

## Pilgrim's Progress December 5, 2018 - Vol. 59 No. 12

Dear Pilgrim folks,

Do you ever get the Advent blues? I know I do. The blues seem to come round the second week of Advent for me (perhaps they've found you already). I look ahead at all there is to do to prepare my family, my home, my sermons, my wardrobe (!) for the season, and it suddenly all seems quite impossible. There is not enough time. There is not enough will. There is not enough daylight. I will never find a present that my mom will truly like. My friend will inevitably wait til the last minute to decide whether she is or is not bringing her three kids over to my house Christmas Eve morning. I won't find the Christmas themed hand towels and the dog will likely not get a bath in time before company.



All that inward thinking comes amidst difficult decisions of what charities will get our donations. And whether to put money in the Salvation Army bucket. (They take care of the poorest of the poor but also say the LBGT folks are sinful.) And then there are the people I'll be missing this year because they've passed away and are gone. My blue-edged nostalgia for them and for what seemed a simpler time that they represent in my memory surfaces--the inner child who wants to have Christmas in front of my grandparent's fireplace in Vermont.

So I find myself blue and wishing all at once that the season was over and I could hop forward into the grey dreary chill of January slush. Maybe you sometimes do, too.

I find two places of solace during the Advent blues. The first is in the texts of longing and hope that we read in this season. People looked to God to bring about something new, to reach them in their loneliness and oppression and sorrow. In reading these I know I am not alone in the blues. In fact Advent is perfect season, really, for a sense of all that is broken and unfinished. All the roads that need mending. The Service of the Longest Night is a time when we gather as a community to honor these feelings and know that loss is a part of the holiday experience for many of us.

Another place I find solace is in remembering why I am making these Advent preparations. I decorate the deck with lights because they are pretty, yes. But also because they are a light in the darkness. This string of colored lights speaks to the belief I have that Jesus does come as a light and hope in the dark. I clean my house so that relatives don't make comments on my (lack of) housekeeping, but underneath I can find that I also clean it to help mirror the cleaning out I am to do be doing inside myself. The paths in my heart need the most cleaning and straightening this time of year. The ornaments I put on our Christmas tree, many carefully saved from year to year, remind me of Christmases past and how I experienced Jesus' arrival as a child, a youth, a teen, a new pastor, a mom. And that Jesus arrives year after year after year, ever faithful to the promise. The ornaments are physical, tangible reminders of that promise kept.

Blue or not, I wish you a good Advent. I pray that you find time to prepare in whatever way helps you to remember that Jesus is coming. His promises of hope and life and healing are true and unchanging, even as we change. I pray that you find you are in actually truly preparing for him in the midst all that demands your time.

Peace,  
Karen



### Christmas Traditions Around the World

In Advent this year we are celebrating different Christmas traditions each Sunday. This past week we looked at how the Lakota include the bear, fox and bison as the Wise Ones who come to the manger. This coming Sunday we look at the traditions from Greece and their devotion to Saint Nicholas as the patron saint of sailors as well as customs practiced in Greek homes. For the third week of Advent we once again welcome the tradition of Saint Lucia and her crown of flaming candles while in the fourth week we will reenact the tradition of Las Posadas in Mexico.

### Publicity Flyers Available

We still have flyers available for you to take to neighbors, friends or anyone you think might like a place to go and be welcomed on Christmas Eve. Our Advent flyer lists all the activities of the weeks leading up to Christmas through the hymn sing the Sunday after. The red flyer focuses on the Sunday events. Please consider who you might know or have a nodding acquaintance with that you might invite to join us. The worst they can say is no! And even if they decline to come, you never know how they might be touched by knowing that you thought enough of them to invite them in.



### Service of the Longest Night - Dec. 20th 7pm

For many the season of Advent and Christmas can be a difficult one. Some of us may be grieving friends and family we have lost over the past year. Some of us may have difficult memories of this time of year, or feel disconnected from all the holiday sparkle and noise. This service is a time to gather together and remember the promises of the season. Light will come in the darkness. Hope is alive. Even as the days are dark this time of year, and we can be weighted down, the love of Christmas, of Jesus coming into the world, is for all. The service is a time of music, meditation, reflection and prayer. Come to be with others. Come to lay down your burdens. Come to take a break from the commercial madness. Come to be in a place of quiet expectation.

### More Hearing Devices

The good news is that folks are really using our hearing devices. So much so that we have ordered more! Please note that if the one you select doesn't work, it is most likely a battery problem. Any usher can help with new batteries.





## News of Pilgrims and Prayers Requests

We lift up these prayers as a community:

- Prayers of healing for John, a 7 year old suffering from Lyme disease
- Prayers of healing and presence for Warren Johnson
- Prayers for Kathy, dear friend of the Moffitt-Clarks as she progresses in her cancer treatment
- Prayers for peace and easy passage for Dick Edmiston's cousin John Edmiston who has been admitted to hospice in San Antonio as he is losing his fourth cancer battle. John has been like a big brother to Dick for 70 years. Also prayers of healing and hope for Dick's very good friend Paul Burch in Dallas. Paul has been diagnosed with CMML, a newly discovered form of leukemia of the brain with a poor prognosis.
- Prayers for dear friends of the Lunds who are struggling with a major household move and all the stress it has brought
- Prayers of thanksgiving to see Anita Bradley back in worship
- Prayers of celebration for all who took part in greening the church on Sunday with such joy and enthusiasm
- Prayers for others in our church community recently diagnosed with health challenges or awaiting results.
- And prayers for all who wait and wait and wait.

