

Pilgrim Congregational Church - UCC, 55 Coolidge Avenue, Lexington, MA 02420-1899



## FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR

February may be short on days, but it's long on holidays. Groundhog day, Valentine's Day, Presidents' Day (which used to be two separate days) fall in February, and often Ash Wednesday as well, although it comes in March this year.

Groundhog Day, February 2, is a popular tradition in the United States. I did not realize until recently that its origins go back to an early Christian holiday, Candlemas. Candlemas celebrated the presentation of the infant Jesus in the temple. On this day, clergy blessed candles and distributed them to the people. Even in its earliest days, Candlemas marked a milestone in the winter and so the weather that day was important. According to an English song,

*If Candlemas be fair and bright,  
Come, Winter, and have another flight.  
If Candlemas brings clouds and rain,  
Go, Winter, and come not again.*

The Candlemas tradition crossed the Atlantic with Pennsylvania's earliest settlers. While they kept the tradition of predicting a long or short winter based on the weather on the day of Candlemas, somewhere along the line, its religious association disappeared. Now, we rely on Punxatawney Phil and his shadow to tell us how long it will be until spring. The candle blessing has dissolved in the mists of time.

A second February holiday, Valentine's Day, also originated in the church. According to what I have read, the holiday was established in fifth century Rome with the dual purpose of honoring a saint and co-opting a pagan holiday which the Church found offensive because of its sexual nature. In an effort to do away with the most licentious aspects of the pagan festival, the Church searched for a suitable patron saint of love to bring a Christian flavor to a popular holiday. They found one in Valentine, a priest or even a bishop, according to which source one reads, who had been executed for marrying Christians against the emperor's orders.

According to tradition, (or perhaps legend) while Valentine was in prison, he befriended the blind daughter of his jailer. Before he was taken off to be executed, he signed his farewell message to her, "From your Valentine."

As the new, G-rated holiday became more popular, it became a tradition for men to give the women they admired handwritten messages of affection containing Valentine's name.

This year, we will be trying something new during the month of February: Children's Sunday has been moved to February 13<sup>th</sup> in an effort to accommodate the calendar and people's busy schedules. Not entirely surprisingly, the theme will be Love--the message which underlies all of the gospels and honors the bishop of the ancient church. Please be sure to attend this service which will be mostly created and led by the students of the Pilgrim Church School. They have been working for some time to prepare this special valentine for us.

Peace and love to you all during these cold and snowy days,  
Sally



## FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

### CHILDREN'S SUNDAY

Come share in the gifts our children and youth bring to worship on February 13th. Children's Sunday is an opportunity for you to support Pilgrim's active children's ministry. We will also celebrate our teachers and their assistants who teach the children about God's love. If you know young families who may want to share a pew with you and see what we are about, please invite them.

#### PILGRIM YOUTH GROUP PRESENTS...

#### SNOW TUBING AT NASHOBA VALLEY!

Sunday, February 6<sup>th</sup>. Drop off at 4:30 pm at Pilgrim Church, and pick up at 7:00 pm also at Pilgrim. The cost per person is \$21. Please RSVP to [pilgrimyouthmin@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimyouthmin@gmail.com) no later than Tuesday, February 1<sup>st</sup>, or let Dana know in person that you wish to attend. Please note that all underage attendees will have to have parents sign and return a permission slip in order to attend. Remember to dress warmly and feel free to bring a friend!!

#### UPCOMING DATES FOR

#### YOUTH GROUP:

Feb. 6 <sup>th</sup>	May 1 <sup>st</sup>
Feb 20 <sup>th</sup>	May 15 <sup>th</sup>
March 6 <sup>th</sup>	May 29 <sup>th</sup>
March 20 <sup>th</sup>	June 12 <sup>th</sup>
April 3 <sup>rd</sup>	June 26 <sup>th</sup>
April 17 <sup>th</sup>	(mtgs. from 4-6 pm)



### HONDURAS HAPPENINGS



**Astrid in the Hospital**

Many people have approached us after church, inquiring about six year old, Astrid, and what her medical condition entails. Some people remember her being here four years ago, when she was treated for a "tethered cord." Astrid was born with this neurological disorder, which is caused by tissue attachment that limits the movement of the spinal cord. A neurosurgeon at Shriners Hospital in Springfield successfully released the spinal cord tethering.

