

In her Adult Education class beginning this Sunday, Ashley makes the distinction between goals and intentions. While goal-setting is focused on outcomes, “setting intentions is not oriented toward a future outcome but, instead, it is a path or practice that is focused on how you are ‘being’ in the present moment. Intentions call your attention to the ‘now.’ You set your intentions based on what matters the most to you and make a commitment to align your actions with your inner values. You live your intentions every day.”

Following that definition, the Session has focused both on goals and intentions over the past several months. Working

with a book by Will Mancini titled *Church Unique*, we asked the question, “Who is

God calling us to be at the present moment?” After spending time exploring our local context, the unique gifts of our congregation, and what Mancini calls our “apostolic spirit,” by which he means the focus that most animates and energizes our leaders, we came up with the following tentative answer to that question:

*At this moment of time, God is calling us to be a community of transformation that engages newcomers, especially young adults, in the practices of Christian community, centered in hospitality, social justice, and spiritual formation, affirming each person, and calling out the best in every individual.*

You might call this our “intention,” which we hope to live every day, aligning our “actions with our inner values.” This is not written in stone. It doesn’t say all that we need to say about what it means to be the church. (Our Mission Statement does a better job at that.) It does not define who we will be for all time. But it reflects where we feel uniquely called by God at the present moment.

We also set a goal, specifically a Big Hairy Audacious Goal (BHAG for short). A good BHAG has the following characteristics:

- Achieving it would change who you are.
- You can’t possibly do it on your own.

With that in mind, we set the following BHAG for the church:

*By 2013, we will increase the number of disciples—defined as active, energized participants—to 200.*

That goal is audacious indeed. The one thing I hold in common with all of my predecessors since Dr. Bird in the 1950’s, is that the congregation has not grown (so far!) during my tenure. We have received new members each year, but each year people move away (or pass

away). The congregation is, on average, several years younger than when I arrived eight years ago. We have seen growth in energy, outreach, and creativity. But we have not experienced a net growth in membership.

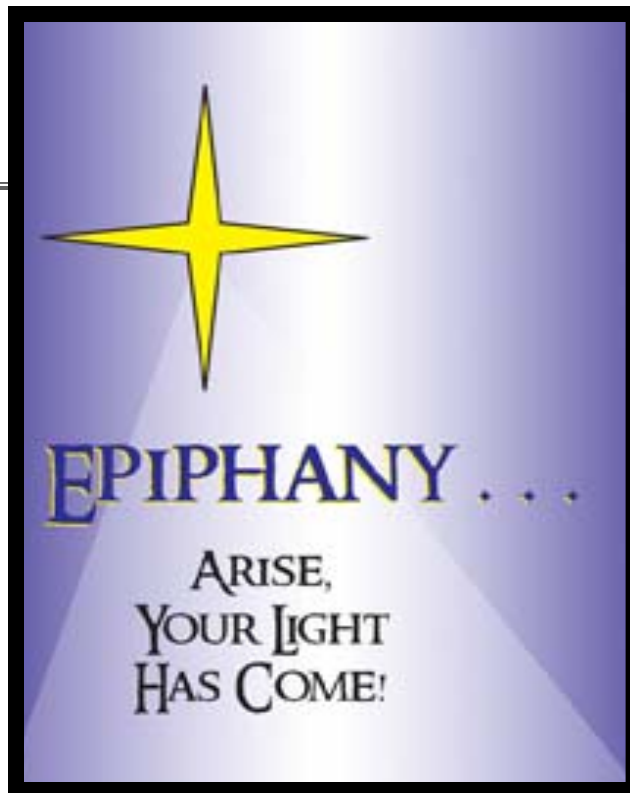
The relationship between the *intention* and the *goal* is that we believe we will achieve the goal best by living in to the intention. That is, we will not grow simply by getting better at recruitment, as if we were some sort of country club. Rather, we will grow by becoming more deeply a place of transformation, where we live out the Christian life together by welcoming the stranger, working for justice, and encountering the living presence of God among us. Our Mission Statement still ties it all together quite nicely:

*“We are pilgrims,  
together on a spiritual journey,  
trusting God to show us the way.  
We follow Jesus, seeing God’s image in every face,  
inviting all people into the circle of God’s grace.  
We joyfully worship in song and in prayer,  
and eagerly proclaim the Good News of Jesus Christ  
in word and in deed:  
by caring for each other, serving neighbors  
in need, and seeking peace with justice.”*

In peace,

Jeff †

JANUARY 2009



## Goals and Intentions



• Hearing it makes you suck air.

**SPIRITUAL FORMATION IN JANUARY****Setting New Year Intentions***January 11, 18 and 25**Led by Ashley Goff*

**T**he New Year is traditionally a time to set resolutions or goals. Goal making is a valuable tool; it involves envisioning a future outcome in your world or in your behavior. One plans, applies discipline, and works hard to achieve New Year goals.

Setting intentions is somewhat different. Setting intentions is not oriented toward a future outcome but, instead, it is a path or practice that is focused on how you are “being” in the present moment. Intentions call your attention to the “now.” You set your intentions based on what matters the most to you and make a commitment to align your actions with your inner values. You live your intentions every day.