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### Notes from the Treasurer--a New "Regular Column"

Karen recently asked Dave McClave, Pilgrim's Treasurer, if he would regularly contribute to Pilgrim's Progress with information and news of Pilgrim's finances. For many the finances of the church are a big mystery. Hopefully these notes will shed some light on how the financial part of the church works. Dave will also answer questions in the column so if you have one related to church finance, send it in to the office or let him know.

At the Annual Meeting this past year, Pilgrim passed a deficit budget of about \$34,000. This was a big concern but a decision was made to move ahead as Pilgrim continues during the Interim period which can be financially challenging. Currently, we are on track to have a smaller deficit than anticipated. The current deficit estimate is about \$21,000. While this is still a large number, the good news is that this number represents a much larger fulfillment of pledged dollars. At the end of November, 99% of pledge totals had been collected. (KG: Thank you for your faithfulness to Pilgrim and its ministries!)

Question: What percentage of Pilgrim's income comes from pledges/pledge dollars?  
Answer: About 60% of the current year's budgeted income comes from pledges. For 2018 pledges totaled \$150,753.



## Mitten Tree Sunday – Sunday, December 9

This is an annual celebration for us! Please bring new mittens, hats, and scarves to be donated to East End House in Cambridge. During the service on **December 9**, we will place our items on one of the Christmas trees located in the front of the sanctuary. If you prefer to make a cash donation, you can write a check to Pilgrim with *East End House* noted in the memo line.

## Pilgrim Church Christmas Party--Dec. 9

What do you get when you add a bunch of Pilgrims, great food, and a roster of carols--a great Christmas party! Come celebrate Christmas with the congregation. We will eat, sing and be merry. The lunch will be held downstairs in Fellowship Hall right after worship on Dec. 9th.



## The Giving Tree

We dedicate our Giving Tree to the children at Shriners Hospital in Boston. Shriners is a 30-bed pediatric hospital providing acute, reconstructive, and rehabilitative care. Shriners Hospital specializes in pediatric care at no charge for children up to 18 years of age. The tree is located in Pilgrim's sun room, and there are gift tags (with specific requests) hanging from the branches. Please take a tag and return it with the unwrapped gift by **Sunday, December 16**. Our Giving Tree Gifts must be NEW and unwrapped. Thank you!





**HOLIDAY  
CHURCH  
OFFICE HOURS**

Just a reminder that the Church Office will be closed **Monday, December 24** and will reopen on **Wednesday, January 2, 2019**.



## Parents' Night Out - December 8 from 6-8 pm

Our Junior Youth Group elected to host all the younger children from 6:00 to 8:00 on Saturday, December 8th. They will be sharing their time and look forward to providing parents with some respite while they entertain and feed the younger kids. A tie-dye like project will be a part of the activities so please prepare for your kids to get messy. They will need clothes to get dirty. Please note there will be additional chaperones, too!



**KID'S PARTY FOR PARENT'S NIGHT OUT**

December 8<sup>th</sup>, 2018  
6:00-8:00  
Pilgrim Congregational Church  
55 Coolidge Avenue, Lexington

Drop your kids off for a party with fun and dinner served while parents get the night out to enjoy some free time and free childcare.

ALL ARE WELCOME  
RSVP to [Devin.Shmueli@PilgrimCongregational.org](mailto:Devin.Shmueli@PilgrimCongregational.org)



**PILGRIM**  
Congregational Church

### Church School Schedule through January

|         | Younger kids                       | Junior Youth              |
|---------|------------------------------------|---------------------------|
| Dec. 9  | Life of Jesus (Jesus at Age 12)    | Sermon reflection         |
| Dec. 16 | Life of Jesus (Jesus is the Light) | Women of the Bible        |
| Dec. 23 | Life of Jesus (Jesus' Baptism)     | Social Justice            |
| Dec. 30 | Intergenerational Hymn Sing        | Intergenerational Worship |



**Would you like to help LexRAP?  
We need Brownies!**

A small group of women from LexRAP are taking a lunch to a class of students who are learning English. They have lunch and practice their English at the same time. LexRAP does this just once every month.

If you can provide a few brownies please contact Sandy Gardiner on or before Sunday Dec. 16th. [sandra.gardiner.02420@gmail.com](mailto:sandra.gardiner.02420@gmail.com)



## Sign Up to Volunteer at Pilgrim!

To sign up to be a liturgist, greeter, coffee hour host or to volunteer with Pilgrim's Children's Church, please click [HERE](#). Thank you!

Click [HERE](#) to access the Pilgrim Church Calendar.



## Recent Sermons

Please feel free to watch or read recent sermons on our website. [HERE](#) is the link to the most recent sermon.



### UCC STILLSPEAKING DAILY DEVOTIONAL

#### Undivided Attention

By: Vince Amlin  
December 2, 2018

*My daughter is two-and-a-half and still not talking much.*

Continue reading [HERE](#)

