

From the Pastor

The Rev. Dr. Keith C. Alderman

One of the best ways to relax is to laugh. I hope your summer is full of beauty, relaxation, and fun. *Rev. Keith*

The new minister stood at the church door greeting the members as they left the Sunday morning service. Most of the people were very generous telling the new minister how much they liked his message, except for one man who said, "The was a very dull and boring sermon, pastor."

A few minutes later, the same man again appeared in line and said, "I don't think you did much preparation for your message."

Once again, the man appeared, this time muttering, "You really blew it. You didn't have a thing to say, pastor."

Finally, the minister could stand it no longer. He went to one of the deacons and inquired about the man.

"Oh, don't let that guy bother you," said the deacon. "He's a little slow. All he does is go around repeating whatever he hears other people saying."



"I hope you didn't take it personally, Reverend," an embarrassed woman said after a church service, "when my husband walked out during your sermon." "I did find it rather disconcerting," the preacher replied. "It's not a reflection on you, sir," insisted the church goer. "Ralph has been walking in his sleep ever since he was a child."



A minister parked his car in a no-parking zone in a large city because he was short of time and couldn't find a space with a meter.

So he put a note under the windshield wiper that read: "I have circled the block 10 times. If I don't park here, I'll miss my appointment. FORGIVE US OUR TRESPASSES."

When he returned, he found a citation from a police officer along with this note.

"I've circled this block for 10 years. If I don't give you a ticket, I'll lose my job. LEAD US NOT INTO TEMPTATION."



A man arrives at the gates of heaven. St. Peter asks, "Religion?"

The man says, "Methodist."

St. Peter looks down his list, and says, "Go to room 24, but be very quiet as you pass room 8."

Another man arrives at the gates of heaven. "Religion?"

"Baptist."

"Go to room 18, but be very quiet as you pass room 8."

A third man arrives at the gates. "Religion?" "Jewish." "Go to room 11, but be very quiet as you pass room 8."

The man says, "I can understand there being different rooms for different religions, but why must I be quiet when I pass room 8?"

St. Peter tells him,

"Well the Catholics are in room 8, and they think they're the only ones here."



Moderator's Moment

So I am going to confess something. I am sitting here and it is snowing outside while I am writing a moderator's moment for July/August 2013. We also had ice today and my car went slip-sliding down the road as I went to get my tires checked. It is hard during a snow and ice storm to think about warm summer evenings, sitting at the beach or by the pool. Sipping cool drinks as the evening sets and enjoying the breezes of mid to late summer seem distant and unreal. At least there is a picture in my mind, right now, based on memories and experiences I have had. Even though I have no idea what it will be like the day this article is printed or on-line, and you read it. Warm and sunny? Hot and arid? Rainy and cool? I have no idea. I can't see the leaves on the trees, the flowers in your garden, or your children and grandchildren playing. I can't hear your music playing or see you walking down the street in shorts and a tee shirt. I do, however, know that that it will happen!



What's heaven like? I guess we can't know that either, living in the present which we do. I like to share with you occasionally the songs that mean something to me. This one says it best. While you sit in the sun or watch the thunder clouds roll in, look into the summer sky and give yourself a moment to look up into it and try to imagine what heaven is like. You don't have to find the answer, but allow yourself to try and wonder about it while you are alive and enjoying the moment. Open your heart and believe he is there.

And what do I know?

...I don't know that there are harps in heaven or the process for earning your wings.
And I don't know of bright lights at the ends of tunnels or any of these things.

But I know to be absent from this body
Is to be present with the lord...and from what I know of him... that must be very good.

Luke 23:43 – Jesus answered him, “Truly I tell you, today you will be with me in paradise.”



Pew Cushion Fundraiser Update



The goal has been reached !!

Many thanks to everyone who has donated or pledged to the pew cushion fund. We have reached our goal of \$30,000. The generous contributions of many members allowed us to reach the goal only a few months after starting the campaign. If you are still fulfilling your pledge, please remember to note that your contribution is for the pew fund when you write your check to the church.

