

Pilgrim's Progress November 3, 2015 – Vol. 57 No. 9



On Sunday November 22 we will formally conclude this year's Stewardship Campaign. By then, you will have heard from Susan Carabbio, Doug Johnston, Susan Moffitt, and Emily Collins about why they pledge and what Pilgrim Church means to them. You will have heard about the good we already do and how with your financial support, we can be even stronger as God guides us to a future with hope.

Stewardship is about gratitude. Personally, when I'm feeling especially grateful I can't help but give more in all areas of my life. When one is grateful, it's like the gratitude starts overflowing. Gratitude is an important aspect of our faith, but it doesn't always come easily. M. Craig Barnes (President of Princeton Theological Seminary) writes about gratitude by saying that we have the capacity to choose to receive the life we've been given or to rebel and try to make a living all on our own. That an element of the Christian story going all the way back to the Garden of Eden is that we can't always have everything that we want! Even Jesus had to work within boundaries, entrusting his disciples with carrying his message out into the world. Jesus had to meet people where they were, help them discover their gifts and who God created them to be, and then send them to go out and do likewise if his message wasn't going to die with him.

Barnes reminds us that we are called to humility and receiving life from God with grateful hearts even though we can't always have everything that we want! Gratitude then becomes an active choice for us. He writes, "I'm not certain that there are such things as measures of our spirituality, but if there are, then gratitude is probably the best one. It indicates that we are paying attention."¹

Gratitude indicates that we're paying attention. When you come worship this November at Pilgrim Church or attend meetings or church events, I invite you to take a moment and truly pay attention:

- Pay attention to the people you encounter—old friends, new friends, young Pilgrims, and people you don't even know yet.
- Pay attention to the memories over the years that connected you to our church community and deepened your Christian faith.
- Pay attention to what you learn, to what moves you, and to how you will go forth and do something about it today.
- Pay attention to how you encounter God with us at Pilgrim Church, and pay attention to how God is guiding us to a future with hope.

When we pay attention and feel gratitude, we can't help but give with grateful hearts!

See you in church,

Lauren

¹ M. Craig Barnes, *The Pastor as Minor Poet: Texts and Subtexts in the Ministerial Life*, 96.



UPCOMING NOVEMBER WORSHIP SERVICES

- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 8: ANDOVER NEWTON SEMINARY SUNDAY**
We will host Sarah Drummond (Dean of the Faculty, Vice President for Academic Affairs, & Associate Professor of Ministerial Leadership) from Andover Newton Theological School to speak to us about the importance of theological education in the life of our United Church of Christ. Andover Newton has provided print materials with more information and offering envelopes for anyone interested in donating to The School of the Church.
- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 15**
Rev. Lauren will preach the Stewardship Sermon.
- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 23: MUSIC SUNDAY & STEWARDSHIP SUNDAY**
Dan and the Choir have prepared special musical selections to be performed throughout the service. We will hear from our final Witnessing Steward and our pledges will be blessed to formally conclude our 2016 Stewardship Campaign.
- **SUNDAY NOVEMBER 29: FIRST SUNDAY OF ADVENT**
Advent begins on the last Sunday of November. Our theme for the First Sunday of Advent is Hope as we begin this holy season of waiting, watching, and hoping.

LAY VISITATION TEAM

There's another exciting new initiative at Pilgrim Church this fall. As a congregation, we all can play a part in promoting compassion for one another. The earliest stories of our Christian tradition show how central love is to our faith. Jesus said that love is a distinguishing mark of discipleship. Caregiving is an opportunity to love others because God first loved us, and it's a sacred opportunity for all Christians to practice.

To that end, I've asked Beth Kurth, Mary Mackie, and Lesley Morrison to form a Lay Visitation Team to spend time with Pilgrims outside our church walls. I've already talked to or called some of you to ask if you're interested and was happy to hear such positive responses! If you'd like to be added to our visitation list, please let me know and I'm sorry that I missed asking you until now. Our Lay Visitation Team won't replace the visiting I already do as your pastor, and I remain the primary responder to hospitalizations and/or emergencies. I'm just so excited that Beth, Mary, and Lesley are undertaking this ministry that will enhance our caregiving at Pilgrim Church and hope that you will join me in thanking them coming up.

