



# The Pilgrim

## Sabbatical Stories of Connection and Clarity

*Throughout the sabbatical period, we will be hearing stories in worship and in our Updates and Invitations from Pilgrims based on our sabbatical themes of "connections and clarity." Each Pilgrim "storyteller" was given a reflection exercise to help name and articulate a story of connection and clarity from their experiences at church.*

### Jeff Francisco

While, I'm drawn to the community at Pilgrims, I often feel unsure of 'my story.' I don't see myself as having a grand tale to tell. But I know this; I'm here because it IS where I feel connections and clarity in a lot of [small] ways. These connections range from the heartfelt greeting from someone that crossed the sanctuary to greet me after a service (a service that I spent wondering if I was in the right place), to the many social, theological and outreach activities. In particular I cherish the connections I made through several Advent Series Studies lead by Ashley, the times spent around tables (or with plates on laps) at dinners and time spent serving and sleeping in a temporary homeless shelter hosted in Georgetown. The list goes on...

Like my connections, my clarity also comes when I least expect it. Like Ashley's sermon a year ago that not only let me know I wasn't the only one that might feel like I wasn't living up to some standard of thoughts, feelings or actions that would cement me as a good and faithful Christian, it moved me to reach out with suggestions of how we could connect with the community around us. Pilgrims' ongoing outreach to the community helps to provide clarity to me; like time spent defending Buster, hosting members of other congregations and working together for social justice in our backyard and around the world. Pilgrims has a long history of leaving its comfort zone to connect with others and to provide clarity on the loving and open face of Christianity, and these are more sources of connection and clarity. †

### Gerry Hendershot

Rummy, Demons, and Me: Adventures of a Pilgrims' Greeter

About four years ago, I got hooked on greeting worshipers at the door on Sunday mornings. That was a miracle in itself, because before then I had had a clinical case of greeter-aversion. I was cured by Washington Interfaith Network (WIN) training in one-on-one meetings, a critical element in Saul Alinsky-style community organizing. Greeting people is always rewarding, but two events that occurred in roughly the same time frame illustrated to me in a memorable way what we mean when we say, as we often do, that Pilgrims "follows Christ at the corner of 22<sup>nd</sup> & P in our nation's capital." They involved Donald Rumsfeld ("Rummy"), then Secretary of Defense, and a homeless man with demons.

I was at the front door one Sunday when I saw that a construction sign on the sidewalk had blown over. I went down to right the sign and after I did so I saw that a middle-aged couple had just walked by me toward the church and were looking toward the open door. Guessing they

were visitors, I fast-walked back to the door so I could greet them when they arrived.

Only then did I notice that a black SUV was moving slowly down the street behind the couple, and that walking behind them was a man with an earphone who was eyeing me with suspicion. I looked again at the couple, and saw the man point to our rainbow welcome sign and say something to his wife. They were, of course, the Rumsfelds--and they kept on walking.

On another Sunday in the same season, a middle-aged, African-American, homeless man stopped on

*(Cont'd, p. 3)*

### Stacy Pervall

As I have announced in service, I recently experienced a great loss in my life - the death of a true friend whom I've loved for over 20 years. The loss has been made all the more difficult because it was a suicide. Going through all the "what if" scenarios and grappling with feelings of guilt, disappointment, frustration, and deep sadness has been a daily ritual for a number of weeks now.

I think most of you know that I love to sing. I was notified of Norm's death on a Thursday. I went to choir practice that evening knowing I would feel better by lifting up my voice and being around Rob and our group of the "usual suspects" for Thursday rehearsals. I was not ready to verbalize my loss to anyone and I certainly sang terribly that night. But we practiced a new song and the final verse touched me with a message I needed to hear: "And when my life on earth has ended, then I will know his grace, and I will see his face; forever I will know that heavenly place with him."

On the Sunday of Jeff's last sermon before leaving for sabbatical, Norm's Mom called to ask if I would deliver part of his eulogy. I was both honored and devastated. How would I find the words to honor Norm's life? That morning Jeff preached on believing and "beloving." Again, I was touched by a message I needed to hear: to "belove" - love what he loves. This not only impacts our journey of faith, but also how we can better love each other. I was inspired and had the basis for my eulogy.

