



FROM OUR PASTOR

Holy Week and Easter are interesting times in the life of churches. It always ends up that the sanctuary is almost empty on Maundy Thursday and Good Friday, and then Easter morning dawns and the sanctuary is overflowing with members and friends we haven't seen in quite some time, family who are in town, young adults home from college, visitors who feel compelled to go to church on Easter, and many more folks with their own unique stories.

This is just how it goes in most churches, and most faith traditions for that matter. What I know is that for Jews, synagogues are overflowing on the High Holy Days, and most Muslims try to observe Ramadan, even if they haven't been practicing all five pillars of Islam.

People flocking to churches on Easter shouldn't surprise us—this phenomenon, to one degree or another, happens in many faith traditions. It's up to those of us who are in church most Sunday mornings to welcome them, to acknowledge that they may be among us to hear some Good News (or because one of you dragged them as an Easter present for yourself!)

However, don't take my attitude of welcome and acceptance of the reality of Easter observances in the life of churches as an excuse to not come to **Maundy Thursday and Good Friday** this year! Both services will be held at **7:30 PM, on Thursday the 5th and Friday the 6th.**

Bottom line, your Easter will be that much more joyful if you observe the events that led up to the resurrection. How can you appreciate the sunshine if you don't occasionally get caught in the rain? How can you understand joy unless you've experienced some sorrow? How can you celebrate the glorious resurrection of Jesus Christ and his triumph over death and despair unless you've walked with him to Golgotha and watched him die on the cross? I don't think you can, not fully.

Life is not all sunshine and daisies, and Holy Week helps us acknowledge this reality. It allows us to understand this as Christians because we see Jesus wrestle with heart breaking loss and suffering at the end of his life. He gets betrayed, beaten, denied, abandoned, whipped, and crucified. He dies knowing that his best friends walked out on him, and he may have even felt that everything he did and taught for years had been in vain-----

But this is not the end of his story, not the end of our stories, and certainly not the end of God's story!

We will bear witness with the disciples that Jesus' death is only the beginning. If we fully observe Holy Week, we will arrive on Easter Sunday with hope in our hearts, able to say with passion and joy that "Christ is Risen!" I want us to have as much enthusiasm as Peter, who had denied knowing Jesus just a few days before, and yet hears that the tomb is empty—and Peter runs to the tomb to see for himself.

May you have a blessed and transformative Holy Week.

Lauren



CONFIRMATION

On **Sunday April 1st at 2 PM**, Dana will be leading class on **Eternal Life (Session 22.)** We'll talk about eternal life as a gift from God and that nothing can separate us from God's love. Also, have you ever wondered about heaven? There are several passages in the Bible that give us a glimpse of heaven that we'll read together in class!

Our end of the year **Confirmation Retreat** is fast approaching. We'll be going to Grotonwood Camp and Conference Center in Groton—leaving in the morning on **Saturday April 28th** and coming back on **Sunday April 29th** in time to go to church together. More details to come, but we'll be doing a fun project while away and get to run around Grotonwood too!



Lenten WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Sunday April 1st Palm Sunday—10:30 AM.

Jesus is welcomed into Jerusalem by the people of the city with waving palms and cries of "Hosanna!" (*John 12:13*) We will be meeting outside on the front lawn and processing in with palms at the start of worship to mark this first day of Holy Week.

Thursday April 5th Maundy Thursday—7:30 PM.

Maundy Thursday is the day Jesus gave the disciples a new commandment and shared the Last Supper with them. *"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*) We will have communion, and Church Council members and other Pilgrims will read scripture as we ponder Jesus' last night with those he loved most.

Friday April 6th Good Friday—7:30 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. *"It is finished"* are the last words Jesus speaks in the Gospel of John, and this will help orient our service this year (*John 19: 30.*) **What** was finished, what did Jesus mean when he uttered this phrase at the end?

CALL TO A CONGREGATIONAL 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, April 15, 2012 at 11:45AM
following the
Service:

1) Congregational vote to elect Church
Officers.

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

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Saradjian
Clerk

Adult Education: Hallelujah! The Bible and Handel's Messiah Part 2

We are finishing up our Lenten adult
education class on *The Bible and Handel's
Messiah*. Lauren's final class will be on
Palm Sunday at 7 PM at the parsonage
("Worthy is the Lamb" Session 10.) David's
final class will be on Maundy Thursday at 11
AM in the sunroom ("Worthy is the Lamb"
Session 10.) Thanks to all those who have
participated either during Advent and/or
Lent!

