

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



## FROM OUR INTERIM PASTOR

*They set out; and there, ahead of them, went the star that they had seen at its rising, until it stopped over the place where the child was. Matthew 2:9*

Happy New Year to one and all! I realize that as you read these words, we will still be in the middle of the Christmas season. Those of us who observe the richness of Advent want to hold on to the power of Christmas through all its twelve days. Too often, however, with our hectic and harried lives we find ourselves pushed into the next season without the opportunity to fully savor the “now.”

I hope you have found some time to allow thoughts of the birth of Jesus to seep into your minds and hearts. As the Reverend Geoffrey Black, President of the UCC wrote in his Christmas letter to all of us, *“In its fullness, the nativity story is about beauty, intrigue, suffering, risk, and sacrifice along with the realities of immigration and poverty. It gives cause for hope and expresses our yearning for peace. Additionally, there is an overarching theme of God’s intervening love and the joy it inspires.”*

Thoughtful and eloquent Christmas messages notwithstanding, January is the month of Epiphany. Most of the signs of Christmas have been put away: the tree dismantled, decorations packed away for another year, and (hopefully) sensible eating habits restored after the glut of December. In many countries, difficult as it may be to believe, Epiphany is more important than Christmas. Epiphany is the celebration of the magi arriving to find the child Jesus. These “wise men” had followed a new star for many months, traveling over “field and fountain, moor and mountain” as the familiar carol tells us. On their arrival they expressed “love and joy” with the gifts they presented.

At first, the magi hadn’t been certain of their exact destination. Their journey involved “intrigue” and “risk,” but they kept their eyes on the star, trusting it to show them the way. And it did. In this New Year, let us keep our eyes focused on our star, whichever one it is that guides us to the “perfect light.” Pilgrim Church also has a star to follow as it moves into the New Year and I know how you yearn to reach the end of your long time of transition.

Like the magi, you and I may not know our exact destination, but if we trust in God’s leading and “intervening love”, we will reach the end of the journey in exactly the place God hopes for us. May the remainder of your journey be richly rewarding, and the New Year a blessed one for each of you.

Peace and love,  
*Sally*



## FROM THE MINISTER OF EDUCATION

Although many people make New Year's resolutions, I am not usually one of them. I prefer to begin whatever resolution I come up with as soon as I think of it. Not this year. I don't want to give up the sweets and delectable holiday dishes that will be presented at each party I attend so I'm putting it off. Besides, it will give me time to ponder exactly how I will achieve my goal, right? Ok, that's an excuse. But many of the important choices we make require some kind of plan or discernment so that we can make informed decisions.

Last year, a small group came together to plan exactly how we would meet our resolution to provide a youth program for our kids beyond what they get on Sunday morning. And the discernment paid off in the form of our enthusiastic new youth leader, Dana Ellis. I am looking forward to working with Dana and very excited that our wonderful youth will have an outlet to express their faith in new and interesting ways. Happy New Year, Happy New Beginnings!

Yours in faith, Debra



### **PILGRIM HAS A NEW DIRECTOR OF YOUTH MINISTRY**

Our new Director of Youth Ministry, **Dana Ellis**, was introduced to the congregation at our December 19th worship service. She was able to informally connect with

some folks during coffee hour and looks forward to meeting the rest of our congregation when she formally begins her work in January.

Dana is full of energy and is incredibly excited about launching Pilgrim's Youth Group. The group will most likely meet twice a month on Sunday evenings, although the interested students will be consulted regarding their schedules. Dana has most recently been an Americorps VISTA worker. She had a very positive Youth Group experience on Long Island, NY and comes to us full of ideas. Dana graduated in 2009 from SUNY Purchase with a major in Media, Society and the Arts.

The search for a Youth Minister began in response to the congregation ranking the need for youth ministry among the highest priorities for our community during the Visioning process. Church Council approved the formation of an ad hoc search committee as well as a budget to pay a part-time youth minister beginning in 2011.

The Search Committee (Lisa Boehm, Dick Edmiston, Sharon Lawler, Kat MacDonald, and Sally Thacher) collected about 10 questions which they personally posed to almost 25 UCC congregations in our geographic area to determine how other congregations organize their youth ministry and to identify some best practices. Armed with that knowledge, the committee wrote a job description, advertised the position, and interviewed qualified applicants. Members of the Search Committee will continue to provide support to the Youth Ministry Program.

Please make an effort to welcome Dana to our community and to share your hopes for our youth with her.

