



PILGRIMS' PROGRESS

Pilgrim United Church of Christ An Open and Affirming Congregation

Highlighting Pilgrim's Youth Retreat *by Kyle A. Tade*

The gymnasium at the Blowing Rock Conference Center was filled with 175 youth from at least three states. A giant banner stretched the length of the stage where Lady Justice made her presence known. Words painted across the banner spoke of the theme for the weekend, "Justice Makers: A Call to Action."



Off to the side of the stage stood a giant set of scales. These scales soon became a focal point as a clown was introduced, playing the parts of two characters: one being an oppressive, unjust, imposing figure weighing down one side of the "scale of justice" with two huge stones he placed on one side of the scale. The other character portrayed someone, anyone, who has ever been oppressed, or found themselves on the receiving end of injustice; he had but a simple, small stone to place on the opposing side of the scale in hopes of balancing the scales of justice back in his favor.

It was during this time we were all given stones to

keep with us. We were told to hang on to the stones throughout the course of the weekend. In our small group breakout sessions, we were asked questions about what did we do with the stones? Did we leave them behind? Did we lose them? Did we find them burdensome to hold onto? What do these small stones represent? What do they mean in regards to the grander picture of balancing the giant scales of justice (both literally and metaphorically)?

As the weekend came to a close, we brought our small stones with us into worship, and together we revisited the giant scales of justice. One by one, people went up and placed their small stones, seemingly tiny contributions, to balance the scales and eventually they tipped. The scales tipped back toward the side of justice.

The speakers challenged us to think about what we had learned over the weekend and think about what we would "take back down the mountain."

Here's what our youth said:

- "Justice takes more work than charity."
- "Be just, be kind, be loving, be accepting... because everyone you meet is fighting a battle."
- "To not be quick to judge."
- "Trying to stand up for injustice, and not just ignore things people don't want to see."
- "Love kindness."
- "How justice starts in small ways with the people closest to you."
- "Fight for what's right."

What a great weekend it was to see Pilgrim's 7 youth engaging, participating, meeting new people, seeing old friends, but also having fun and enjoying the time on the mountain.

Have you ever:

thought the Bible is confusing?

thought, “it would be impossible for me to learn the **WHOLE** Bible”?

wondered what interesting stories, histories, characters, words of hope, consolation, might be hidden in those pages?

wanted to know even just a little bit more about what the Bible means?

wanted a safe space and supportive community to ask and share your questions about the Bible?

Well, then this is the class for you!

We invite you to:

“The Bible Makes Sense...?”

Sunday, February 5th, 2012
Starting *promptly* at 9:30 am

This ongoing class is for all of those seeking a **basic** understanding of the Bible and the biblical story.

The Inquirers...

will continue during the coming weeks the discussions of the “atonement” (Why did Jesus have to die, and what did God have to do with it?). Next Sunday, Feb. 5, Mark Rutledge will lead the discussion on four pages of Marcus Borg’s book, *The Heart of Christianity: Rediscovering a Life of Faith*. All are welcome at 9:30 a.m. in the Community room.

Pilgrim Auxiliary News

¡Hola peregrinos! Ensámblenos por favor en el 10:30 el lunes 6 de febrero, para oír a nuestra propia Carla Gregg hablar de su experiencia de México en un programa titulado, las reflexiones sabáticas: La belleza de México. El almuerzo será servido y como siempre, el cuidado de niños será proporcionado.

Hello Pilgrims! Please join us at **10:30 am on Monday, February 6**, to hear our own Pastor Carla talk about *her Mexico experience in a program titled, Sabbatical Reflections: The Beauty of Mexico*. Lunch will be served and as always, childcare will be provided.

Leopard Sunday School Special Guest

On Feb. 12th Amy Glaser of InsideOut will be our guest during Sunday school in the Leopard class. InsideOut is a youth-founded, youth-led organization that provides leadership opportunities and a safe space for Triangle area LGBT youth and allies both in and out of schools. She will share a program about differences and respect and will be aided by the assigned teachers for the day, Annie and Jose Galvez.

Youth Group Feb 12th

All Middle and High School Youth are invited for youth group on February 12th following worship. We will share lunch and then make and deliver Valentines to some of Pilgrim’s homebound members. Please let Rev. Carla know if you will be joining us.

Parent’s Night Out!!!!

Back by popular demand Pilgrim youth will be offering a parent’s night out on **Saturday, March 10th** at the church from **5:30-8:30 pm**. This will be a fundraiser for the Peru Mission Trip. Donations of any amount will be accepted but a suggested amount is what you would normally pay a baby-sitter. More information and a sign up will be available closer to the date.



Alice Myers and the Contemplative Prayer Group invites you to join us on Thursdays from 9—10 am in the Prayer Room in the Education Wing as part of your spiritual experience.



