



Interim Pastor's Message *by Rev. Phil Price*



October is here, Winter is coming...

I have been with you for about eight months. In some ways I feel that I am among friends that I have known for years and in other ways I feel that I am just getting to know you!

October, the month of harvest, leaves turning to majestic splashes of color, Worldwide Communion, Halloween, All Saints, and the fun of Oktoberfest. As we resist switching our closets to winter wear, we have this growing awareness that winter, albeit Georgia winter, is on its way and rather than fight it, we had better prepare for it.

This seasonal rhythm gives us winter in a regular and predictable way and because of this we can easily prepare for those lean colder months. In other areas of life those "winter times" are not so foreseeable and not so easily prepared for. Those times when there is a surprise loss of a job or income, medical news that was unanticipated, a storm, fire or flood, a relationship that took a surprising turn; we find ourselves in a cold environment. It is those times when

the sage wisdom, "expect the unexpected" points its fingers at us and says, "I told you so. . ." But how do you prepare for an unknown? You can't, but here is what I've learned. No matter what "winter" comes at you, you can get through it better if you have resources, money in the bank, friends, and faith.

Folks who spend every paycheck all "summer" have real difficulty when the first snow starts to fly. I always tell couples that I am counseling in pre-marriage sessions to make a financial plan that disciplines you to live on less than you are making. Be diligent in saving. Those who listened to me certainly do better during "winter challenges" than those who don't.

Feed your friendships. "I get by with a little help from my friends," is a great song and a good lesson in life. Those who have invested time and heart into friendships will always do better when facing surprise "winters" than those who have been cavalier about relationships.

Faith. Believing that, "this too shall pass," that, Springtime is on its way, also helps immeasurably in getting through the dark cold days of winter.

We are also in a strange kind of wintertime politically in this country where whole business models are designed around sensational misinformation rather than helpful news, and algorithms are formulated

that increase divisions and hostilities among, "We the People." It is increasingly hard to be "That More Perfect Union" when profits and power flow to people and entities that stoke hysteria and pump out lies.

During these times we need church more than ever. A place of sanctuary, of healing, of breathing, of mutual support and of holding on to a story of grace, reconciliation and inclusion. Your church needs you and you need your church! Together we can face any storm and get through any winter.

Pastor Phil

World Communion Sunday

Let us break bread together! There is nothing quite as spiritually, emotionally, and physically fulfilling as sharing a meal around the table. On October 4th, we will celebrate World Communion Sunday with churches around the world. As part of our Pilgrimage tradition, members are invited to bring a favorite or ethnic bread which will appear on tables in front of our Sanctuary. Please use the sign-up link below to let the Deacons know what kind of bread you will bring:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094BAEAB2DA6FB6-65662180-pucc#/>

As we partake of the breads from other countries, let us contemplate how we are all connected.



Our next special collection, **Warm Up for MUST**, is about to begin! As you check your closets or shop the fall sales, please consider donating new or gently used clothing to help MUST Ministries' clients stay warm this winter. Coats, hats, mittens, gloves, and scarves are all needed and greatly appreciated. We will collect donations throughout October.

We will welcome our Family Promise families **from October 4 through 10**. Guests stay overnight at Covenant Presbyterian Church & enjoy meals at the Family Promise Day Center. There are several ways to lend a hand and help make their week comfortable and welcoming. Interested in supporting one of PUCC's most meaningful mission projects? Cindy Westlake and Deb Loche would be happy to connect with you!

Fall is gradually arriving after a long, hot summer.

October will be a busy month, with the Council's annual retreat, Worldwide Communion Sunday, Family Promise Host Week, Commitment Sunday, and, of course, Trunk or Treat!

If everything proceeds as scheduled, the Council will review architectural plans for the building renovation this month. Most of the work will occur in the section extending from the Narthex to the pastor's office. Congregants can expect to see the plans soon afterward.

We are pleased that the ONA Task Force is being revived. Jerry Van Vickle, who has long hoped to reestablish it, will lead the group. Please contact him if you would like to get involved.

Although it will continue under the ONA banner, the task force will also explore social issues that matter to our community. Jerry has expressed a strong commitment to continuing the work of the late Ann Baker, who championed many important causes.

As the leaves begin to fall more quickly, remember to exercise your right to vote. Early voting begins October 13, and the General Election is November 3.

If you have a matter that you believe needs the Council's attention, please feel free to contact me.

I am usually available during coffee time between services or by email at:

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com.

October Book Club

Book Club will meet on Saturday, October 10th at 4PM. They will meet at the home of Susan Volentine. Nancy Harrison will lead the discussion about **"The Testaments"** by Margaret Atwood. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

Poinsettias Are Coming!