The cushions are on order. The fabric has been ordered from the factory. Members of the Marcoux Upholstery staff have been in to make templates of the pews and have ordered the stuffing for the cushions. We will keep you updated as their construction moves forward.

We are excited to see and, more importantly, feel the end results of our efforts.

The Pew Cushion Committee: Robin, Evelyn, Janel, Sally, Kathy, Sandra, Jason, and Mary

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION NEWS

Come One Come All to VBS 2013!



This year's theme will be Everywhere Fun Fair - Where God's world comes together.

Ages: Pre K - Grade 5

Dates: Mon. Aug. 5th - Fri. Aug. 9th

Times: 8:30am - 11:30am, with a family celebration

Friday, Aug. 9th, 6:00pm - 8:00pm

Cost: \$25 per child with a \$50 family cap

Children should bring a snack and a drink to VBS each day.

There are also several volunteer opportunities. If you are available to donate your time and talent to help make this a successful VBS we would love to hear from you!

Please speak to [Wendy Arena](#) or [Colette Vallee](#) if you need more information.

Christian Education News and Announcements

The Christian Education Committee is looking forward to a busy and productive fall.

We will be introducing "Children's Church" on Communion Sundays for students Pre-K - Grade 3. Students will proceed upstairs after the welcome and announcements to participate in a "mini service" in our new chapel. The First Communion Class will meet in their classroom and Grades 5-8 are welcome to join us after communion. This program will begin on Homecoming Sunday, Sept. 8. Students will be able to tour their classrooms and meet their teachers after the Children's Church Service.

We are still looking for substitute teachers for Sunday School. Substitutes will be asked to sign up to assist upstairs one Sunday a month or every five or six weeks, depending on how many volunteers we receive. If a substitute is not needed that Sunday we will ask that the substitute collect attendance sheets and be available to teachers needing assistance.

We will be continuing with the Spark House Curriculum for grades Pre-K through 3rd Grade this year. Copies of the curriculum will be available in the CE Office for teachers and substitutes to refer to.

Prayerfully consider joining our Sunday School Teacher Team. - *Eva Kelly*

**Pilgrim Congregational Church
Sunday School Registration Form
2013-2014**

Please Complete the form below and return to your child's Sunday School Teacher or the church office.

Child's Last Name: _____ First Name: _____

Address: _____

Name of Parent or Guardian: _____

Home Phone: _____ Cell Phone: _____

Email Address:

Birth Date: _____

- Age Level: Infant (Birth – 18 Months)
Toddler (18 Months +)
Preschool (3 by August 31st)
Grade: 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10

Allergies / Medical Information:

Interests:

Would you be interested in teaching Sunday School?	Yes	No
Would you be interested in substituting at Sunday School?	Yes	No
Would you be interested in being on CE Committee?	Yes	No
Would you be interested in helping at Children's Church?	Yes	No

Please return this form to your child's Sunday School Teacher or the church office.

2013-2014 Women's Book Bash Selections

Here are the first book group selections for the upcoming year. Enjoy your summer reading and come join us in the fall.

The Storyteller by Jodi Picoult

Sage Singer becomes friends with an old man who is particularly beloved in her community after they strike up a conversation at the bakery where she works. Josef Weber is everyone's favorite retired teacher and Little League coach. One day he asks Sage for a favor: to kill him. When a shocked Sage refuses, he then tells her he deserves to die. And once he reveals his secret, Sage wonders if he's right. Another Jodi Picoult spellbinder!

Sept 15, 2013: ***The Storyteller*** by Jodi Picoult Hosted by Penny Alderman

Oct 13, 2013: ***Inferno*** by Dan Brown Hosted by Colette Vallee

Nov 17, 2013: ***A Week in Winter*** by Maeve Binchy Hosted by Kathy Carruth

Jan 12, 2014: ***And the Mountains Echoed*** by Khaled Hosseini Hosted by Karen McNall



September 7th, Progressive Dinner

The **Progressive Dinner** is scheduled for **Saturday, September 7, 2013**. Mark your calendar and please sign-up on our sign-up sheet on the Opportunity Table in Fellowship Hall. We would like to get a count of approximately how many persons might be attending. If we have a large enough group, we would want to split our numbers so as not to overwhelm any of the hosts. This will aid the Growth Committee in planning for the dinner.