From the Minister of Education

I have just arrived home from Pilgrim and my last day with you. I am writing this to you now while the morning is fresh in my mind. I want to share with you some of the thoughts and emotions that are still swirling around inside of me.

The two heaviest feelings I hold now are gratitude and loss. And, I'm realizing that I would not have such a strong sense of loss if I did not love and care for you all. So the blessing of having been with you and growing to love you for these past eleven years is also the source of my sense of loss. I will miss you very much!

I am grateful for all you have been to me during the time I have been at Pilgrim. I thank you for sharing your children and your stories with me. I thank you for offering me a place to grow into pastoral ministry.

While my heart is full of gratitude and the memories we made today, I want to thank you for the gifts you generously bestowed upon me. The children's song was a real treat! I was given the words to it along with the beautiful stole, which will see many worship services in the years to come. The two memory books you made for me are great treasures. One of them was made up of pages from families with their memories and good wishes for me. The other was made by the children. It must have been the secret project that required my being banished to my office every Sunday this past month! On each page, the children had a space for saying what they will miss most about me and here are some of their thoughts: her teaching us at meeting; she is nice; her cross necklace; her smile; her shoes (I love her shoes); love; and her stories. I'm so touched and will be taking that to keep in my office in Chelmsford! Thank you to the youth group who provided such a lovely coffee hour! And, a special thanks to all the grown-ups for my extremely generous monetary gift. It will be put to good use as I build my book and stole collections. I will remember that each addition came from you!

In case you were not able to be in worship with me on my last day, I repeat the Apostle Paul's words for you here, "I give thanks to my God always for you." May God bless Pilgrim and may God bless you!

Love,
Debra



SERMONS AVAILABLE ON OUR WEBSITE.

Just a reminder that you can read or watch sermons on our website at www.pilgrimcongregational.org. Also, remember to "like" us on Facebook!

Save the Date:

*Debra Adams' Ordination
Sunday, May 20, 2012
3 PM*

*First Congregational Church
25 Woburn Street
Reading, MA 01867*



GREENING OF PILGRIM

No, it's not Advent again! I am talking about the "green" that is associated with reducing the church's carbon footprint. Please join me at church on Sunday, April 15 after the congregational meeting for a presentation titled "A Brief History of the Greening of Pilgrim." We have done an impressive amount of work to reduce the church's carbon footprint - some of which you may know about, but some of which may surprise you. Looking forward to seeing you on April 15th.

David McClave



**INTERESTED IN JOINING
THE PILGRIM FAMILY?**

Rev. Lauren Lorincz and the Membership Committee are inviting all those who are interested in joining Pilgrim Congregational Church to express their wishes to Lauren or Carolyn Beckwith. The membership process consists of two meetings plus the joining ceremony held during a Sunday service. The dates are:

Sunday, April 22nd

after the church service on the third floor

Sunday, May 6th

after the church service on the third floor

Sunday, May 13th

the joining ceremony during the service

Come and explore what it means to be a listed member of our church. Childcare will be provided.

Carolyn Beckwith
cnbeckwith@verizon.net



**ODE TO A STOOL
(OR A PLACE FOR GREETERS TO REST)**

Greeters welcome Pilgrim's friends,
Each Sunday morning around 10:10.
You may have helped one time or more
And smiled as each came through the door.

Men and women, kids are few
Have had a turn to shake hands, too.
But after 10 or 15 minutes
Your legs and feet are almost finished.

With that in mind an idea sprung
We needed a new way to stand among
The gathering flock who've come to pray
And warmly greeted, may choose to stay!

Now two, tall bamboo stools
Are waiting in the narthex cool.
Welcoming to our friendly pews
They're there for all to rest and use!

- author unknown



**EQUAL EXCHANGE PRODUCTS WILL BE
SOLD AFTER WORSHIP ON APRIL 1!**

In addition to various teas and coffees, there will be lots of **CHOCOLATE BARS** just in time for Easter baskets! As you stock up on these items, remember that you are supporting third world farmers and their environmentally friendly growing practices.



HONDURAS HAPPENINGS

People often ask, "why do you go to Honduras, especially now when it has become so dangerous?" The letter written below explains it all. It is written by 12 year old, Iris Maria, born with Cerebral Palsy whose mobility was limited to crawling when we met her at age 8. This young girl who was ridiculed by others is one of the most inspiring people I have ever met. She has turned tragedy into triumph and has hopes of becoming a lawyer one day.

