

CONGREGATION PRESIDENT

By Rochelle Lofstrand

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



The past month has been busy for PUCC! We have celebrated together during our Thanksgiving dinner and the Hanging of the Green Service; and we have worked together during church work days and choir and handbell practice.

As we gear up for Advent and for the return of our beloved minister, Council will be working on drafting a vision statement and a budget for approval by the congregation in January. Our budget is based on congregation pledges, so if you haven't submitted a financial pledge for 2023, consider doing so in the next couple of weeks.

As the Council does our work, we are keeping the mission statement (*below*) of PUCC at the forefront of our performance and the goals we want to achieve.

*“God-loving. Justice-seeking. Open-minded.
Judgement free. Welcoming all, rejecting
none. We believe God's love is for everyone.”*

I am so thankful for this congregation and how we all live out Christ's love in our community.

I wish you all Christmas Blessings and a Happy New Year!

Sandwich Club Support Group

The Pilgrimage Sandwich Club is a caregiver's support group for members and friends that are facing generational challenges and stress in handling relationships with children, parents, and other loved ones for whom they are responsible.

One of our mantras is, “*Caring not curing.*” We can't solve each other's problems or change most of our circumstances. It is helpful, however, to have a confidential outlet in which to share frustrations, fears and hopes; to reflect, pray, and lament together; to tell it like it really is.

Our next meeting is Saturday, December 3 at 3:00 p.m. at the church. A Zoom option is available. Contact Trish Greeves if you would like to be added to this email list.

trishgreeves@me.com



Blue Christmas Service

Christmas can be a painful time for many people. It may be the first Christmas without loved ones who have recently died; it may be a time that has always been difficult. We need the space and time to acknowledge life as it is. We need to know that we are not alone. It is healing and authentic for all of us to be in touch with the quiet, more somber, but hope-filled message of Christmas that speaks to the deepest recesses of our hearts.

For these reasons, Pilgrimage UCC is again offering a “Blue Christmas” service on Thursday, December 1 at 7:00 p.m. We will live-stream this service on our Facebook page if you are unable to attend in person.

Everyone who might be helped by this service of comfort and support, regardless of church background (or lack of it), is welcome.



**We seek to grow
in worship,
learning and
service as a
faithful people of
God, bringing
hope, comfort
and friendship to
all, welcoming
everyone
in Christ.**

*“Glory to God in
the highest, and
on earth peace,
good will
toward men..”
LUKE 2:14*

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STEWARDSHIP

Anne Mooney, Duke Yaguchi, Co-Chairs
pilgrimageucstewardship@gmail.com



The past months at church have been simply amazing. It was a blessing to envision as a church family the mission to which we have been called and about how so many have considered how they can play a part in that! We hope you enjoyed the special activities of our Commitment Season and that you are convinced that God is at work in our congregation.

Stewardship is pleased to announce that the leadership of our Missions Ministry now has a chairperson. Cindy Westlake has jumped into Missions and is already making a difference. We are grateful for her spirit of service. We also welcome both Laurie Spencer and Lisa Toomey who will be joining Clay Roth as co-chairs for the Property Ministry as Chris Shiver has had to step down after 7 and ½ years of service on Properties. Many thanks to Chris for his loving service these past few years.

We continue to seek a co-chair to work with Diane Reese on the Worship Ministry. Please reach out to Diane or to Duke and Anne if you are interested in assisting Diane in leading the Worship Ministry.

We are grateful to members who have taken the time to commit to a financial pledge to PUCG for 2023. While it is not required, an estimate of giving assists us in being fiscally responsible as we make our ministry and mission plans in the year ahead. We do not want to commit to a project that we cannot complete. It is not too late to offer a pledge. You can find pledge cards on the table in the narthex of the church. They can be placed in the church offering plate or placed or mailed to the church office. You can also simply drop an email with your pledged amount to Rita Mehlan, our PUCG Financial Secretary at pilgrimageucfinsec@gmail.com.

If it concerns you to offer a commitment, please know that the church understands. The economic times we live in are still uncertain for some and making a commitment may seem difficult. At the same time, we want you to know that estimates of giving are precisely that—estimates—and they can be adjusted at any time. Whether you choose to submit a card or not, please know that we are grateful for your continuing support.

Blessings to each of you as we move into Christmas Season and prepare for the New Year in 2023.