Any questions, speak to ***Natalie Stassen, Sue Kristoff, or Karen McNall.***



Sorry these are so late! I hope you all had a very Happy Birthday!

AUGUST	
8/1	Jacqueline Milhans
8/2	Karen Schilling
8/4	Michelle Elliot Nat Keogh
8/5	Christina Barry
8/6	Bonnie L. Budd Todd Mosher Cathy Poulson
8/8	Paul Higgins Sara Palis Elaine Perreault
8/10	Ashley Dauphinais
8/11	David Sontag Betty Wass
8/13	Michelle D. Brosseau Allison Paquette
8/15	Jon E. Carruth
8/16	George A. Douglas Jill Gordon
8/19	Pam Douai Tom Yoder
8/20	Susan Kristoff
8/21	Beth Lyle
8/23	Bria Pichette
8/25	Jessica Maillet Sharon Mendes
8/27	Olivia Elliot Louise Fusco Bobbie Toohey
8/31	Barbara Brown Donna Dowse-Smith

JULY	
7/1	Winifred Bateman Liz Itkowski Violet Racine Vera Wiitala
7/3	Jane Perreault
7/4	David S. Kelly
7/7	Helen Butler Karen Farrar
7/8	Beverly Stone
7/9	Soan (Suzie) Park
7/12	Charles Koski
7/14	Wendy Brown
7/15	Debbie Maillet Jack Sampson
7/16	Karen McNall
7/17	Jenny Dupuis
7/19	Dorothy MacPherson
7/21	Richard Burke
7/22	Richard Bergman Steven Jeffers
7/24	Cassandra (Casey) McDowell
7/28	John Mendes Robert Perreault
7/29	Craig Claflin
7/30	Marissa Itkowski



**September
28th Rummage
Sale**

SAVE your

unwanted clothes (especially Winter and Fall clothes) and gather those of kids and family members to contribute after Aug. 11 for a fundraising event on the 28th at the Johnny Appleseed Festival. **Only clean, saleable items wanted!** The sale will be held on the sidewalk near the library. We will also be selling bottled water and juice boxes.

Growth Committee:

Penny Faul, Karen McNall, Rosemary Banda, Sally Hens, Natalie Stassen, Sue Kristoff, Gail Purretta.

**THANK YOUs from J.D. Miller
Scholarship Winners**

Dear Scholarship Committee,
Thank you for awarding me the J.D. Miller Memorial Scholarship. It's a great feeling to know that working hard in school will be rewarded, and that one more fee in college does not need to be paid. I really appreciate the scholarship and everything that it stands for, and I'll make sure to send my 2nd semester enrollment!

Thanks again,
Emily Gove

To the J.D. Miller Scholarship Committee-
Thank you so much for awarding me the J.D. Miller Memorial Scholarship Your support for my family and for my future means so much to me! *Sean Boyden*

To Whom It May Concern

Thank you so much for awarding me the J.D. Miller Memorial Scholarship. I am so thankful for your generosity and will put the money to good use as I attend Tufts this fall. Thanks Again! *Dominique Zarrella*

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**MONTACHUSETT INTERFAITH
HOSPITALITY NEWS**

MIHN Mentor Volunteers Needed
HELP! Put an END to HOMELESSNESS-
one family at a time.

Can you spare about 1 hour a month?

You CAN make a positive impact on their lives!

You CAN help break the cycle!

MIHN is looking for a few good men, and women, to help us see our mission through. Become a MENTOR, and make a difference in someone's future-today!

Contact:

Laurel Sanford

Community Outreach Coordinator

MIHN 978-342-9501

MIHN HOSTING WEEK

Pilgrim Church will be hosting MIHN starting 8/18/13 and ending 8/25/13.

Volunteers are needed to cook an evening meal, host evenings 5-8 P.M. and weekend hours. The sign-up sheet is on the

Opportunity Table. Contact *Bonnie Hathaway, Cherie Rivera or Karen McNall* if you need additional information about the Montachusett Interfaith Hospitality Network.