Beginning Sunday, October 4, we'll begin taking orders for beautiful Christmas poinsettias to brighten our church during the holiday season. The plants will be displayed for Hanging of the Green on Sunday, November 29. After they have helped decorate the church during Advent, please take your poinsettia home on or after Christmas Eve.

You must place your order by October 25. Click the link below to place your orders.

Plant Options

- **6-inch red or white poinsettia:** \$10.50
- **8-inch red or white poinsettia:** \$19.00

Prices include green foil, tax, and delivery to the church. We hope you'll join us in filling the sanctuary with festive color this Christmas!

<https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1ntwN7nEUToMYx-UzJb6Q6sx9bFcLyFDGgqVN2bt1z4w/edit>

Usher Training & Retreat

All current ushers, as well as anyone interested in becoming an usher, are invited to attend a brief training session in the Fellowship Hall Sunday, October 4 following the 10AM service. **Jamie Durkee** will review usher responsibilities and cover important safety protocols.



We are planning a Spirituality Retreat in North Georgia on January 29 - 31, 2027. If you are interested and would like to receive more information about the retreat or the usher training, contact **Jamie Durkee**.

jjdurkee11@gmail.com

Parish Life



Autumn has arrived, and our next festive event, Trunk or Treat, will be here before we know it. Join us in the church parking lot after the 10:00 a.m. service on Sunday, October 25. Please mark your calendar and start planning costumes for your children and decorations for your vehicle's trunk. The event will include our traditional costume parade, trunk-or-treating, and prizes for first-, second-, and third-place trunk decorations. Children's costumes will be recognized in three categories: Cutest, Spookiest, and Best Overall. Get ready to imagine, create, and celebrate fall together!

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Parish Life will hang a large paper banner in the sanctuary titled "We Appreciate Pastor Phil!" Markers will be provided for anyone who would like to write a thank-you message. In addition, we welcome you to help us "Bling" the Banner! Some suggestions are colorful cardstock, stickers, borders, ribbon, pictures—whatever gets your creative juices flowing. Glue sticks will be available. The banner will be displayed from October 4 through the morning of October 25 and will be presented to Pastor Phil during the 10:00 a.m. service on October 25.

Carol and Susan
Parish Life Co-chairs

The Lives We Touch *by Deb Loche*

I'm a couple of weeks late in sharing the latest *The Lives We Touch* update—thank you for your patience! During August and part of September, we touched 42 lives through acts of kindness. That brings our total to 106 acts since we began tracking them. We are truly a kind and generous community of believers. Our goal is to reach 500 by the end of the year, so please remember to record your acts of kindness in *The Lives We Touch* journal located in the fellowship hall.

This month's kindness took many forms, from reaching out to old friends facing difficult life decisions to collecting mail for a neighbor who was out of town. I especially want to recognize the children who added their acts to the journal. Each one is precious, so I'm sharing them all:

- ✓ Shared a cookie
- ✓ Told my substitute teacher she was nice
- ✓ Told my teacher she did the right thing
- ✓ Said goodbye to a friend who was leaving our school

To the parents: bravo! You are setting a wonderful example, and your guidance clearly makes a difference in your children's lives. Thank you for nurturing such kindness. Your children are our future leaders!

Look for our next update in early October, and please continue recording your acts of kindness in the journal!



THE SEEKERS

The Seekers Group will meet next on Tuesday, October 27th at 7PM.

Looking for a welcoming small study group to grow in faith and form meaningful friendships? We'd love to have you—please reach out to Laurie Spencer for more information.

lauriespencergardens@gmail.com



PUCC SANDWICH CLUB SUPPORT GROUP

A caregiver support group offers a space to connect with others who are also navigating stress and complex family responsibilities. The Pilgrimage Sandwich Club is a recurring monthly gathering that can help foster ongoing relationships and a sense of belonging.

Their next meeting is Saturday, October 24th at 3:00 p.m.

Email Trish Greeves at trishgreeves@me.com if you have any questions.



PUCC Vision Statement

"We are an open and affirming faith community living out Christ's love through acceptance, learning, service, and action."

October Events

- Council Retreat: 10/3
- World Communion: 10/4
- Family Prom. Host Week: 10/4-10/10
- Book Club: 10/10
- Sandwich Club: 10/24
- Trunk or Treat: 10/25
- Seekers Group: 10/27

2026 STEWARDSHIP CAMPAIGN



STAFF

Interim Pastor, Rev. Phil Price

<mailto:pastor@pilgrimageucc.org>

Music Director, Jake Daron

Accompanist, Anna Mbiad

Administrative Assistant, Lynne Buell

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BIRTHDAYS

10/01 Jason Fulsang
10/05 Cary Lee
10/11 Michael Hyland
10/14 Sunny Alexander
10/17 Jean Ward
10/22 Aiden Scates

ANNIVERSARIES

10/20 Janet & Ken Derby

If we missed someone, email Lynne at:

office@pilgrimageucc.org