CLIMATE CHANGE – A Christian Concern

By Hugh Lowrey

COP27 has met in Egypt to coordinate the world's response to climate change, plan efforts to control it and make pledges to help each other. This underwhelming series of meetings, which have produced mostly unfulfilled promises and unmet goals, has been undercut by the lackadaisical attitude of us, the world's citizens. It seems that, with the exception of a significant number of unbelievers, we do care, but we expect – somewhat erroneously – enormous financial outlays to be required to stop the warming. We also correctly expect great numbers of personal upheavals. We aren't ready for those things.

Wildfires, heat waves, deluges, extreme droughts, unprecedented storms and rising seas have produced only inadequate action. Perhaps if our future in a hotter world were widely understood, it would inspire a more vigorous approach. Such a future is on display in southern Iraq, one of the world's hottest places.

At the turn of the century, Basra was a thriving city, hot but quite livable. Nearby to the north, an enormous spread of grassy marshlands marked the joining of the Tigris and Euphrates Rivers. Fresh water from rivers provided irrigation for many groves of date palms. Today, things have changed.

The highest temperature registered in Basra is 129°, and summer readings of over 120 are common, and deadly to the old and unwell. Some Iraqis have air conditioning, but electric power is intermittent. The marshland grass at the confluence of the rivers is parched and dead, providing more fodder for dust storms, which are frequent and unhealthy. River water levels are dropping, and this permits encroachment by sea water which is making river water deadly to palm groves and other growing things.

Faced with this Hell-on-Earth situation, educated young people are leaving Iraq in droves. Is our future as bad as present day Iraq? It's up to us.

CHRISTIAN ED

Janet Derby & Darlene Wagner, Co-Chairs
pilgrimageucce@gmail.com



Christmas Eve Family Service

The children have begun preparing for our Christmas Eve family service. They will be singing and presenting the story of Christ's birth, mainly from the perspective of the animals who shared their stable with the holy family. There are still opportunities for anyone who wants to be involved. Please contact Janet Derby at:

pilgrimageucce@gmail.com

...for information.

Church Nursery

We are excited to announce that Sarah Wilson, one of our members, will begin staffing our church nursery beginning the first Sunday in December. The nursery is available to children aged 3 and under during the 10 AM worship service.

The Stewardship Message from Our Children

Thanks to our children who reminded us of some of the reasons that Pilgrimage is important.

Acolytes: Theo

I was very glad to get to acolyte for the first time last week. I like doing it because it's fun.

Children's Time and Little Lambs: Atlas

I love that we have a children's sermon.... I get to raise my hand to talk and tell people things and ask questions. And then we get to go to Little Lambs. Last month I was very excited on Rally weekend because I got to come to church twice that weekend and make things.

Food: Eli

Because we love food: Our favorite thing at VBS is usually the snacks. My favorites were ones with candy, particularly the gummy bears!

Jackson:

He said his favorite was eating red lungs made out of gummies.

I also like having snacks during Little Lambs, especially when candy is included. Communion is important not just because we get bread, but because we think about God.

Music: Cody

Last year I loved listening to the bells play so much that I wanted us to be able to play "Carol of the Bells". We tried it on our boomwhackers, but it just didn't sound right. This year, thanks to money given in memory of Mr. Owens, we got our own set of bells. I hope we can play Carol of the Bells this Christmas.

We all love the closing song. We get to sing *Let there be Peace on Earth, and let it begin with meeeeeee.*



Editor's Commentary

I've been with Pilgrimage since 2009, and since then, I've observed many of our children grow into amazing young adults—blossoming into successful and delightful individuals. First, I had never attended a church where the children were actually a part of the worship service; and second, I was amazed at how enthusiastic the youngsters were to learn 'church stuff.'

The previous article is a testimony for the dedication and love our Christian Education chair, Janet Derby provides to the children in our church community. From the beginning, I was aware of Janet's expertise in teaching our kids about Jesus and God, right from wrong, by using methods that help them retain information and demonstrating the patience she has to keep the even littlest ones focused. Janet, you truly are a blessing to Pilgrimage UCC. Thank you for your commitment and enthusiasm to the little ones and youth in Pilgrimage UCC.

"To the world you may be one person; but to one person you may be the world." —Dr. Seuss

WORSHIP

Diane Reese, Chair

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com



As we move into the season of Advent, we are grateful to the leadership team of liturgists and other worship leaders who are helping with our services during Rev. Courtney's family leave.

On Saturday, November 26th, a team of volunteers took time out of their Saturday morning to work together and prepare for the Hanging of the Green services on Sunday on November 27th.