THANK YOU

My thanks to *Martha Crane, Nancy Hicks and Beth Lyle* who staffed the church office for me during the summer when I was away.

Penny

I also wish to thank the Church Council for approving, and paying for, my participation in the annual Secretaries Gathering held at Craigville Conference Center in June.

Our theme this year was “Helping Hands”. As our craft project, we made fleece baby blankets and 3-D cards to attach to the blankets. These, along with baby items we each donated, were given to *A Baby Center* located on the Cape.

A workshop on networking was held. I found this workshop informative. Different problems were presented, solutions offered, encouragement given. Ideas were exchanged. Samples of our respective bulletins and newsletters were exchanged.

My free time was spent walking the Craigville Beach with two other church secretaries, and getting to know each other.

The last day of our conference we had a worship service, including communion. A minister who divides her time between California and the Cape blessed the baby blankets, served communion, and offered a meditation. What a great way to end our retreat!

Again, my thanks for allowing me to attend this gathering of my peers.

Penny

HOME COMING SUNDAY

Sunday, Sept. 8th. Save the date! More information will be provided in the September newsletter.



Monday, Aug. 12

SEPTEMBER NEWSLETTER DEADLINE

Monday, Aug. 12th.

SYMPATHY

Our sympathy to *David, Laura and Melissa Sykes* on the passing of *David's* father this summer.



Christian symbol

Wedding Rings

The exchange of wedding rings isn't found in Scripture. It came into practice among Christians in the late ninth century. The unending circle profoundly symbolizes a couple's mutual promises of ongoing love and commitment, as well as God's promise of eternal love that surrounds all — including each couple and marriage.



**PROMOTE YOUR BUSINESS IN
THE “MESSENGER”**

Pilgrim Congregational Church invites members and friends to advertise your business in our monthly newsletter. The cost is \$25.00 per calendar quarter. Simply submit a business card or equivalent-size notice to the church office, along with payment, for however many quarters you'd like the ad to run. This is a wonderful opportunity to promote your business while contributing financially to the church's operations. We thank the following for advertising in the “Messenger”:

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DEACON OF THE WEEK

Aug. 4 Communion by Intinction
Sandra DeRienzo, Deacon
Serving Deb Walker and Karen McNall
Aug. 11 Deacon Sophia Kelly
Aug. 18 Deacon Dave Kelly; Worship
Leader Dave Toohey
Aug. 25 Deacon Dave Toohey;
Worship Leader Mary Mullahy
Sept. 1 Deacon Joe Banda; Worship
Leader Evelyn Jiménez

FOOD PANTRY-August

Please remember to bring in non-perishable food items for our pantry. Monetary donations are also very helpful.

This summer, Ginny's was closed for two weeks and the number of people visiting our Food Pantry doubled. Our cupboards are bare!



WHY BE GREEN?

In *Green Like God* (Faith Words), Jonathan Merritt insists that caring for the planet isn't a “right-left” issue but a “moral-immoral” issue. When Christians find common ground about being stewards of creation, he says, we fulfill God's divine plan and encounter him more easily.

Merritt writes: “One of the reasons God is so protective of the earth and one of the reasons he charged us with keeping and caring for it is because he is singing through it That alone should produce in us a deep appreciation for the creation and a passionate worship for the One who made it.”

A radical decision

In *Conformed to His Image* (Zondervan), Kenneth Boa writes: “We need to review frequently the truth that our performance and our acceptance by other people has nothing to do with our dignity and value, since this is determined by God and not by the world. When we suffer rejection and indifference, the pain will be real, but it need not destroy us, since we have made the radical decision to look to God and his resources alone for our true and unchanging identity and worth.”

St. Paul made a similar point: “With me it is a very small thing that I should be judged by you or by any human court. I do not even judge myself. ... It is the Lord who judges me. ... The Lord ... will disclose the purposes of the heart. Then each one will receive commendation from God” (1 Corinthians 4:3-5, NRSV).

Active love

Christ calls us to active love that isn’t always easy. But it’s stronger and longer-lasting than the love of dreams and fairy tales.

