

PILGRIM'S Progress

April 2024

*"There are many who say, "O that we might see some good! Let the light of your face shine on us, O LORD!"
Psalm 4:6*

PASTOR

Rev. Courtney Jones

pastor@pilgrimageucc.org



Dear Beloved,

Christ is risen!

We had a wonderfully challenging Lent, and now we get to bask in the hope of resurrection. Don't forget that Christ appeared again and again, slowly revealing himself to his friends and followers. So if your Easter is a slow one, you are in good company. I encourage you to pause, to notice, to see the people/places/relationships that need resurrection. Speak life into those places; invite the risen Christ into those places in radical solidarity. And be the love of Christ for one another—we are the hands and feet of the Risen One in this hurting and broken world.

Thanks to all of you who helped make the sanctuary beautiful, who brought food for Easter brunch, and hid eggs and the thousand things that help us celebrate the holiest day of the year with joy and whimsy. For our musicians, those who helped set up and tear down outside, and all who showed up to be church together—thank you. It was a glorious day,

and I hope you are all still reveling in the success of your efforts.

Happiest happy Easter, dear ones. God loves you, and so do I.

Love,
Courtney



PUCC Vision Statement

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

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Pilgrimage
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

COUNCIL MODERATOR

Ken Moss

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



Happy April, Pilgrimage! I hope this message finds your spirit reinvigorated following the Easter season. Christ's promise of everlasting life seems to be everywhere I turn this Spring. Bold flashes of color from tulips, new blooms from trees and bushes, not to mention all the songbirds returning to make the neighborhood alive and noisy. The world seems to have exploded back into life post-winter with a frenzy!

In fact, frenzy seems to be the correct word to describe events right now. This ramping back up to full engagement with the world can create a lot of stress for everyone. As the school year winds down, children of all ages are focused on completing their end of year projects so they can advance to the next challenge. Families may be looking ahead to the rest of the year realizing we are over $\frac{3}{4}$ of the way done with 2024 and wondering how they are going to meet all their family obligations (graduations, vacations, birthdays, etc.) with time already running out. I know from my perspective, spring has brought a renewed emphasis on work travel and some other projects which are creating challenges in my personal time management. How is it possible that spring can be so beautiful and yet so stressful?

Your council, too, is busy. Though the insurance claim has been successfully concluded, as I write we are still finalizing the plan for the Congregation's involvement in moving forward with the gift we have been given. The timing of the insurance claim is almost like a new chapter for Pilgrimage, a "Spring", if you will. Like Spring, there will be a frenzy of activity associated with planning for how to best use our gift and it comes with a promise of renewed "life" for our church and its mission. Also, like Spring, it is likely to produce some stress as we work to agree on the best way forward.

So, as we move into Spring, I will close with saying my spirit does feel renewed and reinvigorated. I also feel all the stress associated with the frenzy of activity as life—personal & professional—seems to erupt into action before my very eyes. I feel the pressure of good stewardship of the insurance claim. The question is how best to manage these competing feelings? One of the best ways for me to manage these competing feelings is to prioritize my spiritual reinvigoration to manage the

stress of the rest of life. Communing with friends and reflecting on lessons of love and hope while sitting in church is stress relieving and reinvigorates me for the week. Sundays become a "mini-Spring," if you will. You are each part of my weekly renewal of spirit, and I hope I can be a small part of that for each of you, too. And on that note, I will close with my usual...hope to see you on Sunday."

WORSHIP

Molly Moss & Melissa Fadeley, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com

Happy Easter!

How did you feel about our Lenten series, "Sin, Suffering, and Sacrifice"? Please let us know your thoughts...we're always happy to have feedback.

With Easter behind us, Pentecost is right around the corner, and soon we will be back to Ordinary Time and our ever-changing, always inspiring Summer Series!

We would like to thank all our March Scripture readers as well as our ushers and greeters.

Remember, if you would like to join either or both of these teams, just let Melissa or Molly know at:

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com

Molly, Worship Co-Chair

PARISH LIFE

Susan Volentine & Carol Hill, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com

We had a very successful and well-attended Easter Sunday! It looked like everyone enjoyed our Easter activities, too! Thank you to everyone who contributed donations and their time to make this such a successful and fun time. Pictures and more information will be posted on the Parish Life bulletin board in the Fellowship Hall very soon.