### **PILGRIM YOUTH GROUP MTG.**

Please note that the first meeting of grades 6-9 youth group will be held on Sunday, January 9<sup>th</sup> from 4 - 6 pm.

**REMINDER: The deadline for the next issue of Pilgrim's Progress is Tuesday, January 25<sup>th</sup>.**



## HONDURAS HAPPENINGS ASTRID AND HER FAMILY



Tom and I returned from a 10-day visit to Honduras, with six year old, Astrid Ordonez. Four years ago, Astrid received her first operation at Shriners Hospital in Springfield for a "tethered" spinal cord. This time she is scheduled for two operations on her "cavus" foot. The first operation will take place on December 29th and the next one will be on February 2nd. It is estimated that Astrid will be living with us until April.

Although this is a significant amount of time for her to be away from her mother, little brother and extended family, Astrid is so fortunate to have this surgery which will greatly improve her mobility. It also provides a respite from her home which is located in an area of Flores referred to as "little Colombia" because of the abundance of drugs. It has become increasingly more violent and we were not able to visit this area of town, where one of the schools is located.

Friends of ours from Concord have made the financial commitment of sending Astrid to a bilingual school in Comayagua. The academics are significantly better than the public schools and will offer her a much

brighter future. We are in the process of raising funds to build two bedrooms and a bathroom for Astrid and her family, which will be built in a safer area, next to her grandparent's home.

We'd like to thank you all for your prayers, interest and support. If anyone would like to sponsor a child in school, assist with our building project, or become involved in any other way, please let us know. It truly is one way to feel the Christmas spirit throughout the year.

With appreciation,

Emily Collins

## COMMUNITIES WITHOUT BORDERS A LETTER FROM RUTH LITCHFIELD

Dear Friends,

I have never made an appeal like this previously which would indicate that I feel very strongly about this particular effort. For the last three summers I have been part of a group which has been traveling to a small community outside of Lusaka, Zambia in southern Africa. Prior to this, I had wanted to do something for many years to be of help in some small way in Africa, even if only to hold a small child and let them feel cared for. I have been fortunate enough to have found a wonderful organization, **Communities Without Borders** and hope to return again this June.

When I first went to the village of Ng'Ombe and met Nina, I was so taken by her tenacity and passion as well as natural ability and love of children that when I came back to my church I advocated for our supporting her education. At that time she had only completed 9th Grade and was teaching nearly 50 children for free, but she had and still has the gift of teaching. I modeled lessons and Nina observed and picked up skills and strategies very quickly. The following year she

(continued)

walked 4 hours daily to attend school and when I returned the difference she had made was absolutely astounding the difference she had made. Other than being a dear and caring teacher she is beautiful and for the children it is like going to school with Cinderella everyday. She earned her Certificate and is now working on her Diploma with aspirations of attending college afterwards. I could not be more thrilled with her dedication and progress; she is part of what keeps me returning.

There are also the children and I wish I could introduce you to more of them for they all have a story. I will simply share Juliette with you, for she came to class in 2008 and essentially managed the class and then took over with the recess games before she could no longer attend class; yet she returned daily to unload and reload our van which I did not entirely realize until nearly our last day. I also taught her to knit while waiting for our van to pick us up the first day ... and then, sadly, could not find her in 2009 and was so scared. Then this past summer, we had arranged a Health Screening in Ng'Ombe the evening before our last day at school and later when I walked outside that morning, there she was. We hugged and she cried as I tried to tell her that it was a good day. I wiped her tears with my dress and arranged for her to also be a child CWB now supports.



**Juliette with Ruth L. Eating on the porch in Ng'Ombe**



**First Day with Things**

I could go on and on to Peter, Renford, Kennedy, Mercy, Erika, Loveless, Innocence - there are hundreds and Nina is now teaching all these children, nearly 70 this past summer, due to the help provided by CWB and a small monthly stipend. I have attached only a couple of photos for I have nearly a thousand from each summer. If you can find it in your heart and it is possible for you to contribute to this cause, I would be so very appreciative and I can promise you that 90% will go directly to the children, who are all AIDS Orphans, and otherwise highly vulnerable children. Whatever you are able to do from the least amount and up, nothing, absolutely nothing is too small. Additionally, I would like to ask that if this is possible for you that you mention my name in connection with your donation for this will aid in the Partnership I must maintain to continue to make these trips.

Donations may be mailed via check to the address below or made on line ([www.communitieswithoutborders.org](http://www.communitieswithoutborders.org) Click on "How to Help") or by check. Please put my name on the memo line of your donation.