As Fyodor Dostoyevsky writes in *The Brothers Karamozov*, “Love in dreams is greedy for immediate action, rapidly performed and in sight of all. Men will give their lives if only the ordeal does not last long but is soon over, with all looking on and applauding as if on the stage. But active love is labor and fortitude.”

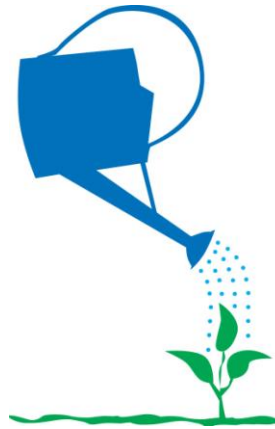
• “Awareness of the divine begins with wonder.”
—Abraham Heschel

• “The best prayers have often more groans than words.”
—John Bunyan

• “Our greatest fulfillment lies in giving ourselves to others.”

—Henri J.M. Nouwen

Untapped resources



While taking photos of the earth, the space shuttle Columbia made a surprising discovery: Underneath the harsh Sahara Desert were 26 lakes, as well as miles of underground rivers. That region’s inhabitants face tough conditions because those abundant resources haven’t yet been tapped.

Churches often suffer a similar problem. Congregations can’t reach their full God-given potential unless people discover and use their gifts. When we tap into our talents, God promises that we “will be like a well-watered garden, like a spring whose waters never fail” (Isaiah 58:11, NIV).

What’s it worth?

As a man browsed through a rare-book store, he chatted with its owner. The customer had recently thrown away a dusty old Bible he’d found in the attic of an old house he’d bought.

“Someone named Guten-something-or-other had printed it,” he mentioned offhandedly.

“Not Gutenberg?” the shop owner gasped.

“Yes, that was it,” the man replied.

“You threw away one of the first books ever printed!” the owner exclaimed in dismay. “A copy recently sold at auction for half a million dollars!”

“Oh, I don’t think this Bible would’ve been worth anything like that,” the man replied. “It was scribbled all over in the margins by some guy named Martin Luther.”

How to view death

For the believer, the time of death becomes far less daunting a factor when seen in the light of eternity. Although death remains an enemy, an outrage, a sign of judgment, a reminder of sin and a formidable opponent, it is, from another perspective, the portal through which we pass to consummated life. We pass through death, and death dies. And the more a Christian lives in the consciousness of God's presence here, the easier it is to anticipate the unqualified delight that will be experienced in God's presence there.

—D.A. Carson

The Lord of the rings

Did you know that July and August are now more popular wedding months than June? During all these ceremonies, wedding rings play a prominent role.

An almost universal tradition dating back millennia, rings in general and wedding rings in particular have various meanings. Glimpsing the ring on one's finger, one is prompted anew to live out the vows made years ago: to love and be faithful to one's spouse in ways big and small. Others are reminded of the precious gift given to them, when the one placing the ring said, "I give you this ring as a sign of my love and faithfulness."

Wedding rings carry added meaning for those inviting Jesus to be the heart of their union. They signify not only the couple's (hopefully) unending love for each other but also Christ's (definitely) unending love for them, individually and together. The Lord's eternal grace encircles Christian marriage, even as wedding rings encircle the fingers of those who exchange them.

"Summer"

Oh! long happy days, when 'tis full of
delight

To roam in the meadows from morning till
night!

Oh! summer, sweet summer! glide slowly
away,

For I love in your warmth and your
fragrance to stay.

—H.P. Nichols

Ordinary offerings, extraordinary use

The book of Numbers contains endless instructions about the offerings Israel should make — gold and silver vessels, flour-and-oil mixtures, incense and sacrificial animals. Hidden in there are "six covered wagons and twelve oxen" (7:3, KJV) that the leaders offer to God.

Although many of the commanded offerings were impractical for daily living and likely easy to comply with — what use were silver bowls and incense while wandering the desert? — giving up wagons and oxen surely required more thought. They may not seem as holy as gifts of money, fancy utensils and expensive fabric, but they were indeed precious: They would transport the Tent of Meeting from place to place.