This popular, three week series will call us to set New Year intentions. What values do we want to see blossom in our lives this year? What values or intentions need our highest priority in 2009? Come to reflect on 2008 and to set your own personal intentions so you can live more fully in the moment in 2009. ††

**Becoming an Accessible Congregation***January 11, 18, and 25*

**I**n 2001 the Church of the Pilgrims was certified as an “Accessible Congregation” by the National Organization on Disability. The Certificate noted that Pilgrims’ values people with disabilities, seeing in them the image of God, and that the congregation was trying to remove architectural barriers to accessibility. It has taken nearly eight years, but in January 2009 Pilgrims will dedicate architectural changes that dramatically improve the accessibility of the rear building entrance and first floor bathroom. In conjunction with that event, an adult education series on disability will be held January 11, 18, and 25, 9:30-10:30 in the Bird Room. It will feature a visit by Judy Heumann, internationally known leader of the disability rights movement, who has held high offices in the Department of Education and the World Bank, and is now Director of the DC Division of Disability Services. ††

**L**ighting candles during Advent is a long-standing ritual in many traditions.

Commonly there are four candles, one for each week, and standing for Love, Peace, Joy, and Hope. But those symbols are traditional, not doctrinal. For

Advent 2008, the worship planning team re-named the candles Community, Comfort, Justice, and Wonder.

At the beginning of worship, the week’s candle is lit by a family with a young child, and they explain the meaning of the candle. The Justice candle, for



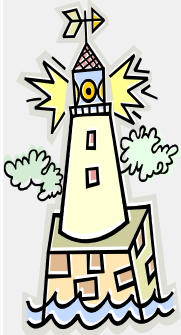
### Advent Candles: Community, Comfort, Justice, Wonder

instance, was lit by the Bruce-Oosterveld family (Diana, Bart, Emma, & Sebastian) After the

lighting, Bart explained the symbol in this way: “*The light of the candle is to remind us to be creators of justice. God has promised us that a day is coming when God’s justice will reign.*”

After the lighting, each family places an object from their home on the wreath as an additional symbol. The Oostervelds placed a picture of Emma’s and Bassie’s favorite super heroes.

Other family candle lighters were the Goff-Glennons (Ashley, Bob, Sam, Maddie, & Ryan), the White-Marcellinos (James, Ian, & Julin), and the Grund-Wagners (Matt, Lynn, Lydia, & Siri ††



## Letting Our Light Shine: Epiphany Service Days

**D**uring the season of Epiphany, we celebrate that God is known to the world through the transformative ministry of Jesus, a ministry focused on caring for the poor, the sick, the broken and rejected. Epiphany means “shining forth,” “manifestation,” and “revelation.” As people of the Way, it is our responsibility to manifest the radical Way of Jesus through acts of service and justice-making. It is through our actions that we can show those around us that our God is one who calls connections with the injustice around us.

To reveal the Light of Jesus during Epiphany, we have created Epiphany Service Days. These days are opportunities for a group of five Pilgrims to serve at various non-profits that work with the homeless and working poor of D.C.

Here is our line-up:

- **January 8<sup>th</sup>:** N Street Village, serving dinner from 6-9pm.
- **January 10<sup>th</sup>:** SOME (So Others Might Eat), serving breakfast from 7-10am.
- **January 24<sup>th</sup>:** Community of Hope, working in their transitional apartments in SE from 9am until 1pm.
- **February 14<sup>th</sup>:** Capital Area Food Bank, 9am until 1pm
- **February 17<sup>th</sup>:** Dinner Program for Homeless Women, serving dinner from 4:30-8:30pm.

Each group of five Pilgrims will have an already designated “key leader” who will gather the Pilgrim group on-site before serving to connect and offer a brief prayer. The Pilgrim group will serve then take an hour at a coffee shop or restaurant after serving to debrief and reflect on the experience (this hour is already included in the serving times listed above).

If you are interested in serving on one of the Epiphany Service Days, please RSVP to Ashley Goff, [ashley.goff@verizon.net](mailto:ashley.goff@verizon.net). Our groups are intentionally small and it’s first come, first serve for RSVP’s! This is also a great opportunity to invite a friend who might be interested in church life to experience and connect with Pilgrims. ☩

## What’s going on at the Pilgrimage? Pilgrimage 2009: Looking ahead

**W**e just experienced the season of giving: Christmas. It is that one time of the year when it is compulsory to think about other people. And now is the lull after the storm: the New Year. It is that one time of the year when it is compulsory to think about ourselves; how can I improve myself through New Year’s resolutions?

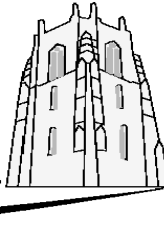
At the Pilgrimage we want to combine these two notions as we move forward. We had a very successful year at the Pilgrimage in 2008. As our attention turns toward 2009 we are working hard to continually improve and think/give to others. We aim to accomplish this by creating new programs, finishing up our new website, updating some structural needs in the Pilgrimage, and working with our new Board members to identify needs and solutions. While we are extremely thankful for all the hard work members of our Board put in over 2008, we are also very excited to be bringing new people on for 2009 and beyond.

The following groups are coming this January. If you see any of them, say hi!

- University Lutheran Church – Eau Claire, Wisconsin – January 4-9
- Drew University – Madison, New Jersey – January 4-10
- Elon College – Elon, North Carolina – January 9-15
- University of Chapel Hill – Chapel Hill, North Carolina – January 16-19
- First Presbyterian Church of Decatur – Decatur, Illinois – January 19-21
- First Presbyterian Church of Salisbury – Salisbury, North Carolina – January 22-25
- Second Presbyterian Church of Baltimore – Baltimore, Maryland – January 23-25
- Catonsville Presbyterian Church – Catonsville, Maryland – January 23-25
- Westminster Presbyterian Church – Greensboro, North Carolina – January 30 – February 1st ☩

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

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Voice: 202-387-6612  
Fax: 202-387-6614  
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.

**HAPPY NEW YEAR** 2009



## Disability Sunday

Sunday, January 18 is Disability Sunday and Dedication of our first-floor ADA renovations, including new power doors and ADA bathroom.