Pilgrim Book Club will hold its next meeting on **February 9, 2012 at 7:00 pm** in the Dowdy Room at Pilgrim. For February we will read and discuss “The Sunflower: On the Possibilities and Limits of Forgiveness” by Simon Wiesenthal. This is a short book and there is a copy in Pilgrim Library. A dying SS officer, seeking absolution, confesses his crimes to a Jew who does not answer but wonders afterward: Had he done the right thing? And what would you have done in his place? Many people try to give answers in the book and we will consider their answers in the light of our own values and beliefs.

For March we plan to read a new book by P.D. James, “Death Comes to Pemberley.” which uses the characters of Jane Austen’s “Pride and Prejudice.” For April we plan to read “The Glass Castles” by Jeannette Walls, a memoir of her childhood with very neglectful and unorthodox, but well-loved, parents.

Feeding the Homeless in our Community



We will be participating in Interfaith Hospitality Network on Tuesday, February 28 and Thursday, March 1. Anyone who is available to drive, host or prepare/provide a part of the meal for several homeless families, please contact Karen Bradsher at karenbradsher@hotmail.com. We will know more about the families that we will feed as we get closer to the end of the month.

Thank you for your continued support in this important mission in our community.

~ Karen Bradsher



We welcome our newest members Dana Bauer, Greg Bechtel and Sue Fletcher, Hilda Dawson, and Glen Frybarger. Those who are interested in joining Pilgrim please call 489-1381 or email pilgrimucc@frontier.com

Our next New Member Sunday will be scheduled for March.

Seasons of the Church

Christianity marks time and tells stories through the liturgical calendar. The calendar divides the year into seasons such as Advent, Lent, and Ordinary Time. On February 22nd we will begin the season of Lent. Read below to learn more about Lent and make note of special activities and services offered on the Lent and Easter calendar.



The Season of Lent -- edited from excerpts by Dennis Bratcher

Originating in the fourth century of the church, the season of Lent spans 40 days (plus 6 Sundays) beginning on Ash Wednesday and culminating with Holy Week: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday and Holy Saturday. Originally, Lent was the time of preparation for those who were to be baptized, a time of concentrated study and prayer before their baptism at the Easter Vigil, the celebration of the Resurrection of the Lord early on Easter Sunday. But since these new members were to be received into a living community of Faith, the entire community was called to preparation. Also, this was the time when those who had been separated from the Church would prepare to rejoin the community.

Today, Lent is marked by a time of prayer and preparation leading up to Easter. The number 40 is connected with many biblical events, but especially with the forty days Jesus spent in the wilderness preparing for His ministry by facing the temptations that could lead him to abandon his mission and calling. Christians today use this period of time for introspection, self-examination, and repentance. This season of the year is equal only to the Season of Advent in importance in the Christian year.

Lent has traditionally been marked by penitential prayer, fasting, and almsgiving and some today still observe a discipline of fasting during Lent. Some people choose not to partake of other foods or drinks that may “control” them a little more than they like. Some choose to re-engage with an old friend every week. Others increase prayer, exercise, giving, quiet time, meditation, reading, acts of service, or letter writing. We each must find what is right for us - that which will call us to a “different” kind of attentiveness. It is really a preparation to celebrate God’s marvelous redemption symbolized in Easter, and the resurrected life that we live, and hope, for as Christians.

A Lenten Dictionary

Lent –A season in the church year that begins with Ash Wednesday and lasts forty days, not including Sunday. The name has Germanic roots and means “long” or “to lengthen” which reflects the lengthening of days in the spring. Lent was traditionally a time of preparation, fasting, and praying for those who were to be baptized at Easter. Today it is time of repentance and reflection and we prepare ourselves for Easter. It is symbolized by the color purple.

Ash Wednesday—The first day of Lent whose name comes from the traditional marking of ashes on Christians’ foreheads during worship as a sign of repentance.

Palm Sunday – On the Sunday that begins the last week of Lent, know as Holy Week, we recall Jesus’ entry into Jerusalem where he was greeted with “Hosannas” and the waving of Palm branches.

Maundy Thursday—Maundy comes from Latin and means commandment. This name reflects Jesus giving his disciples the command to love one another during their final meal together.

Out of the Desert: Lent & Easter at Pilgrim

FEBRUARY 22 – 7:00 pm - Ash Wednesday service. Join us on the first day of Lent when we will mark our foreheads with ashes, remember our own mortality, and turn toward God.



Faith and Marriage Amendment Series

(childcare will be provided for all events.)

