are invited to send Diane the name(s) of any friend or family member you have lost over the past year

admin@pilgrimcongregational.org.

Lauren will read the names of all these saints of our church during worship on November 6 and we will give thanks and praise for their lives. Please submit names by November 1.



DAYLIGHT SAVINGS TIME!

Remember to turn your clocks
back one hour on Sunday,
November 6, 2016.



Please note: We will be updating the directory soon, so please notify Diane (admin@pilgrimcongregational.org) if you have a relatively new address, phone number, or email address to ensure we have the most current info. Thank you!

PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

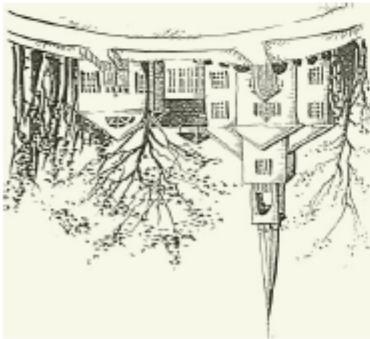
NOVEMBER 1, 2016

A publication of
Pilgrim Congregational Church, UCC
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Sunday Worship and Church School - 10:30am
Choir Rehearsals: Thursdays at 7:30pm

Rev. Lauren Lorincz, Pastor
Daniel Schmidt, Director of Music
Devin Shmueli, Director of Christian Education and Youth Ministries
Diane Blair, Church Secretary
Diane Murphy, Nursery Care Provider
Dan Conley, Church Sexton
Leslie Beatrice, Director of Pilgrim Nursery School



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