Astrid is now here for treatment of her left "cavus" foot, a condition of her neurological disorder, which results in a very high arch. The doctors at Shriners have now completed two surgeries on her foot. The first one was a tendon release, and the second one required them to insert a wedge of bone into a cut in one of Astrid's bones, in the middle of her foot.

Astrid is now wearing a full-length cast for six weeks. She will then be x-rayed and it will be determined whether she will require additional casting or if she will be fitted for an AFO(ankle-foot orthosis), a plastic brace which will be inserted into her shoe.

We are grateful Astrid has been given this opportunity for treatment because without it, the disorder is progressive causing sensory and motor problems, as well as, loss of bowel and bladder control.

On April 13th, Astrid will return home to her family in Flores, Honduras.

Emily Collins



## STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

The Stewardship Committee would like to offer our sincere thanks to all who contributed to this year's pledge drive. The total pledged for this year is \$187,955, a very generous amount considering the current financial times, and it represents a 0.8% increase over pledges made last year. With the new Youth Minister starting this year, many people stepped up their pledges to support that, among other ministries.

Unfortunately, we did not meet our goal of \$205,000. Some of that is due to the decrease in total number of pledges from 83 last year to 79 this year, although the 79 includes 10 new pledges. So if anyone would like to increase their pledge now, we would be more than happy to accommodate them!!! Besides the idea of an increase in pledging, we could use some creative ideas for fund raisers or other methods to help bridge the gap this year. We all need to put our thinking caps on. Please feel free to contact any of our committee members with your ideas.

Fortunately, as a church we care passionately about its ministries and are willing to put our resources in the furthering of God's work.

The Stewardship Committee  
Joe Carabbio, Peter Saradjian, Julia Kirby, Kim Bond, David Nuss, Sally Thacher

### Matthew 6:19 - 21

**"Lay not up for yourselves treasures upon earth, where moth and rust doth corrupt, and where thieves break through and steal: But lay up for yourselves treasures in heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through nor steal: For where your treasure is, there will your heart be also."**



## Join the Choir

### SPECIAL INVITATION TO JOIN THE CHOIR

To everyone who has ever thought about being part of Pilgrim's Chancel Choir: this is your chance to join us in time to learn a very special choral work for our next Music Sunday on March 20. Since its initial performance in 2000, James Whitbourn's *Son of God Mass* for choir, organ, and soprano saxophone has been universally heralded by critics and musicians alike. The piece is stunning, yet it is simple enough to remain accessible to enthusiastic singers who lack formal vocal training.

The choir enthusiastically invites everyone in the Pilgrim community to join in by attending the weekly rehearsal on Thursdays from 7:30 - 9:00 pm. If you would like to sing in the choir, but are unable to attend on Thursday, please speak with David Mislin about attending the early Sunday morning rehearsal. For more information about Pilgrim's choir, feel free to contact David at (617) 223-1270 or [david.mislin@gmail.com](mailto:david.mislin@gmail.com).



**COME TO PILGRIM  
FOR  
A DINNER WITH  
RAY GREENE!  
February 5th at  
5:30pm**

Please make reservations to attend a delicious dinner and exciting entertainment!

Dessert donations would be most appreciated! RSVP required, email Susan Carabbio at [s.carabbio@comcast.net](mailto:s.carabbio@comcast.net). This is going to be a wonderful evening, get out of the snow and cold, and warm up to a home made meal and live music!



