

PASTOR

Rev. Courtney Jones

pastor@pilgrimageucc.org



Dear Beloved,
I love Advent. In a season marked by holiday busyness, Advent is a counter-cultural call to slow down, to be alert, to expect God to do something new.

Historically, Advent was called “little Lent,” because both seasons were about repentance in preparation for receiving God’s revelation. Jesus was born into the Jewish community in a time and place when Jews were feeling the pangs of empire, the injustice and oppression of second-class citizenship. The more I read the gospels, the more parallels I see between the setting of Jesus’s life and ministry and our contemporary realities—increasing cost of living and wage stagnation, supply chain problems, the complex realities of racism and queer phobias and the violence waged against marginalized communities (not to mention the spiritual/emotional/physical violence too many people experience in their own homes and families). It gives me some empathy for those who longed to see the Messiah, a powerful ruler who would right what was wrong; sometimes, I’d sure love to see that, too. But that powerful

messianic figure isn’t exactly what God had in mind; our tradition tells us that God slipped into the world as a vulnerable child rather than a well-armed ruler. In order to see a God who enters the world in such a tender and subtle way, it will require us to adjust our expectations and our preparations.

This Advent, I am leaning into the idea of a “little Lent” and invite you to join me on this *journey* (see what I did there?!). I’m making a few small changes in my daily routines to include more space for spirituality and self-care. It’s easy for me to get distracted by all the feel-good holiday movies and the magical joy of twinkle lights, especially when I look around and see how much suffering there is in the world. When things feel out of control, I’d rather escape into the fantasy of another Christmas movie or a video game or a sugary snack. In the real world, life isn’t always fair and people aren’t always kind. We don’t always get what we want for Christmas, whether it’s a kiss beneath the mistletoe or the newest gaming system or peace on earth. But the promise of Christmas isn’t a Hallmark happy ending; it’s the deep and abiding hope, joy, peace, and love that comes from finding God in the unlikelyst of places. We will always find Christ’s light in the places most ignored by the trappings of consumerism: among the poor, the marginalized, the lonely, the fearful.

That’s exactly why I love Advent. It is the time when we remember the promises of God, that “the people walking in darkness will see a great light (Isaiah 9:2),” and that “God [pulls] the powerful from their thrones and [lifts] up the lowly (Luke 1:52).” The universe is pregnant with possibility, and so we prepare our hearts and our lives to participate in the new Kin-dom that is coming.

Have a blessed Advent, good people!

Love,
Courtney



**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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CONGREGATION PRESIDENT

By Susan Volentine

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



I hope everyone had a wonderful Thanksgiving. It is so wonderful that we were able to gather in the church to celebrate Thanksgiving together as a church family. Now we are looking forward to Christmas, and we will spend the Sundays of Advent together and Christmas Eve as well. I am so glad I can celebrate the holidays with my church family.

Thanks to everyone who participated in the Congregational meeting on November 14 where we approved the safe church policy. The safe church task force is happy that one of our tasks is completed (at least for now) and the task force will next look at physical safety and emergency preparedness.

During the fire drill on November 14, we all had the experience of going out the exit doors from the sanctuary. Now if we ever need to exit the building quickly, we know that those doors are available to us. The safe church task force will be looking at many ways of improving our safety.

Please send any concerns or suggestion to me at:

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



Book Club will be meeting at Marlowe's Tavern (near the church) on Shallowford Rd. on the corner of Sandy Plains Rd. The book for review is "Finding Dorothy" by Elizabeth Letts.

Tuesday, December 7, 7:00 p.m.

**For more information contact:
Fran Howard**

roberthow@aol.com

STEWARDSHIP

Anne Mooney, Duke Yaguchi, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com



2 Corinthians 9:6-7 (*Contemporary English Version*)

⁶ Remember this saying,

*"A few seeds make
a small harvest,
but a lot of seeds make
a big harvest."*

⁷ Each of you must make up your own mind about how much to give. But don't feel sorry that you must give and don't feel that you are forced to give. God loves people who love to give.