Our next event will be organizing the lunch for our next church retreat on Saturday, April 27. The link to our Sign-Up Genius will be sent out soon for folks to contribute a dish or dessert to share. Hope to see you then!

Susan & Carol, Parish Life Co-Chairs

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Janet Derby

pilgrimageucce@gmail.com



Mark your calendars for this year's Vacation Bible School, which will take place the week of July 22-26. If you are interested in helping out, please contact Janet Derby at pilgrimageucce@gmail.com.

Registration forms for children aged 3 through grade 5 are available now, both in the Narthex and on-line. You can also register by emailing your child's name, age/grade, and t-shirt size to pilgrimageucce@gmail.com.

VBS T-shirt Design

Again this year, we are looking for children or youth to submit ideas for our VBS t-shirts. The design should be in bold outlines – it will all be in one color, and small details don't show well. If we get multiple designs, I may try to put them together as a kind of collage, so the simpler the better.

This year's theme is *Believe it or not Bible Stories*. So, have them think about a design that indicates God surprising us or the idea of miracles or mystery or investigation. You can also read them some of the stories we are going to hear, and they can draw a picture of one of them. This is the list:

- Genesis 11:1-9 – The Tower of Babel
- Numbers 22:21-35 – Balaam's Donkey
- I Kings 17:8-16 – The Never-ending Jars of oil and flour
- John 2:1-11 – Jesus Turns Water into Wine
- Acts 16:16-40 – Paul and Silas praying in prison and the earthquake sets them free

Drawings can be brought to the church or scanned in, and send it to pilgrimageucce@gmail.com.

Please submit by April 21.

Faith Formation

Do you ever wonder what the children do when they leave the sanctuary after Children's time? Sometimes they do science experiments to demonstrate some aspect of the Bible story. In the last few weeks, they have colored pretzels to mark the journey toward Easter and participated in some parts of a seder meal to learn about the last supper Jesus had with his disciples. They were not excited about the smell of the horseradish, though they did like the apple butter substituting for the haroseth on the matzoh.



STEWARDSHIP

Greg Kask, Duke Yaguchi, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com



Spring has sprung! The Lord has Risen! Thank you to all of you who have filled out the Time and Talent Survey. Committee Chairpersons will be contacting you soon to tell you about the many possibilities where your talents and interests can be placed in service of others.

For those of you who missed the survey, it's never too late to raise your hand. There are additional written surveys available in the Narthex.

For those of you who attend on-line, there are many ways to volunteer virtually as well. Simply contact one of the Stewardship Co-chairs, Greg Kask or Duke Yaguchi and they'll be happy to connect your talents with the appropriate committee.

Peace be with you all.

Your brothers in Christ,

Duke and Greg

MISSIONS

Cindy Westlake, Chair

pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com



Your generosity is boundless! You donated so many items to Lost-n-Found Youth that we are still counting! We will let you know the final count soon.

It's hard to believe that we're already thinking about the end of the school year! In April, we will be collecting new and gently used books for the students of Hasty Elementary School Pre-K to 5th grade. Your donated books will enable students to build their home library, and go a long way to helping increase literacy. Picture books to easy chapter books to young adult fiction – we need them all! Note that the majority of their students are Hispanic. If anyone needs book suggestions, please see or contact Jamie Durkee at jjdurkee1@gmail.com.

The Missions Committee is looking for volunteers to help out with our on-going food and clothing donations for MUST Ministries. If you can sign up for one month this year in which you can deliver those items to the MUST Donation center, we can use your help. The donation center is located at 1280 Field Parkway, Marietta and is open Tuesday-Saturday from 9:00-5:00.

Please contact Cindy Westlake if you can help with this important mission work.

678-215-1451, or
woocjw@aol.com



APRIL 2024

**Book Club will be held on Tuesday,
April 2 @ 7:00 p.m. at the
home of Deb Loche.**

**The book for discussion is:
"The Collected Regrets of Clover"
By Mikki Brammer**

**If you have any questions,
please contact Fran Howard at:
roberthow@aol.com**



We will be hosting the families of Family Promise of Cobb County the week of April 14th through April 20th.

If you are able, this is a great opportunity to participate in one of our congregation's most meaningful ministries. Please consider giving of your time to share a meal, serve as an overnight host, or offer a gift card for breakfast and lunch. It's a beautiful experience and a chance to work together for the sake of Love.