**A WORD FROM  
OUR CONFERENCE MINISTER,  
THE REV. JIM ANTAL**

**Expanding our Conference Mission Statement.**

Since its adoption in 2005, the MA Conference mission statement “nurturing local church vitality and the covenant among our churches” has guided the ministry of the Board of Directors and staff. With the adoption of the mission statement, the programming, resourcing and prayers of the Conference have been focused on strong local churches, excellent pastors and faithful leaders. Making covenantal connections between churches, leaders and pastors has served to share best practices and build community in Christ.

Even as the fruits of the mission statement were becoming more evident, a sense lingered that the statement would be stronger if we could clarify “to what end?” were we seeking to nurture vitality and covenant. In September 2010, the Board of Directors added the phrase, “to make God’s love and justice real” to the mission statement. So the efforts of the Board, commissions, committees and staff are all to the end of making God’s love and justice real. Nurturing local church vitality and covenant are not ends in themselves, but are meant to embody and incarnate God’s love and justice.

This is now reflected on our new Conference web site: [www.macucc.org](http://www.macucc.org).



**CALL TO ANNUAL 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, February 6, 2011 11:45 am following the Service.

**Agenda**

- 1) Congregational approval of minutes of prior meetings.
- 2) Presentation of written committee reports, distributed in advance of this meeting
- 3) Presentation and adoption of the fiscal budget for 2011
- 4) Update on Ministerial Search
- 5) Any other pertinent matters that may arise
- 6) Necrology, remarks, and a prayer by the pastor.

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

Respectfully submitted,  
Dick Edmiston  
Clerk



### **PLANNING AHEAD FOR EQUAL EXCHANGE SALE**

Many Equal Exchange items will be on sale in the Sun Room after worship some Sunday – date to be determined and announced. In addition to several kinds of coffee and tea, there will be other items available as treats for your spouse, your kids, your friends – and why not yourself? These will include a rich variety of chocolate bars, packs of almonds and dried cranberries.

The Interfaith Program at Equal Exchange, in partnership with ten different faith groups, maintains a strong commitment to furthering both Fair Trade and environmental justice. This provides Pilgrim with a chance to continue supporting these programs while helping to insure that the small-scale farmers who grow the products receive a fair wage.

Please remember that every time you purchase Equal Exchange products you'll also be helping to support Pilgrim's coffee hour as well as all the other times when coffee and tea are served at our church.



### **LOOKING FOR GIRLS CLOTHING SIZE 9-12 MONTHS**

Vernice Elizabeth Miranda Garcia will be arriving on Friday, February 25th from Honduras. She will be having open heart surgery at Tufts Medical Center at the beginning of March. We will be looking for girls clothing, size 9 - 12 months. Thank you.



### **LUNCHEON FOR DOUGLAS HOUSE RESIDENTS 2011**

On Saturday January 22 several members of the Care Committee as well as Rev. Sally Thacher, Dana Ellis and Sara Carabbio welcomed back a few of the residents of Douglas House and Kerri, a new caregiver there. For various reasons other residents were not able to attend the luncheon, but the ones who did enjoyed the food, the conversation and the change of scene. It was a special experience for the Care members to talk with the guests as they spoke of their home towns, families, Boston sports teams and life at Douglas House. They all gave positive comments about their facility, their care and caregivers. Charlie Dexter and Bruce Dayton accepted a last minute invitation to join in the conversation, provide some male companionship – and enjoy the lunch. All the folks hope that this will continue to be an annual event, though probably holding it a bit later in the year to avoid the snow and cold.

Douglas House is located at 7 Oakland Street – very close to Lexington center. It was the site of the Lexington Press for many years and completely retrofitted to be able to fulfill the needs of the new residents when it opened in August 2008. There are 15 studio-style units with baths for the residents. It is the third facility owned by Supportive Living, Inc. to serve the needs of adult survivors of brain injuries through rehab and research programs.



## **PILGRIM ENVIRONMENTAL GROUP**

### **LOOKING AHEAD**

At our recent discussion of Jim Wallis' book on rediscovering values, someone made the comment that our traditional holidays in Christianity, such as Christmas and Easter, are not really about Jesus' teachings, or how he hoped we would live.