Through these events, I know I was seeing the workings of the Holy Spirit - that manifestation of the trinity that I often have a hard time understanding - and I was more connected to my faith and to Pilgrims. †

### Joanne Leong

My first experience with Church of the Pilgrims was when Amir and I stumbled into Pilgrim's Arts and Crafts Fair this past fall. We decided to take a walk around Dupont Circle and saw the hubbub. I think we were more fascinated with the church itself than the fair. Aside from the church being very pretty, I felt something quite

*(cont'd, p. 3)*

*Joanne and her partner, Amir Venegas, have been worshipping at Pilgrims since the fall and will be married at Pilgrims this June.*

# CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

## ADULT EDUCATION IN JUNE

9:30-10:30 in the Bird Room

- June 3<sup>rd</sup>: Connections and Clarity with Rev. Christine Wiley, our guest preacher for worship
- June 10<sup>th</sup>: Connections and Clarity with Rev. Louise Green, our guest preacher for worship.
- June 17<sup>th</sup>: Ashley. Come and be part of the examination of Martinique Duran Gigax for confirmation.

Sunday School classes for all ages is at 9:30 A.M. on Sundays  
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## SABBATICAL PREACHING SCHEDULE

- June 3<sup>rd</sup>, More Light Sunday: Rev. Christine Wiley, co-pastor, Covenant Baptist Church, Washington, D.C.
- June 10<sup>th</sup>, Washington Capital Pride Weekend, Rev. Louise Green, Director of Social Justice Ministries, All Souls UUA Washington, D.C.
- June 17<sup>th</sup>: Rev. Ashley Goff: Come and witness the confirmation of Martinique Elsa Duran Gigax.
- June 24<sup>th</sup>, Rev. Margee Iddings

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# MISSION AND OUTREACH, ETC.

## CONNECTIONS WITH THE CITY AND GLOBAL VILLAGE

- Annual Capital Pride Week Interfaith Service: Tuesday, June 5, 7:30pm @ Lincoln Temple United Church of Christ, 1701 11th St NW (11th & R Sts, 3 blocks from Howard or U St Metro). Join an interfaith gathering to celebrate Pride week with "Together in Pride, Together in Faith."
- Artist's reception for "Through the Window: Spiritual Insights into HIV," by Lois Wilson, Saturday, June 9<sup>th</sup>. Our artist's reception is co-sponsored by the DC chapter of More Light Presbyterians, 3-7 PM (light refreshments).
- Capital Pride Parade, June 9<sup>th</sup>, kicks off at 6:30 PM 23<sup>rd</sup> & P on Pilgrims door step; March with Pilgrims, More Light churches, and exquisite drag queens!
- Interfaith Convocation on Hunger, June 11<sup>th</sup>, 6pm @ The National Cathedral. Join an interfaith gathering to call on the president and Congress to renew their commitment to end hunger. This convocation is sponsored by Bread for the World and other anti-hunger organizations.
- WIN Action Team Meeting, Thursday, June 14<sup>th</sup> at Covenant Baptist Church. Join other Pilgrims at this WIN event to hear an update on politics with Mayor Fenty to implement the Neighborhood Investment Plans and Vote Neighborhoods First Election Agenda. Contact Jean Stewart if you are interested: [stewartj@starpower.net](mailto:stewartj@starpower.net) ‡

## FROM THE PILGRIMAGE

As June draws near, we are eagerly anticipating the start of a very busy summer! We will have 23 groups and over 500 volunteers pass through before labor day and almost all of them will be doing service projects focused on hunger and poverty. Of those 23 groups, eight are repeats, and of those eight, six are our summer "regulars." We will have 12 National Coalition for the Homeless Faces of Homelessness panels and David Harris will present at least five creative writing workshops. We are excited to have our intern Rob participate in service projects with our groups and lead our new focus on lobbying: Letter Writing Wednesdays. We hope to have every group write a letter to their senator encouraging them to support the Farm Bill and housing issues. (As an added bonus, we plan on supplementing these letter writing campaigns with popsicles!) We're looking forward to a great summer and we hope that you'll keep all of our groups in your prayers as they travel to and from DC and as they serve our neighbors here in the nation's capital. ‡

Peacemaking Demonstration March 2007, Washington DC Pilgrims, left to right: Calva Leonard, Melissa Rosenblatt, Jeff Pittman, Ashley Goff (kneeling), Stan Lou, Tari Gregory, Anne Womeldorf, Jean Stewart, Helen Cope, Betty Rudolph