Please consider how you can help with this important part of our missions program, and click on the Sign-Up Genius link below:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30E0A4BAEAF2CA4FC1-48754211-family/20312460#/>



**MUST
MINISTRIES**

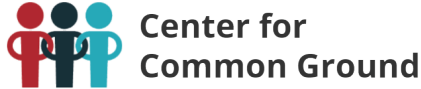
On Tuesday, April 30, 2024 we will serve the guests of MUST Ministries a nutritious lunch. The location is MUST Hope House, 1297 Bells Ferry Rd Marietta, GA 30066. We are expecting about 130 guests for lunch. We will need 4 -5 volunteers to help cook starting at 10:15 a.m. and 4 -5 volunteers to help serve starting at 11:30 a.m. If you are going to help cook and stay to serve please sign both sheets on the poster in the narthex. Volunteers must enter through the front door and clear security before coming to the kitchen.

Cash donations can be made to buy chicken and side items since we must do all cooking on site at MUST. Donations can be sent to the church by check, or you can make your payment through PayPal or Zelle. If you have any questions or want to volunteer please contact Dick or Rita Mehlan at:

re_mehlan@bellsouth.net

or

rmehlan@bellsouth.net



1st Quarter Giving Statements

PUCC Voting Rights Initiative Update As of March 27, 2024

In response to the fall 2023 survey of PUCC, Voting Rights was the 2nd highest priority for our congregation to address social justice issues. The new 2024 PUCC Voting Initiative is about to begin!

The GA primary election for U.S. President was on Tues, Mar 12. Primaries for **ALL** other elected officials (for local, county, state, & Federal) in GA is on **Tues, May 21**.

The PUCC Voting Rights Initiative as of now will focus on getting out the vote of all GA citizens by writing post cards, phone calling, perhaps sending texts, etc. Please share your ideas for other ways we can have a positive impact on community participation in voting. We will also be notifying folks of important dates and events such as candidate forums where the people running for office in your districts, precincts, etc. will be answering your questions.

Our **first event, a Postcard Writing Party**, will be on Wed, April 3, at 7pm at the church. Ann Baker will bring all the materials needed as well as some food and drinks. Anyone who wants to bring snacks and drinks is invited to do so. Also, if you have Forever stamps or any 53 cent stamps to donate, please bring them.

If you want to be involved in this initiative, please let **Ann Baker** (annbaker5@verizon.net) know so she can include you on Voting Initiative emails.

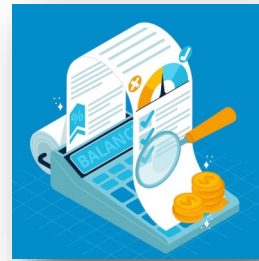
Important upcoming dates:

Apr.3, at 7pm at the church – Postcard writing party – All are invited

May 21 – Primary for all elected officials in GA except for U.S. President

P.S. PUCC Voting Rights Initiative Partner is the outstanding national, nonprofit, 501(c)(3) organization, The Center for Common Ground. Click below for more information:

<https://www.centerforcommonground.org/reclaim-our-vote>



First Quarter Giving statements will be distributed in April. Please review them for accuracy and reach out to our Financial Secretary, Anne Mooney at:

Pilgrimageuccfinsec@gmail.com

Since the New Year, we have been posting receipts in our new reporting system, REALM. If your email is on file, your report will be distributed to you via your email.

April Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

- 04/08 Stephen Williams
- 04/10 Carol Reed
- 04/10 Shelby Reitz
- 04/14 Skyra Loche
- 04/15 Gabriela Mills
- 04/18 Teresa Scates
- 04/19 Noah Reed
- 04/19 Marc Mills
- 04/23 Syd Bowcott
- 04/27 Olivia Roth
- 04/29 Karen Clark

ANNIVERSARIES

- 04/24 Ric & Noel Reitz
- 04/30 Adrian & Rachel Puente

If we missed someone, email Lynne at:

office@pilgrimageucc.org

TREASURERS

Amy Jones, Treasurer
 Rochelle Lofstrand, Asst. Treasurer
pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com



This month, we have reports for February and YTD 2024 income and expenses. We have now migrated our processes to Realm Accounting so the format of the reports is different. Feedback is welcome.