Perhaps Lent is one of our traditions that does come closer to Jesus' teachings. Many of us remember as children giving up some treat for Lent, or as adults, studying a book related to our faith during this time.

What would happen if we collectively decided to do something related to social justice, or the environment? This year, the Massachusetts Conference of the United Church of Christ has suggested that member congregations consider giving up CARBON for Lent. Since environmental degradation afflicts the poor more than the rest of us, any reduction in our carbon, or energy use, is also an act of justice for those who live near coal fired power plants, or on vulnerable river flood plains. Presbyterians call their similar effort "Tread Lightly for Lent".

It might be as simple as 'buy Fair Trade Coffee today', or 'wash your clothes with a full load to save water'. We will have more information about how you can participate in this effort as we move closer to Lent.

***Ending Homelessness:  
Recent Successes and the Next Steps...  
Despite the Growing Problem***



**Sunday, March 6, 2011  
3:00 to 5:00pm,  
Trinitarian Congregational Church, Concord**

*Seventh Annual Forum sponsored by the Advocacy Network To End Family Homelessness*

**Do You Know the Disturbing Statistics About Family Homelessness?**

Family homelessness remains a severe crisis in Mass. due, in part, to the continued economic crisis, including record foreclosures. Over 33,000 families applied for emergency shelter in the year ending July 2010, a significant increase over the previous year. Thus the number of homeless families far exceeds the 3000 families that are currently in emergency shelters nightly.

**Learn** what we can do to sustain homelessness prevention programs at risk due to upcoming State Budget Cuts.

**Hear** how congregations and individuals can play a pivotal role in helping end family homelessness.

**Listen** to an urgent call to action to support the regional network and shelter programs.

**Speakers:**

**Lt. Gov. Timothy Murray, Keynote Speaker. "The State's New Successful Homelessness Prevention Initiatives"**

**Tina Brooks, Co-leader, Mass. Commission to End Homelessness.  
"Accomplishments and Innovations of Regional Network Pilot Programs & the Importance of Continuing Their Funding"**

**Tina Close, Co-convener of the MetroWest Regional Program. "Our Region's Achievements in Homelessness Prevention, Diversion, and Rapid Re-housing & the Benefits of Continuing These Family Programs". Also, A First-hand Account By a Person Who Avoided Homelessness Through the Diversion Program**

**State House Lawmakers from our Area in a Panel Discussion, moderated by Miriam Stein, MSW, advocacy consultant.**

The forum is free and open to all. It is also sponsored by *Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries*. Forum co-sponsors include Episcopal City Mission and the UU Mass Action Network. *Cooperative Metropolitan Ministries* is an interfaith coalition of over 80 congregations, in the city of Boston and surrounding communities, which brings people together across religious, racial and socioeconomic lines to work jointly for social justice. For more information, contact Carl Miller at 978-369-3755 or at [NormanCMiller@comcast.net](mailto:NormanCMiller@comcast.net)

# February 2011

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
		1 11:00 a Bible Study	2 12:00 p LICA Mtg. and Lunch 7:30 p Worship Committee Mtg.	3 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	4	5 9:00 a Arts Program (Pilgrim Hall) 5:00 p Pilgrims Dinner
6 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship/Communion 11:45 a Annual Mtg. 4:00 p Youth Group - Tubing Outing	7	8 11:00 a Bible Study	9 7:30 p Membership Mtg.	10 4:00 p Pilgrim Serves Bristol Lodge 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	11	12 9:00 a Arts Program 5:00 p Pilgrims Dinner - Snow Date
13 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship/Children's Sunday	14 7:30 p F&A Mtg.	15 11:00 a Bible Study	16 10:00 a Care Mtg. 7:00 p Fellowship Mtg.	17 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	18	19
20 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship 4:00 p Youth Group	21 President's Day - Office Closed	22 11:00 a Bible Study	23	24 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	25 <u>Deadline for PP Articles</u>	26 9:00 a Arts Program
27 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship	28 7:00 p Council Mtg. 7:00 p PNS Committee Mtg.					