Sunday, March 4, 3:00 pm Keynote Address

Rev. Jimmy Creech, former United Methodist Minister put on trial by the United Methodist Church for blessing a “gay union; author of *Adam’s Gift*

Brent Childers, Executive Director, Faith in America; Lifelong conservative evangelical Christian who formerly derided gays and lesbians under the banner of Christianity and who now opposes religion-based bigotry.

Tuesday Evening Series – 6:30 – 8:00 pm (please gather at 6:15 pm)

MARCH 6 - Legal Perspectives on Amendment 1

Sharon Thompson, Family Law Attorney, Durham

MARCH 13 - Biblical & Theological Perspectives on Amendment 1

Mary McClintock Fulkerson, Professor of Theology, Duke Divinity School

MARCH 20 - Personal Perspectives

Panel of Persons Directly Affected by Amendment 1

MARCH 27 - What People of Faith Can Do to Oppose Amendment 1

Ryan Rowe, Director of Faith Outreach for the Coalition to Protect All North Carolina Families

Rev. Rollin Russell, North Carolina Council of Churches

MARCH 31 - 9 - noon - Morning of Remembrance and Hope. Those who have experienced the loss of a loved one are invited to breakfast and a time of remembering and looking toward the future.

APRIL 5 - 7pm - Maundy Thursday service. The service on this night remembers Jesus’ final meal with his disciples and his command to love one another.

APRIL 5 - 7pm - 7am - Good Friday to Holy Saturday -- We invite you to be a part of an all night prayer vigil at the church. Details will be shared closer to the time.

APRIL 8 – Easter Sunday

Early Easter service at the Columbarium - **8 am**

Churchwide breakfast – **9 - 10:30 am** (coffee – 8:30 - 9 am)

Easter worship service with Easter egg hunt to follow – **10:30 am**

The Rev. Dr. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham Elected President!

Durham Congregations in Action held its Annual Meeting and Dinner on Tuesday, January 24, 2012. Pilgrim has supported DCIA through our benevolences and participation for many years. The purpose of DCIA is to engage and empower people of faith to create a community of justice and peace through common prayers and acts of compassion; and with prophetic courage to act as advocates for the dignity and well-being of all persons, recognizing that behind every human face is the face of God. Our keynote speaker, Rev. Dr. William J. Barber, President of the North Carolina NAACP and Pastor of Greenleaf Christian Church (Disciples of Christ), in Goldsboro, NC, gave an inspiring call for us to put our faith into action to fight racism, discrimination, and poverty. We also were inspired by the music of United Voices of Praise. Seed Money grants were distributed to the following new programs:

- Achieving Health for a Lifetime, in collaboration with Healing with CAARE, will be offering new, free fitness and sports programs for families and adolescents in Northeast Central Durham.
- Circles of Support and Accountability will be organizing volunteer teams from faith-communities to provide social support and reflection with sex offenders in the Durham area, to support rehabilitation and prevent recidivism.
- Durham Crisis Response Center 's Faith Based Initiative will be equipping faith-communities for ministry with domestic violence victims, and extending its network of contacts and support for victims.
- Durham Economic Resource Center will be extending its workplace training and job-placement service for chronically unemployed adults.
- Durham Partnership for Children's Faith in Books project will be providing bilingual board books for young children to congregations in Northeast Central Durham.
- John Avery Boys and Girls Club will be building its coaching staff and improving accessibility for Latino youth in its programs.

- Latino Educational Achievement Partnership will be providing pre-Kindergarten readiness services for Latino children and families.

The 2011 CROP Walk funds to remain in Durham, totaling \$37,981 were distributed to: Urban Ministries of Durham, the Food Bank of Central and Eastern NC, Meals on Wheels, Genesis Home, Durham Interfaith Hospitality Network, Housing for New Hope, YO:Durham, Mt. Calvary UCC Food Pantry, Threshold, Society of St. Andrew, and Changing A Generation Outreach. Some of these programs provide prepared meals to food-insecure area residents, some provide groceries and produce directly to households for use at home, and some organize and provide food supplies to front-line pantries or meal programs. Mark your calendar! **April 1, 2012, Palm Sunday will be the next Durham CROP Hunger Walk.**



At the end of our evening The Rev. Dr. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham was elected and installed as the new President of DCIA. She will serve a two-year term in this organization that seeks to live out Christ's call to love one another.