Blessings,

Lauren



**SAVE THE DATE FOR AN ADVENT BOOK STUDY:
WEDNESDAY DECEMBER 9 AT 7 PM**

***WEARING GOD: CLOTHING, FIRE, AND OTHER OVERLOOKED WAYS OF MEETING GOD*
(Lauren Winner)**

At the beginning of Advent, let's gather at 7 PM in the sun room on Wednesday December 9 for an evening of good conversation and some light snacks as we explore *Wearing God* together. Lauren Winner is a scholar and Episcopal priest who's written about how we meet and experience God. "Chapters on God as clothing, laughter, flame, food, wine, and a laboring woman not only invite us to understand God in a new way, but each reveals God to be much closer and more intimate than we imagine, opening up the opportunity for experiencing and knowing God more deeply."²

As we wait for the Christ child to be born into our midst during the Season of Advent, let's take the time to consider the ways we experience and know God. And if God has felt distant or even absent in our lives, perhaps these new understandings and images of God will open up new meanings to help ground us in God. Hope to see you on December 9 for a meaningful and compelling book study. And happy reading in the month of November!

INTERESTED IN BECOMING A MEMBER OF PILGRIM CHURCH?

Are you new to Pilgrim Church and would like to learn more? Have you been attending Pilgrim for a while and would like to learn about becoming a member?

If you answered yes to either of these questions, please join Lauren and our Moderator Jeanne DeSanto for a casual conversation on **Sunday November 15 immediately following worship in Fellowship Hall** (where our Church School meets.)

We would love the opportunity to share more about who we are at Pilgrim. We would love to answer your questions and tell you about next steps should joining the church be something you're interested in pursuing. And we'd love to just chat and get to know each other better! So grab your coffee and a snack and come on down on November 15 (childcare will be provided.)



Lauren and Jeanne

**INTERFAITH THANKSGIVING SERVICE AT TEMPLE ISAIAH:
TUESDAY, NOVEMBER 24 AT 7:30 PM**

Temple Isaiah will host this year's local interfaith Thanksgiving service led by the Lexington Interfaith Clergy Association.

As a continuation of town-wide conversations on race and diversity, the interfaith service this year will focus on appreciation of difference and speak to the push for justice and equality that drives so many of our faith traditions. All are welcome – bring a friend. Refreshments and conversation will follow the service.



² Front cover of Lauren Winner, *Wearing God: Clothing, Laughter, Fire, and Other Overlooked Ways of Meeting God*.



STEWARDSHIP COMMITTEE

"For surely I know the plans I have for you . . . to give you a future with hope."
(Jeremiah 29:11)

Our annual Stewardship pledge drive began on Sunday, November 1 and will conclude on Sunday, November 22. During the course of our Stewardship campaign, we will be hearing testimonials from our Pilgrim Church members, and on Stewardship Sunday, November 22, Lauren will lead us in a blessing of the pledges.

Each of us on the Stewardship Committee sees pledging as a responsibility and an opportunity to contribute to the ministries at Pilgrim that allow us to continue the good things we already offer and to find ways to grow our Church to make it strong for the future. We hope all of you share that view.

During the first week of November, you will receive a letter and information on the proposed 2016 budget from the Stewardship Committee along with a pledge form. We are asking that all who are able bring their pledge envelopes to church on Sunday, November 22, so that pledges can be consecrated at that time. If you aren't able to attend church that day, please mail or email your pledge in time for it to be included in the consecration on Stewardship Sunday.

The Stewardship Committee would like to thank everyone who pledged so generously last year. We ask that you keep an open mind and heart to that which you will be presented during this Stewardship drive and give according to the blessings God has given you.

The Stewardship Committee: David Nuss, Suzanne Abair, Elizabeth Chen, Michael Scott Morton and Susan Bennett

PILGRIM JOYS AND CONCERNS

- Eleanor Smith asked for prayers for one of her friend's mother who is sick and in the hospital.
- Beth Kurth asked for prayers for her friend Jane who is recovering from back surgery.
- Anita Bradley asked for prayers for her granddaughter Jennifer who ran the NYC marathon.
- We lift up Tom and Emily Collins who will be traveling to Honduras this week and for Ricky and Abby traveling with them.
- We pray for Maggie Babson battling a lung infection and hospitalized this week.

You're Invited

The Mission Kids are hosting a family dinner on November 21st at 5PM. The students will be serving dinner as well as leading children in activities and a reading of the story "Stone Soup". We ask that instead of monetary donations you bring a nonperishable food item to be donated to the local food pantries.

You can RSVP to lisa at education@pilgrimcongregational.org



This Event is open to all! Please share this invite with family and friends!

SAINTS WE REMEMBERED FROM THIS PAST YEAR

Donald Kenneth Nuss
Nicholas Bradshaw
Dale Calverly
Mrs. Chiu Tang Hing Kuen
Janet Tilley
Marilyn Hall Williamson
Elizabeth Gertsch
Sally Shufelt
Birney Pease
Steve Percassi
Joseph and Anna Trustey
Cristina Braselton
Omar Alexi Amador
Tom Stenberg
Marta
Pauline Wurl

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



DEADLINE FOR PILGRIM'S PROGRESS

Please note that the deadline for the December issue of Pilgrim's Progress will be **November 23**. Thank you!