Rev. Kimble Sorrells led the services on All Saints Day, November 6th, Rev Tim Downs led the services on Sunday, November 13th, and Tom Query led the services on Sunday, November 20th. Rochelle Lofstrand led the Hanging of the Green services on Advent 1 on November 27th.

Trish Greeves will be leading a special Blue Christmas service on Thursday, December 1st at 7:00 p.m. Rev. Tim Downs will return once again on Sunday, December 4th which is Advent 2, and Rochelle will take the lead on Sunday, Advent 3, on December 11th, which is Music Sunday.

Exciting things are happening with our worship services as we approach Christmas Eve on Saturday, December 24th with a Family Service in the early evening and a service of Lessons and Carols at 10:00 p.m. It will be a wonderful season of Advent with the choir and the Handbell Choir adding beautiful music to the worship services led by our Music Director, Asa Bradley and our Accompanist, Anna Mbiad.

Scripture readers for the month of November were:

- November 06: Syd Bowcott and Monty Wyne
- November 13: Michelle Brumfield & Duke Yaguchi
- November 20: Juliann Heilhecker and Pat Kask
- November 27: Sharon Getty and Laurie Spencer

Each week, the Worship Team meets on Zoom at 5:00 p.m. on Wednesdays. This team of folks helps review services, plans for upcoming services and communicates with the supply pastors who are serving during

Courtney's family leave.

If anyone is interested in being a scripture reader on a rotation schedule or just at times and dates you prefer, please email the worship committee at:

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com

Also, please feel free to reach out if anyone has interest in ushering or greeting. Thank you to everyone who helps PUCC as needed for every worship service.

MISSIONS

Cindy Westlake, Chair

pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com

Thank you to one and all who have welcomed me as the new chair of the Missions Committee. I'm excited about serving in this capacity.

An additional thank you to those who have offered to help with the committee, as well as those who have answered my endless questions. I'm sure there will be many more questions to come!

Thanks also to Rita and Dick Mehlan and the deacons for taking the lead with the Thanksgiving food drive for MUST ministries.

Our December missions project is the Angel Gift Tree. This year we will be collecting toys for the clients of Simple Needs GA – a local organization assisting children, people experiencing homelessness, and others in need. The Angel Tree (located in the Narthex) is decorated with ornament tags denoting the age and gender of a child, along with their wished-for item and its approximate cost. Please return the gifts unwrapped with the ornament tag attached by Dec. 21st. If you prefer to have us do the shopping for you, please see me.



PARISH LIFE

Susan Volentine & Carol Hill, Co-Chairs
pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com



It was wonderful joining together for our Annual Thanksgiving Potluck on Sunday, November 20. We had a sizeable turnout and a more than ample amount of food!

Thank you to all who helped make it a huge success. We appreciate everyone's help in making it go smoothly—from the folks who brought delicious food to those who helped with setup and teardown.

Our next event will be a chili cook off at the end of January or beginning of February. So get your chili recipes ready! We will provide details very soon.



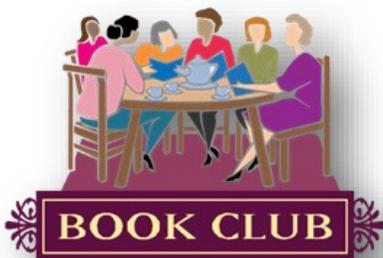
PUCC Ornament Exchange

This year's Ornament Exchange is scheduled for Friday, December 16th at 7:00 p.m. Pat Kask will be hosting this fun event at her home.

This Pilgrimage tradition has always been a great way to get together and have a great time.

All you have to do is bring a wrapped ornament and a snack or dessert to share.

Please RSVP Pat at pjo5359@bellsouth.net.



Our next meeting is Tuesday, January 3, 2023 at 7:00 p.m. at the church.

**The book for review is
"The Dictionary of Lost Words"
by Pip Williams**

**If you have any questions,
please contact Fran Howard at:**

roberthow@aol.com



Christmas Fund

The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, Christmas "Thank You" gift checks each December to our lower-income retirees.

Bring good news and great joy to those who have who have given so much to the UCC. The Christmas Fund has been caring for active and retired clergy and lay employees of the United Church of Christ for over 100 years, providing emergency grants, supplementation of small annuities and health premiums, and Christmas "Thank You" gifts to lower-income retirees. Show your gratitude for active and retired UCC clergy by giving generously to the Christmas Fund.

We will receive this special offering on December 18, 2022.