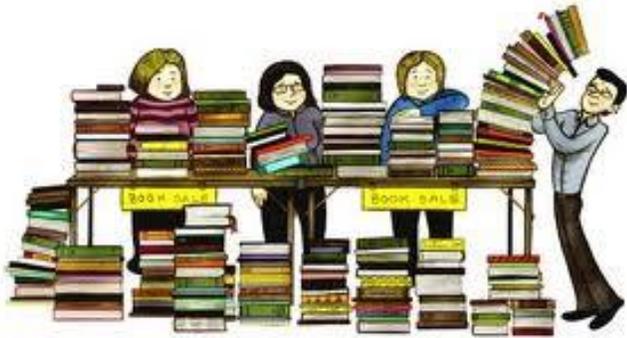
This is for someone very special who has stayed recorded in my mind and in my heart and a person that I will never forget until the day that I depart this earth.

Hello Emily,

You know, I want you to know that there is someone who loves you very much. In my heart, there is something very special for you. You are an angel sent from God into my life. I will never forget that date... Tom especially, November 25th, 2008 when we met. Thank the lord our creator from the sky, that today I can run and walk. I've suffered, I have cried, I have been rejected but today I can say that there is hope. And this for me is a triumph. The same for you as well. I wish with all my heart that God keep you and your family safe in your travels. And that you guys continue to be prosperous in all that you do. God almighty on this day I ask that you give Emily and her family strength and that everyday you be her helper and illuminate her path. Bless their hands and their feet because they bring blessings to many. Thank you God because that is the way it will be. Amen. I want to say that I don't have any money to repay you but I do have something that is very secure, and that is my heart. Full of sweetness. Now I ask that you never forget me, where ever you go please. Keep me in your thoughts and in your heart. That will make me stronger and it will show me that you guys will never be ashamed of me. Some day you will see that I will triumph.

Thank you Emily.

Iris maria Mendoza



PILGRIM CHURCH BOOK SALE 2012

Sort out your books, DVDs, CDs! And bring them to the 2nd level of the church near the elevator. We would appreciate having them as soon as possible, certainly before April 22nd.

The 2012 Pilgrim Book Sale will be on two weekends. On Saturday April 28th and Saturday May 5th we will be welcoming the community in for the book sale. On Sunday April 29th and Sunday May 6th we will be offering books for sale to the congregation during Coffee Hour. We need Books, DVDs and CDs. We will be grateful to receive non-fiction books other than text books, novels, children's books, recipe books, travel books less than 5 years old, hobby books, reference books, etc. If you can help please call Sandy at 781-862-7198.

The proceeds of this year's sale will be dedicated to creating improvements in the Labor and Delivery/ Gynecology room of the Hospital Santa Teresa in Comayagua, Honduras the nearest hospital to Flores. In just that department (which is essentially one room) of the hospital there are falling ceiling tiles, exposed wires, blood stained floors, crowded conditions with no privacy, and virtually no medical equipment. For example what passes for an incubator is a tiny bed with a desk lamp over it to provide heat. With your help a big difference can be created in this one room of one hospital! If you have any questions please contact Sandy Gardiner at: sandra.gardiner@verizon.net.

REMINDER: The deadline for the May issue of Pilgrim's Progress is **April 23rd**.



PILGRIM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP

REFLECTIONS ON THE CARBON FAST

In the past few weeks we have shared comments from people in other congregations who participated in the Carbon Fast last year. Now we hear from Pilgrim members who have shared reflections on this year's Carbon Fast at Pilgrim.

Deborah Burger writes:

"For two years I rode my bike to work in Arlington. It was a wonderful commute down the Minuteman bike path, it allowed our family to get by with two cars and three drivers, and it was my work-out on those days after working 8-6. As I think about the Lenten Carbon Fast at my church this year, I am so glad that we are taking these steps to help our home/earth. In these times of angry diatribes, ranting blogs and the uneasy feelings that harsh words and judgments do inflict in spite of the childhood rhyme "sticks and stones", taking positive actions that are pro-nature, pro-children and pro-health help me to look to the future with hope."

Elizabeth Chen writes:

"I love the carbon fast. Last year, we were inspired to ride our bikes to church. It all started with a ride to see the newly renovated parsonage (I think we missed the Lenten Season, but we thought about it through Lent!). Throughout the year, I've tried to walk or ride to church on Sundays. This way we don't end up driving two cars since Dick goes off early for choir. I now really look forward to the exercise. The carbon fast has helped me develop new habits for the entire year. I try to do little things.