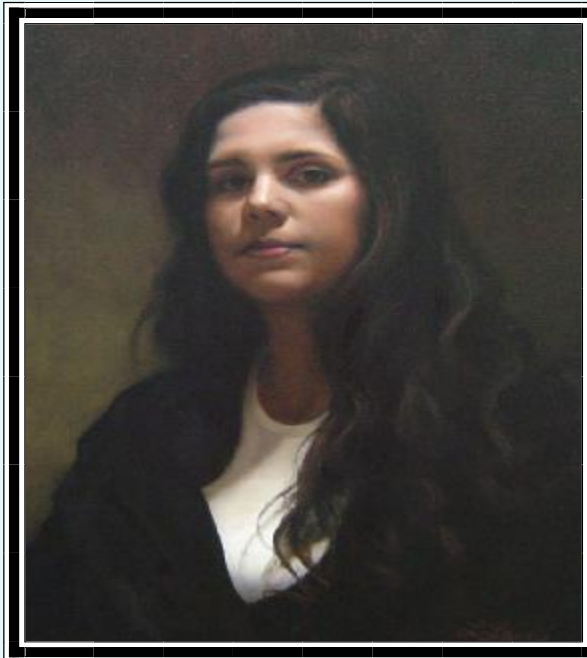
**NEWS RELEASE:FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
Tish Lowe Wins Art Prize in Florence, Italy**

Florence, Italy - April 28, 2007-  
Letitia "Tish" Lowe, a classical realist artist, won first prize for

her oil painting, "Portrait of a Young Woman," at the City-Wide Art exhibition held April 18-22, 2007, in Florence, Italy. The event, an international exhibition combining visual art, music, theater, dance, poetry and cuisine, was presented by ZanZara, a subsidiary of I.D.E.A. (Institution for Developing Expressive Arts), an international organization that promotes innovative arts to the local community and beyond.

The art exhibition was juried by John T. Spike, world-renowned art historian, author, critic, and Director from 1998-2005 of the Florence Biennale, which he established as the largest contemporary art show in the world. The exhibition presented works of 29 student artists from eight countries and eight Florentine schools. "Lowe's portrait won best of show," said Spike, "because she convinced us that we were in the presence of a real person with a mind and heart, that there is an interior life behind the painted eyes."

Born in Jackson, Mississippi, Lowe demonstrated artistic talent early in her childhood. After a successful career as an environmentalist and anthropologist at the World Bank/International Finance Corporation and the Tennessee Valley Authority, she dedicated herself fully to art, moving in



Europe and North America. She is currently represented by the I. Pinckney Simons Gallery in Columbia, SC.

Lowe earned a BA from Agnes Scott College, an MBA from Yale University, and a PhD (anthropology) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. When not in Italy, she resides in Washington, DC. Examples of her artwork can be found on her website at [www.tishlowe.com](http://www.tishlowe.com). †



**CONGRATULATIONS** to our Pilgrims graduates:

- Ann Krehbiel (Simon's Rock College of Bard)
- Jennifer Stacks (The University of North Carolina at Wilmington)
- Crystal Quintanilla (Holy Cross)
- Laura Pippenger (summer intern, '06, Denison University)
- Emily Presley (summer intern, '07, Davidson College). †

**Gerry Hendershot...**  
*Cont'd from front page*

the sidewalk and looked up to me as I stood at the open door. I went down and greeted him. He asked if I were the Pastor. I said no, but I was an Elder. He then told me that he was invested with demons and asked me to cast them out.

He knelt on the sidewalk facing the church, reaching out to me with his hands and eyes. What should I do? What would Jesus do? I sat on the steps, took his hands in mine, and spoke a prayer for healing. Where did the words come from? After the "Amen," the man thanked me, stood, and walked away. I have never seen him again. Was it Christ?

Rummy, demons, and me. At 22<sup>nd</sup> & P in our nation's capital. †

**Joanne Leong. . . Cont'd from front page**

peaceful and welcoming when I was inside the church. That was my first introduction to Church of the Pilgrims.