Commitment season has ended at Pilgrimage and Advent is upon us. By the time this newsletter is published we will have hung the greens and kicked off the Advent season. Thanksgiving is past and we are looking forward to the birth of the Christ Child.

In looking back, I am grateful for the gracious giving of so many at Pilgrimage. Looking ahead I am excited about the possibilities our giving can produce. Our gifts of time, talent, and treasure when gathered together can bring about a larger harvest of love and welcome. The work of many prevents burn out of a few and the work remains cheerful.

If you have not completed a time and talent survey or made a pledge, please pick one up from the table in the narthex of the church. You can also reach out to Lynne our Administrative Assistant, and she will drop one in the mail to you.

There are many ways and many reasons to give of your time, talent, and treasure. Your cheerful gifts help keep us together as a family of faith and as a testimony of God's love in our community.

CHRISTIAN ED

Janet Derby

pilgrimageucc@gmail.com

Advent Devotions

We are pleased that during Advent, our daily devotions have returned. Much appreciation goes to our devotion writers. If you are not currently receiving these via email and would like to, email the Pilgrimage office, office@pilgrimageucc.org, and request to be added to the list.

Adult Sunday School is Back!

During Advent, Rev. Courtney will lead a "sermon talk-back" series, where each week participants will be invited to bring questions and thoughts about the Scripture and/or the sermon. Our curiosity will lead the discussion. Any additional materials will be provided either in print copy or electronically, such as extra research materials that didn't make it into the sermon. Bring your own interpretations, your questions, your disagreements--we make meaning together, and wisdom bubbles up among us!

Because of handbell practice and to allow those who wish to join online time to get home, the sessions began at 12:15 pm beginning on November 28. You are welcome to join in person or via Zoom. Please contact Janet Derby (derbjm@gmail.com) or Rev. Courtney (pastor@pilgrimageucc.org) if you are interested in being on the mailing list for this class.

Christmas Eve Pageant

We have begun preparations for the Christmas Eve family service which will take place at 4:30 or 5:00 PM on Friday, December 24. (Watch your email for specific times which are currently being determined.)

The children will have socially distanced rehearsals on December 5th and 12th, and an additional one the week of December 19.

Please contact Janet Derby (derbjm@gmail.com) if your child or youth would like to take part.



CLIMATE CHANGE – A Christian Concern

By Hugh Lowrey

As we're aware, representatives of 197 countries met in Glasgow in November to seek ways to minimize climate change. The goal, as the British hosts termed it, was "keep 1.5 alive", a reference to the goal of the Paris meeting in 2015, to hold the average atmospheric temperature increase, over the whole world, to no more than 1.5° Celsius (2.7° Fahrenheit) above pre-industrial levels.

The conference was to end on November 12 but was extended for 24 hours because there was general dissatisfaction with its accomplishments. Several additional national commitments came on the last day, but not enough to achieve the "1.5" temperature limit. If every nation delivered on its promise, the average increase in atmospheric temperature in 2100 would be about 2.4 °C (4.3°F) – a level expected to be catastrophic. However, the temperature may be kept lower if agreements that were not part of the official action of COP26, among smaller groups of nations, are adhered to, and if there are enough more commitments at a meeting planned for 2022. To hold this meeting after only one more year was a decision intended to help get the world back closer to "1.5".

A commitment to "phase out coal usage and inefficient fossil fuel subsidies", which would have been a major step, was altered when India, backed by China, objected. It was re-worded, "phase down coal usage and phase out inefficient fossil fuel subsidies." In India, coal mining is extensive and fuels virtually all of the country's industry. It makes up about half of the freight carried by Indian railroads. There is hope for this situation, however, because both India and China have terrible urban air pollution problems, with heavy public pressure to clean up. Most air pollution comes from burning coal, so there is more impetus to phase out coal than climate change alone.