For example, we now recycle our plastic grocery bags. I also try to bring my sacks if I can remember, so I don't have to get plastic bags at the grocery store. They're a pain to store! In my mind, it has been a great success! My habits have changed as a result."



THE INTERFAITH GARDEN BEGINS!

Those who are new to Pilgrim Church may be interested in our connection to the Lexington Interfaith Garden, an effort supported by the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association. This year twelve faith communities will send volunteers to the vegetable plot across from the Battle Green to plant seeds and tend the garden from now until late October. Our Head Gardener is Carla Fortmann, who has been gardening organically in her back yard for 32 years. She shows us just how to tend and harvest the crops. When harvesting begins, a few volunteers take the vegetables in a wheelbarrow over to the Church of our Redeemer, which is host to the Lexington area Food Pantry. In addition to the veggies sometimes there are strawberries, blueberries and perhaps some extra eggs from Carla's chickens!

For anyone interested in helping out, we have a flyer which explains where the garden is, what to bring, and other details. Email barbjim.munkres@verizon.net if you would like more information or wish to sign up for one of our scheduled dates below:

- Tues. April 3, 4:30 to 6 pm**
- Sat. April 14, 9 to 10:30 am**
- Sat. April 28, 9 to 10:30 am**
- Sat. May 12, 8:30 to 10 a**

AMNESTY INTERNATIONAL SUNDAY, APRIL 22nd

In answer to the question "What can I do to promote justice and take a stand for human rights?", you can join others after worship in Pilgrim Hall in the annual Amnesty International letter signing campaign in Pilgrim Hall. These letters are sent to heads of state to request freedom for prisoners of conscience imprisoned and/or are being treated unjustly for their beliefs, race, or ethnic origin. They have neither used nor advocated violence.

Gisela Koester will be here once again to provide assistance and to answer questions; she will bring the form letters provided by Amnesty International for us to address and sign.



New Address for
Chris Emery

Please note as of mid-April or so,
Christine Emery's new address is as
follows:

88 Vista Bella Way
Newnan, GA 30265

We wish Chris much happiness and
joy in her new home!



CRADLES TO CRAYONS

Pilgrim Youth and Confirmation students will be helping out at the **Cradles to Crayons Giving Factory** on **Tuesday, April 24th from 5 to 8:30 pm (Dinner will be served)!** This event promises to be a great charitable way to give back to those in need! Please let Dana know if you'll be able to help at this service project or if you have any questions. You can let her know at church or email her at Pilgrimyouthmin@gmail.com.



PLEASE NOTE:
BIBLE STUDY WILL RESUME
ON TUESDAY, APRIL 17TH!!

Make Your Voice Matter With Lawmakers™

**Can You Spare 10 Minutes a Month
to Slash Family Homelessness?**

A "user-friendly, no experience needed" FREE WORKSHOP that gives you new tools and increased confidence to share your opinions and concerns with your lawmakers.



Are you upset when you hear about children who are homeless?

Do you wish you could do more to help very poor and homeless youngsters but are strapped for time?

Do you volunteer for quite a few hours a month and are frustrated that it seems like you are "putting bandaids" on the problem, rather than addressing its root causes?

Do you yearn to do something to eliminate the root causes of family homelessness but wonder where to start?

Do you know that 2 or 3 calls or letters can draw a lawmaker's attention to an issue?

Learn how to communicate your views and concerns to state house lawmakers whose votes determine which services are available, and which aren't. In a supportive atmosphere, practice key advocacy skills (including how to best present your case to lawmakers and techniques in writing letters-to-the-editor and social media posts) that can sway your elected representatives.

The workshops will be led by **Miriam Stein, MSW**, the author of the newly released book, *Make Your Voice Matter With Lawmakers: No Experience Necessary* (flyer on reverse side). An advocacy consultant and trainer, Ms. Stein has extensive experience in advocacy, lobbying, and media work. Her awards include: Social Worker of the Year from the National Association of Social Workers, MA Chapter and the Arlington Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. Community Award. For more information, feel free to contact her at 781-648-0255 or at mstein@makeyourvoicematter.com.

Workshop Locations: Lexington, Pilgrim Church, 55 Coolidge St., **April 11, 2012, 6:30-9:30pm.**

Wellesley, Wellesley Friends Meeting, 26 Benvenue St., **April 29, 2012, 2:00-5:00pm.** The workshops are sponsored by the Advocacy Network to End Family Homelessness, Carl Miller, Coordinator. To register or for more information, contact him at NormanCMiller@comcast.net or 978-369-3755.