Pilgrimage UCC Financial Deficit

We began 2022 with an established Mission Spending Plan (MSP) which is updated every year and can be found on our website under “Member Information.” Council uses the pledged monies people submitted during the Stewardship Campaign to develop our church budget (MSP) based on the total amount pledged.

During this year, we have been paying our bills, our salaries, and other expenses based on the fact that we will be receiving the full amount pledged for 2022.

At this point we are drastically short of the amount we need to financially back the spending that we have already incurred. Unlike some denominations, PUCC does not have any other means to obtain money to cover our expenses.

We rely on folks to stand by their pledged amounts throughout the year.

As everyone knows, costs are going up and money is tight for us all. Pilgrimage had a savings account to fall back on, but we are quickly diminishing the account, which will leave us with no money. The hard reality is the total amount pledged for 2022 is \$50,000 short. This is a huge amount for PUCC. In order to continue with the programs, pay our bills and support the salaries for staff, it is necessary to reduce this short fall to a much lesser amount.

So please, if you are behind in your weekly or monthly pledged amount, consider catching up the best way you can to help reduce our current deficit. You can review our Financial Data each week in Friday’s E-Tidings.

Geoff Heilhecker
Treasurer

December Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

12/02 Patrick Prah
12/03 Chris Shiver
12/07 Amy Jones
12/15 Maggie McMahill
12/15 John Roth
12/23 Noel Reitz
12/24 Bill McNulty
12/25 Rochelle Lofstrand
12/27 Andy Roberts
12/28 Hannah Alexander
12/28 Nancy Donahue
12/30 Stu Gillespie
12/31 Katie Bridges

ANNIVERSARIES

12/05 Bill & Lois Dischinger
12/21 Fran & Bob Howard
12/21 Monty & Joyanna Wyne
12/26 Carol Hill & Eden White
12/30 Neil & Karen Clark
12/31 Rev. Courtney & Auggie Jones

If we missed someone,
email Lynne at:

office@pilgrimageucc.org



Advent Calendar

Thursday December 1 7:00 PM	Blue Christmas Service Led by Rev. Trish Greeves
Sunday December 4 Advent 2	Communion (Both Services) Rev. Tim Downs preaching
Sunday December 11 Advent 3	Music Sunday Rochelle Lofstrand preaching
Sunday December 18 Advent 4	Rev. Courtney Returns
Saturday December 24 Christmas Eve	Family Service (5PM) Service of Lessons & Carols (10PM)
Sunday December 25	Christmas Day Worship TBD

STAFF

Pastor	Rev. Courtney Jones
Music Director	Asa Bradley
Accompanist	Anna Mbiad
Administrative Assistant	Lynne Buell

Pilgrimage UCC's Emails

Pilgrimage UCC Website:	www.pilgrimageucc.org	Worship:	pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com
Pastor-Rev. Courtney Jones	pastor@pilgrimageucc.org	Christian Education:	pilgrimageuccce@gmail.com
Office-Lynne Buell:	office@pilgrimageucc.org	VBS-Janet Derby:	pilgrimageuccvbs@gmail.com
Council:	pilgrimageucccouncil@gmail.com	Communications:	pilgrimageucccommunications@gmail.com
Council President:	pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com	Missions	pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com
Treasurer:	pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com	Properties	pilgrimageuccproperties@gmail.com
Council Fin. Secretary:	pilgrimageuccfinsec@gmail.com	Stewardship	pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com
Deacons:	pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com	Parish Life:	pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com
Music:	pilgrimageuccmusic@gmail.com		

Meeting Schedule for Committees & Small Groups

Book Club via Zoom (Fran Howard)	1st Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.
Pilgrimage Council (Rochelle Lofstrand, Pres.)...	Second Thurs. of the month—7:00 p.m.
Sandwich Club Support (Trish Greeves).....	Quarterly Meetings—3:00 p.m. Saturday
Spiritual Seekers' Group (Trish Greeves)	4th Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.
PFLAG	4th Sunday of the month—1:00 p.m. https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-marietta

This listing includes the group name, followed by the coordinator or director in parenthesis then the meeting days and times. If your group should be added to this list, please e-mail office@pilgrimageucc.org.

The Month in Sundays

Dec.	4	Advent 2 Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Communion (both services) Handbell Rehearsal (11:30 a.m.)
Dec.	11	Advent 3—Music Sunday Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.)
Dec.	18	Advent 4—Rev. Courtney Returns! Christmas Fund Special Offering Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.)
Dec.	25	Christmas Day Worship Time TBD