WORSHIP

Diane Reese, Chair

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com



We are grateful for the guidance and inspirational leadership of Rev. Courtney Jones. During Advent, Courtney will hold Vespers services as a quiet, reflective time to gather via Zoom on Sunday evenings at 5:30 p.m. The Hanging of the Green service was held on Sunday, November 28. Other special services this month are Blue Christmas on Thursday, December 2nd at 7:00 p.m. and the two Christmas Eve services on December 24th at 5:00 p.m. and 10:00 p.m.

Thank you to the dedicated volunteers who came volunteered Saturday, November 27, to prepare the sanctuary the day before for our Hanging of the Green service.

Our sincere thank you to Rev. Trish Greeves who led us in worship at both services on Sunday, November 21st while Rev Courtney was on vacation.

The piano music provided by our music director, Matthew Raisky, has been such a beautiful part of our worship services. Matt has begun rehearsing with the members of the Harper Williams Handbell Choir. Many of us are looking forward to more musical offerings to enhance our worship services during Advent.

Thank you to the scripture readers for the month of November. They were:

November 7 - Anne Mooney and Auggie Jones
November 14 - Laurie Spencer and Pat Kask
November 21 - Syd Bowcott and Constance Blair
November 28 - Michelle Brumfield and Molly Moss

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

The Advent Candle Lighters for the First Sunday of Advent, November 28th were Sharon Getty and Noel and Ric Reitz.

Last, but not least, we would like to thank all of the volunteers who help in our weekly worship services from the tech support folks, to other adults who fill in as volunteers when needed; and also to the children and youth who help make worship a peaceful experience.

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 2 at 7:00 p.m.

Everyone, regardless of church background (or lack of it), is welcome.

Community Support



We will be collecting gift cards from Walmart and Target for Family Promise graduates in the amount of \$20 to \$50 beginning Sunday, December 5. These gift cards will assist the families who are beginning to get back on their feet after being homeless have a cheerful Christmas. Your generous donations will help them to afford to provide a little more joy for their families during this season of giving.

There is a box on the table in the Narthex where you can place your donations.

Thank you for your support.

Rita Mehlan

DEACONS

By Juliann Heilhecker & Stephen Williams
Co-chairs
pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com



On Sunday, December 5th, we have the privilege of honoring one of our own.

In this day and age, we are bombarded with negative news on our TV's, tablets, computers, and phones. What we don't hear about enough, are the good deeds and kindness and generosity of our fellow people. Love can overcome hate. Love can shed light in the darkness. There is hope, joy, peace and love in our world if we are willing and able to see it and be it.

On Sunday, December 5, at 9:30 AM, we will honor Lois Dischinger who is the embodiment of love, generosity, kindness and humility. She served as deacon in our community for more years than I can count. The deacons of past and present have written letters and anecdotes for Lois, and we put them together along with a gift.



If you would like to write a note to Lois, please feel free and we will add it to her gift on Sunday. Please join us in celebrating Lois' service.

Juliann Heilhecker
Deacons Co-Chair
pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com

December Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

12/03 Chris Shiver
12/07 Amy Jones
12/15 Maggie McMahill
12/15 John Roth
12/22 Patrick Prahl
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

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

If we missed someone, please let Lynne know at: office@pilgrimageucc.org

STAFF

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|---|---|
| Pastor Music Director Administrative Assistant | Rev. Courtney Jones Matthew Raisky Lynne Buell |
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Pilgrimage UCC's Emails

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|----------------------------|--|----------------------|--|
| 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 |
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| Deacons: | pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com | Parish Life: | pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com |

Meeting Schedule for Committees & Small Groups

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|---|---|
| Book Club via Zoom (Fran Howard) | 1st Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m. |
| Pilgrimage Council (Susan Volentine, 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

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| Dec. | 5 | Worship—Advent 2 8:30 & 10:00AM Communion (both services) |
| Dec. | 12 | Worship—Advent 3 8:30 & 10:00 a.m. |
| Dec. | 19 | Worship—Advent 4 8:30 & 10:00 a.m. |
| Dec. | 26 | Worship 10:00 a.m. PFLAG Meeting (1:00 p.m.) |