**Communities Without Borders  
63 Pickwick Road  
West Newton, MA 02465  
617-965-4713**

**[www.communitieswithoutborders.org](http://www.communitieswithoutborders.org)**

For further information, please read the letter on the next page or go to the website above. Bless you each and everyone. I cannot tell you how much your gift will mean to these wonderful children, their community and their teacher, "Teacher Nina". Thank you, Ruth

PS - please feel free to pass this along



**Nina Teaching Children in Her Class**



December 9, 2010

Dear Friend,

63 Pickwick Road  
West Newton, MA 02465 USA  
617-965-4713  
[www.communitieswithoutborders.org](http://www.communitieswithoutborders.org)  
[info@communitieswithoutborders.org](mailto:info@communitieswithoutborders.org)

*Building Community-to-Community  
Relationships*

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Special Envoy in Zambia

For ten years now CWB has supported orphan and vulnerable children in Zambia. One of them, David K, recently wrote that when his father died he was scared, wondering who would support his going to school. Support came through CWB, and this support continued after his mother died in 2007. David says, "I can't do without your support." There are now literally hundreds of stories like this among the children CWB supports. This is particularly true for young girls, like Esther B, who is the first girl in her family to go to school. Support from CWB not only gives these children a chance at a better life than their parents, but each year these young folks stay in school decreases the probability of their developing HIV/AIDs. Today in Zambia there are over 800,000 orphans and vulnerable children, as a result of the AIDS epidemic. We cannot help all these children, but what we can do, and have done is to make a difference in the lives of some of these children, ones carefully chosen and tended to by the women in their own communities who have assessed them to be at great risk of falling by the wayside.

This summer we awarded 82 certificates to students passing the 7<sup>th</sup> and 9<sup>th</sup> grade exam, which means that we have even more students to support at secondary school level at a cost of \$300 a year. This year two of our students graduated from the National Resources Development College -- one at the top of his class! This summer I saw the first cluster of students we have supported from the first grade in Mandevu Compound, graduate high school. What an accomplishment for them and joy for us at CWB.

We currently have 125 children awaiting support to enter the first grade, in addition to the 1,500 children we are currently sponsoring. Paradoxically, our own success has made the challenges even greater. The costs for supporting more and more children at primary and secondary levels are exceeding our budgetary capacity. In fact, unless we are able to substantially increase our fund-raising, we are projecting a nearly \$50,000 gap between what our Zambian partners needs and our revenues.

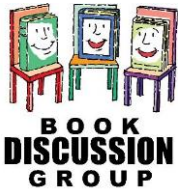
I hope you will be as generous as possible in responding to our annual appeal. (Nearly 100% of donations to CWB directly support the children.) Your gift is entirely tax deductible. Children in some of Africa's most impoverished communities are looking to your support for their education. Many thanks in advance for your compassion and generosity.

Dick Bail  
President and Founder  
Communities Without Borders

## ALTAR FLOWERS

If you are interested in giving the altar flowers, the dates remaining for the year are following. Please be in touch with Ruth Litchfield if you are interested. She can be reached via e-mail at [ruthkb3@hotmail.com](mailto:ruthkb3@hotmail.com). Thank you.

<b>January</b>	<b>16<sup>th</sup>, 23<sup>rd</sup></b>
<b>February</b>	<b>13<sup>th</sup>, 27<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>March</b>	<b>20<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>April</b>	<b>3<sup>rd</sup>, 10<sup>th</sup>, 17<sup>th</sup>, 24<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>May</b>	<b>1<sup>st</sup>, 15<sup>th</sup>, 22<sup>nd</sup>, 29<sup>th</sup></b>
<b>June</b>	<b>12<sup>th</sup>, 19<sup>th</sup>, 26<sup>th</sup></b>



**DISCUSS JIM WALLIS'  
NEW BOOK,  
REDISCOVERING VALUES,  
SUNDAY, JAN. 23, 7:00-8:30,  
AT PILGRIM**

Deb Adams, Steve Van Evera and Sally Thacher will lead a discussion of Jim Wallis' new book, **Rediscovering Values: On Wall Street, Main Street, Your Street**, on Sunday evening, 1/23/11, 7:00-8:30. Wallis is a prominent writer on religion and public life, social policy, and ethics. He is editor of *Soujourners* magazine and author of eight books, including, most recently, *God's Politics*. He has taught at the Harvard Divinity School and Kennedy School of Government on "Faith, Politics, and Society."