Each time I come to a service on Sundays, I feel like my connection to the people at Church of the Pilgrims is strengthened. I was pleasantly surprised at the service for Martin Luther King, Jr. weekend. I had never seen a Children's Circle during a church service, much less any kind of participation from children besides altar boys. It is always a nice feeling to be reminded of the wonderment that children experience. As adults, we are jaded by our life experiences and sometimes forget that one of the reasons to keep the world a beautiful place is so that children can experience this wonderment – the special feeling they get from being part of the church service, the lesson they get about civil rights and Mar-

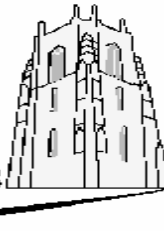
tin Luther King, Jr. and the connection they have to us and each other.

Some weeks later I also felt extremely touched by the baptism for Phoebe Noonan. I thought it a little odd that there would be a baptism during Sunday's service. I have always considered baptisms to be private, for close family and friends. There would be strangers present! Did these parents really want strangers at their baby's baptism? During the baptism, however, everyone gathered around as Phoebe was blessed and she was taken around the congregation so that we could all wish her and her family well. In everyone's own way, they welcomed Phoebe into the Church, showed her love, wished her well and channeled all the positive energy there was. I realized that no one was a stranger. Why would any parent want their child to miss out on this powerful experience? Why would I want to miss out on Phoebe's

experience? At the beginning of the service, I didn't know anyone but by the end of the service, I felt a connection with everyone in the church. It was a wonderful experience for me to feel that connection because we were all there together to give Phoebe our blessings and well wishes. I felt moved, blessed, teary-eyed and connected. My world consists of my relationships with close family and friends and my job. It's really easy to get wrapped up in only those relationships, forgetting that there is a whole world going on beyond where I am. The experience with Phoebe's baptism made me realize how one experience can connect you to others. Usually the one experience is a disaster, that's when people come together. But it makes so much more sense to come together beyond times of need. †

POSTMASTER,  
SEND ADDRESS CHANGES TO:  
*The Pilgrim*  
Church of the Pilgrims  
2201 P St., NW  
Washington, DC 20037

Church  
of the  
Pilgrims



Periodicals  
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Fax: 202-387-6614  
[pilgrim.mail@verizon.net](mailto:pilgrim.mail@verizon.net)

*"Where all are Pilgrims, but none is a stranger."*

[www.churchofthepilgrims.org](http://www.churchofthepilgrims.org)

*If you no longer wish to receive this newsletter please e-mail,  
fax or call in your request to the church office.*

Join us  
on Sundays for  
Worship, 11:00 A.M.

The Rev. Jeffrey K. Krehbiel is on sabbatical. He will return to his pastoral duties in mid-July.

Jeff's a Blogger! Check out Jeff's Sabbatical Blog at [www.jeffkrehbiel.blogspot.com](http://www.jeffkrehbiel.blogspot.com)



**T**he Rev. Dr. Hector Mendez, Pastor of the First Presbyterian Reformed Church of Havana, Cuba, taught and preached at Pilgrims on Sunday, May 13. Earlier in the week, he was honored at a Presbytery-wide dinner hosted by Pilgrims.

Dr. Mendez was in DC to lobby for better relations between the US and Cuban governments, especially a relaxation of travel restrictions. He was hosted by New York Avenue Presbyterian Church and Pilgrims.

Both churches have partnerships with First Havana, and many of their members have visited there.

The photograph shows Dr. Mendez at Pilgrims flanked by Ana Besu of New York Avenue and Stan Lou of Pilgrims, both of whom have visited First Havana. Other Pilgrims who have visited there are Ann Womeldorf, Gerry Hendershot, Betty Rudolph, Stacy Pervall, Tari Gregory, Mitch Fulton, and Mary Ester.

Dr. Mendez is a distinguished Presbyterian, having

## Pastor of First Havana (Cuba) Presbyterian Church Visits Pilgrims

been an officer of the World Council of Churches, Moderator of the Cuban

Presbyterian Church (twice), and an invited guest of the General Assembly of the PCUSA (four times). He has preached in more than fifty countries. In the early years of Fidel Castro's Revolution, when most religious leaders left the country and church membership dwindled, Mendez answered God's call to pastoral ministry. Through decades of scarcity and decline he labored tirelessly to



preserve the church.

Many people who had left the church after the Revolution have now returned, and many people born after the Revolution have, for the first time, discovered the Good News of Jesus Christ. Hector Mendez's story of the faithful remnant of Cuban Presbyterians who kept the flame burning through the long night until a new dawn arrived is an inspiration to all who meet him. †