Likewise today, some people offer money, altar linens, physical labor; others donate art supplies for Sunday school, casseroles for funeral luncheons, a computer for the church office. All gifts are useful. All are holy.

All you need

When I was a little girl ... I went to my father and said, "Daddy, I am afraid that I will never be strong enough to be a martyr for Jesus Christ."

"Tell me," said Father. "When you take a train trip to Amsterdam, when do I give you the money for the ticket? Three weeks before?"

"No, Daddy. You give me the money for the ticket just before we get on the train."

"That is right," my father said. "And so it is with God's strength. Our Father in heaven knows when you will need the strength to be a martyr for Jesus Christ. He will supply all you need just in time."

—Corrie ten Boom, Tramp for the Lord

God plays fair

For whatever reason, [when] God chose to make man as he is — limited and suffering and subject to sorrows and death — he had the honesty and the courage to take his own medicine. Whatever game he is playing with his creation, he has kept his own rules and played fair. He can exact nothing from man that he has not exacted from himself.

[God] has himself gone through the whole of human experience, from the trivial irritations of family life and the cramping restrictions of hard work and lack of money to the worst horrors of pain and humiliation, defeat, despair and death. When he was a man, he played the man. He was born in poverty and died in disgrace, and thought it well worthwhile.

—Dorothy Sayers, *The Greatest Drama Ever Staged*

10 reasons to attend church

1. To have fellowship with the crucified and risen Christ.

2. To worship.

3. To be forgiven.

4. To hear the voice of God.

5. To grow in the knowledge of the Bible, God's Word.

6. To feed your soul.

7. To be prayed for.

8. To be loved and encouraged.

9. To love and encourage your fellow Christians.

10. To promote the Gospel.

—Dr. Richard P. Bucher

Bible Quiz



come and curse them. What strange event does God

Numbers 22 contains a little-known account of Balak, king of Moab, and Balaam, a practitioner of divination. Feeling threatened by the Israelites' presence near his land, Balak summons Balaam to

use to get Balaam's attention so that he blesses, rather than curses, Israel?

A. Balak's men turn into pillars of salt.

B. The sun stands still in the sky.

C. Balaam's donkey speaks to him.

D. An angel makes Balaam mute.

Answer: C (See Numbers 22:22-35, especially 28 and 30.)

What sins?

In *A Forgiving God in an Unforgiving World* (Harvest House), Ron Lee Davis retells a true story about a priest in the Philippines who was burdened by long-ago sin. Despite repenting, he didn't feel God's peace or forgiveness.

Meanwhile, a woman in the priest's parish said she was having visions of Christ — and the priest was skeptical. To test her, he said, "The next time you speak with Christ, ask him what sin your priest committed while he was in seminary." The woman agreed and went on her way.

Later, the priest asked the woman if she'd had another vision and had posed his question to Jesus.

"Yes, I did," she said.

"Well, what did he say?" the anxious priest asked.

"These are his exact words," the woman replied. "I can't remember."

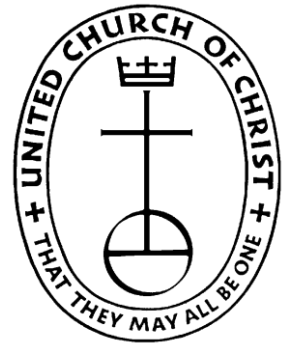
Thanks to God for his forgetfulness where our sins are concerned. "I, I am He who blots out your transgressions for my own sake, and I will not remember your sins" (Isaiah 43:25, NRSV).

Pilgrim Congregational Church
26 West Street
Leominster, MA 01453

A Newsletter from Pilgrim
Congregational Church

Office Hours: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Monday - **Thursday**

The Rev' d Dr. Keith C. Alderman, Minister
Cell phone: 978-407-8502
Lucille Sampson, Organist/ Music Director
Penny Alderman, Admin. Assistant
Ashley Keogh, Sunday Sexton
Office: 978-534-5164 Fax: 978-534-7679
E-mail: pilgrimchurch1743@comcast.net
Worship Service: Sundays, 9:30 AM
Web Page: www.pilgrimchurch-ucc.org
Church School: 9:30 AM



2013