ACTIVITY BRAINSTORMING SESSION

Do you have a great idea for an event at Pilgrim you've wanted to do but don't know how to make that happen? Do you have fond memories from past events that you'd like to re-visit? Are you looking for a one time volunteer opportunity at Pilgrim? Do you want to get to know fellow Pilgrims in a low-key atmosphere and join the fun of planning and executing our fellowship events?

If you answered yes to any of these questions please come to the Vitality Committee's Activity Brainstorming Session on November 8! We will be discussing ideas for small fellowship opportunities as well as some of the larger events we do. We will offer our support and experience to see new ideas come to fruition and will be presenting easy and clear ways to pitch in for up-coming events like the Christmas Party.

So grab your coffee and come join in the fun! We will meet on Sunday, November 8 directly after church in Fellowship Hall, and childcare will be available.

See you there!

Beth Kurth and Jeanne DeSanto and the Vitality Committee

If you have ideas and would like to participate, but can't be there on that date, please contact Beth Kurth at hughzhoney@gmail.com or 781-820-7635

CROP WALK UPDATE

Dear Donors,

Claire and I want to thank you for your donations to the CROP Walk this year. It was a record for Team Pilgrim, with a total of \$710 raised! Thank you for supporting such a worthy cause! Food is a blessing that all of us should have the good fortune to enjoy, and your generous donation helps make that possible!

Sincerely,

Claire and Don Moir



**Cradles
toCrayons**

Providing the essentials for childhood.

Pilgrim is partnering with Cradles to Crayons to host a family engagement volunteer opportunity the last Sunday of every month at Pilgrim Church from 2-4 pm. We will sort and create packets of hats and gloves in an effort to help Cradles serve the 32.5K kids ages 0-12 this winter with hats, gloves, coats, and boots. We will sort, pack, and then add a handmade "well wish" note we will make that day into the packet. Cradles to Crayons is a local non-profit that serves over 100K children ages 0-12 in the MA area with essential items such as clothes, shoes, books, and toys. All ages are welcome - adults and children alike. For more information please contact Jeanne DeSanto at jeannedesanto@verizon.net or Yolanda Taylor at yolandataylor@mac.com. More information on Cradles to Crayons can be found at <http://www.cradlestocrayons.org>.



join us in

Making the Holidays Festive for All

East End House's holiday programs provide a great way for individuals, families, community groups and corporations to give back during the holiday season.



HELP SUPPORT A FESTIVE THANKSGIVING FOR EAST END HOUSE

Pilgrim Church will collect food donations and provide Turkey Vouchers for the many eager families of East End House in Cambridge again this year. Food donations of Stuffing, Gravy, Cranberry Sauce, Canned Pumpkin, Desserts, Canned Fruits and Vegetables, or Baby Food and formula left at the church by **Thursday, November 19** will make the delivery deadline for food basket preparation.

Pilgrim has been the leading donor of Turkey Vouchers for the past several years - let's keep our record intact. Purchase \$15 Shaw's or Market Basket gift cards, and leave them in the Mission mail tray, or put cash or checks marked "Get Turkeys" in the collection plate through November 15, and the Mission Committee will convert all to Vouchers.



VOLUNTEER SIGN UP INFORMATION - UPDATE:

A big thank you to all who have signed up to volunteer thus far!

As you know, there is no “right way” to volunteer. Some of us prefer to do everything all on one day several times a year. They will sign up to greet, be a liturgist and host coffee hour on the same day. Others prefer to do one activity multiple times throughout the year (e.g., host Coffee Hour every other month). You decide what works best for you.



Did we mention that there is no experience necessary? Instructions are available for three opportunities and there is always someone available on Sundays to help answer any questions you may have. Sign-ups for Greeters, Liturgists and Coffee Hour Hosts will be available online through SignUp Genius using the link provided in this email. Please note that altar flower donations are being handled offline so please contact Beth Kurth (hughzhoney@gmail.com) or Diane Blair (admin@pilgrimcongregational.org) directly.

Thank you for being such an important part of the Pilgrim Church community.
Worship and Music Committee and Vitality Committee

[CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TO GREET, BE A LITURGIST, OR HOST COFFEE HOUR](#)

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**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE GREENING
OF THE CHURCH**

Come help decorate the church for the advent/Christmas season on **Saturday, November 28 at 8:00am**. The work usually only takes 1.5-2 hours at the most. Coffee will be provided!!

**SAVE THE DATE FOR THE
PILGRIM CHRISTMAS PARTY!**

The annual Pilgrim Church Christmas party will take place on **Sunday, December 13** following worship. More details to follow.