How Pilgrim UCC Became Racially Integrated

On June 7, 2011, The Rev. Dr. Sylvester Lorenzo Shannon died in Alexandria, Virginia. In the early 1960's he attended Duke Divinity School and, with his family, Pilgrim UCC, at that time still the Congregational Christian Church on Main Street (today the Brightleaf Parking lot). The church was open to black visitors – which at that time was not a matter of course – but when the Shannons asked to have their baby son, Keith Lester Shannon, baptized, the church had to vote on allowing African-Americans to become full members of the congregation. After many difficult discussions the vote was affirmative, and so we became offi-

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Dr. Shannon continued from previous page

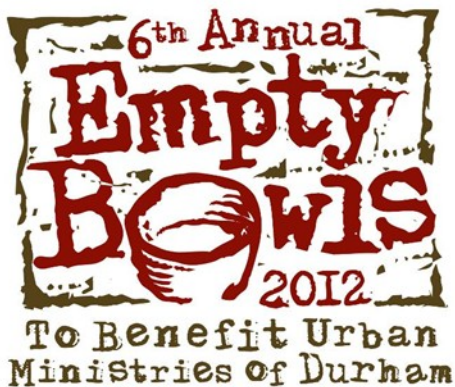
cially “integrated,” which meant that we lost some members and gained others.

Sylvester Shannon went on to become the first African-American to serve as chaplain of the Pentagon pulpit. He later conducted preaching missions all over the world, earned various academic degrees, and, after retiring from the army, served Presbyterian churches in various parts of the U.S.

After Martin Luther King, Jr.’s death he founded, with two colleagues, a scholarship fund for young people from poor families in the U.S., India, Korea, and Zimbabwe to pay for college.

In 2008 Dr. Shannon preached at Pilgrim Church on the occasion of the 25th anniversary of our relationship with the black UCC churches in Durham. In 2009 he received the Distinguished Alumni Award from Duke Divinity School. He was praised as a man who always worked for inclusiveness.

~ Kristin Herzog



**Save the date now
for a soul-warming
evening with
Urban Ministries of Durham**

**Thursday, March 8th
5:30-8:00PM
The Durham Armory**

Please join us as we serve up soups from some of Durham's top restaurants and beautifully handcrafted bowls from local artisans at [Empty Bowls '12](#).

Now in its sixth year, the annual tradition continues to grow and brings together folks throughout the community to help raise awareness and funds for Urban Ministries of Durham's Community Cafe which serves nearly 220,000 meals each year.



There will be live music, local celebrity soup judges, tasty desserts and more. Plus, you get to help decide the Best Soup, so come and be a part of the fun and the tradition of filling "Empty Bowls" with hope in the heart of downtown Durham.

This year you can continue the fun at an After-Party, just blocks away at Fullsteam Brewery, where food trucks and more music await!

Stay tuned for more details to follow in February, or buy your tickets now at [etix for Empty Bowls '12](#). For more information, please visit our [website](#).



Pilgrim United Church of Christ

3011 Academy Road
Durham, NC 27707
Worship Service - 10:30 am

Church Office Hours
Mon.—Thur. 8:00 am to 2:00 pm



Office and Staff Information:

Telephone: (919) 489-1381
E-mail: pilgrimucc@frontier.com
Web: www.pilgrimucc-durham.org

Mr. Marty Powell staffs the Pilgrim office. He can be contacted at the Pilgrim office phone and email.

Ms. Eden Badgett, our music director, is at Pilgrim on Sundays. She also comes in on Wednesday evenings except for summer when the choir is off. She can be contacted at eden.badgett@gmail.com

Mr. Jeremy Harris is Pilgrim's accompanist and can be reached through the office.

The Rev. Carla P. Gregg, Minister of Christian Education, is in the office Sunday mornings, and Tuesday - Thursdays from 9 - 2 pm. You can reach Carla at the office or carlap-gregg@gmail.com

The Rev. Dr. Ginger Brasher-Cunningham, our Senior Pastor, has a schedule of being in the office and out for visitation, meetings, etc. Sunday - Thursday her schedule is flexible, often meeting with people in the evenings. She can be reached at the office or at Gigibc@aol.com. **For pastoral emergencies** in late hours or Friday or Saturday please call 919-408-6947.

Member-in-discernment Ms. Nancy Chew (nchew@ranainc.com) is seeking ordination / commissioning in the UCC.

Seminary Intern Kyle Tade is seeking ordination in the UCC and will serve at Pilgrim for his field education placement. You can reach him at kyle.tade@duke.edu

All staff have mailboxes in the office (Marty's is his desk!) or can be reached at 919-489-1381.

Pilgrim Birthdays in March!

- 1 Kristin Herzog
- 3 Lois Pradka
- 4 Sally Engle
- 5 Tom Heath
Paul Earl
- 7 Doris Hogan
- 8 Alice Ratliff
Janneke Ratcliffe
- 10 Leah Wildermann
- 11 Robin May
- 17 Sharon Odima
- 18 Elizabeth Sousa
- 22 Chris Schroeder
Hana Ratcliffe
- 23 Jess Peter
- 25 Joey Crooks
- 26 Mylan Marhoul
Robin Keith



Do I smell
birthday
cake?