In **Rediscovering Values** Wallis calls for basic change in our approach to economic policy and our economic lives, and provides us with a moral compass for the hard new economy we face.

If you didn't receive the book for Christmas, go get it and give it to yourself! Then read it under the mistletoe by a yuletide fire, and come fired up to share thoughts on Jan. 23.



Thank you from **Eleanor Smith** to all who purchased teddies, Beanie Babies, and Santa items from the sale. A total of \$551 was raised for Pilgrim Church Care committee! A thank you to Eleanor too, for her generous donation of her great items.

*Dear Friends at Pilgrim:*

*I want to thank you so much for remembering me on my 90<sup>th</sup> birthday. Your cards and flowers were beautiful and certainly enjoyed. May peace and good wishes be with you always.*



**Ruth Dalrymple**

**PLEASE NOTE THAT ALL ANNUAL  
REPORTS WILL BE DUE INTO THE  
OFFICE BY FRIDAY, JANUARY 14<sup>TH</sup>.**

**THANK YOU!**

# Filling Your Cup; Drawing From the Well

**January 21-22, 2011**

*Friday evening 7:00 pm (no dinner) to Saturday afternoon 4:30 pm*

*MACUCC Conference Center, Framingham, MA*

*A limited number of overnight accommodations are available at Edwards House\**



## A Christian Spiritual Formation Retreat to

- Ground you spiritually
  - Replenish your energy, joy, and purpose
- Give you practices to keep your cup overflowing
  - Help you live your life as a spiritual practice
- Discover your spiritual tools for the ups and downs of life

This 2- day long retreat is intended for people in all stages on the spiritual path. Whether you feel like a beginner, or a long-time traveler, you will find nourishment here for your soul.

Come to worship, to learn new spiritual practices and rediscover old ones, to sing and express yourself through the arts, to build community, to take Sabbath, and to play. Choose from a number of activity options that will make your heart sing!

**What does it mean to "Practice the presence of God?"  
What does it mean to "Seek first the kingdom of God?"**

*Come to explore. Come to deepen. Come to expand. Come to open.*

**Led by Rev. Matthew Carriker and Mrs. Heather Ramsey Mabrouk  
(MACUCC Confirmation Retreat Facilitators)**

*Sponsored by the Commission for Leadership Development Massachusetts Conference United Church of Christ.*



**To register:** mail this form to Cindy Bolton, MACUCC, 1 Badger Road, Framingham, MA 01702  
**no later than January 12, 2011.** Include your check for \$75\* payable to MACUCC.

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_ City \_\_\_\_\_ State \_\_\_\_\_ Zip \_\_\_\_\_

Phone (Work or Home): \_\_\_\_\_ Cell Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

Email: \_\_\_\_\_ Local church: \_\_\_\_\_

<http://macucc.org/events/detail/78> \*Cost for overnight accommodations is \$15.00 plus \$8.00 linen charge. Please call Cindy Bolton @508-875-5233

<h1>January 2011</h1>						
Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						New Year's Day <sup>1</sup>
<b>2</b> 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship/Communion	<b>3</b> Office Reopens 7:30 p Worship Mtg.	<b>4</b> 10:00 a Staff Mtg.	<b>5</b> 7:30 p Worship Committee Mtg.	<b>6</b> 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>9</b> 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship 11:45 a Ed Ministries Mtg. 4:00 p Youth Group	<b>10</b> 7:30 p F&A Mtg.	<b>11</b> 11:00 a Bible Study	<b>12</b> 7:30 p Membership Mtg.	<b>13</b> 4:00 p Pilgrim Serves Bristol Lodge 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	<b>14</b> Deadline for Annual Reports	<b>15</b>
<b>16</b> 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship	<b>17</b> Church Office Closed <b>Martin Luther King, Jr. Day</b>	<b>18</b> 11:00 a Bible Study	<b>19</b> 10:00 a Care Mtg. 7:00 p Youth Stress Meeting	<b>20</b> 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b> 12:00 p Lunch for Douglas House Residents
<b>23</b> 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship 7:00 p Book Discussion	<b>24</b> 7:00 p Council Mtg.	<b>25</b> <u>Deadline for PP Articles</u> 11:00 a Bible Study	<b>26</b>	<b>27</b> 7:30 p Choir Rehearsal	<b>28</b> 12:00 p RATT Needs Kitchen	<b>29</b> 6:00 p RATT Haitian Fundraiser
<b>30</b> 9:15 a Choir Rehearsal 10:30 a Worship	<b>31</b> 7:00 p PNS Committee Mtg.					