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ
Operating Fund P&L Summary

Date Range: Feb 1st 2024 - Feb 29th 2024 | Filtered by: Fund

Accounts	Actual Feb 01, 2024 - Feb 29, 2024	Budget Feb 01, 2024 - Feb 29, 2024	Budget Over/Under Feb 01, 2024 - Feb 29, 2024
Revenues			
General Fund	17,095.07	19,846.99	(2,751.92)
Total Revenues	\$ 17,095.07	\$ 19,846.99	(\$ 2,751.92)
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	11,383.91	11,393.07	9.16
Pastor Expenses	1,508.34	467.50	(1,040.84)
Properties	3,254.71	4,288.71	1,034.00
Worship Expenses	225.00	1,021.66	796.66
Communications, Admin & Office	1,643.97	3,790.67	2,146.70
Missions	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Christian Education	90.00	216.66	126.66
Other Expenses	1.29	33.33	32.04
Total Expenses	\$ 21,107.22	\$ 24,211.60	\$ 3,104.38
Net Total	(\$ 4,012.15)	(\$ 4,364.61)	\$ 352.46

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ
Operating Fund P&L Summary

Date Range: Jan 1st 2024 - Feb 29th 2024 | Filtered by: Fund

Accounts	Actual Jan 01, 2024 - Feb 29, 2024	Budget Jan 01, 2024 - Feb 29, 2024	Budget Over/Under Jan 01, 2024 - Feb 29, 2024
Revenues			
General Fund	49,663.07	39,693.98	9,969.09
Total Revenues	\$ 49,663.07	\$ 39,693.98	\$ 9,969.09
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	21,313.48	21,331.81	18.33
Pastor Expenses	2,857.87	935.00	(1,922.87)
Properties	9,547.28	11,655.21	2,107.93
Worship Expenses	650.00	2,043.32	1,393.32
Communications, Admin & Office	2,340.10	4,581.34	2,241.24
Missions	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Christian Education	165.00	433.32	268.32
Other Expenses	6.28	66.66	60.38
Total Expenses	\$ 39,880.01	\$ 44,046.66	\$ 4,166.65
Net Total	\$ 9,783.06	(\$ 4,352.68)	\$ 14,135.74

Here are some notes on the February YTD expense variances:

Through February, giving is roughly \$10,000 ahead of schedule. There may be other months that come in lower but so far, we're doing quite well.

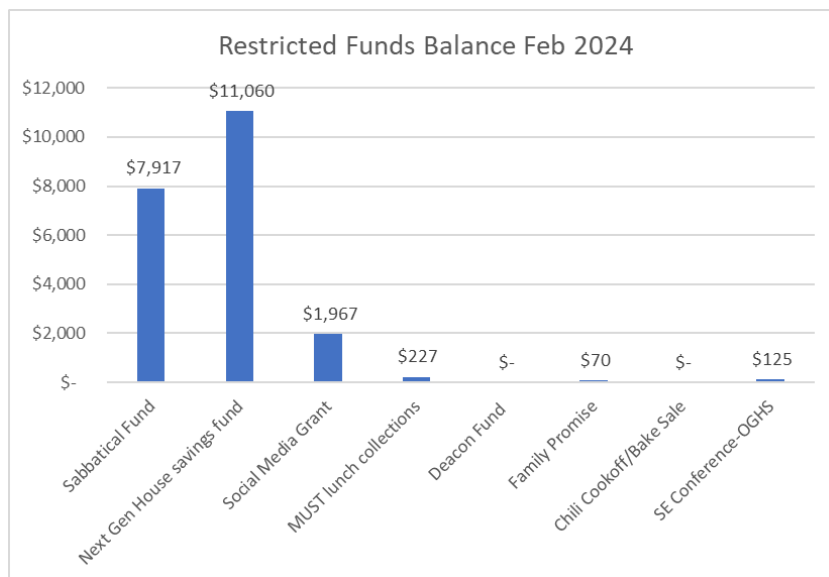
Pastor expenses are high due to the full program fees for her study program coming due in February. Those expenses were planned evenly through the year.

Properties expenses are low due primarily due to planned special projects that haven't begun yet. Spending may pick up in later months.

Worship expenses are low primarily due to not yet staffing for the planned A/V role.

Communications, Admin & Office expenses are low due to the computer purchase coming in lower than planned.

At the end of February, we had \$51,942 in our bank accounts. Our restricted funds account balance is \$21,365 leaving us with a balance of \$30,577 in our Operating Funds. Our Restricted Funds Balance details are shown below:



As you are all aware, the Insurance Claim has now been paid. We received two checks, one for \$350,000 and one for \$192,460.98. They were received in March and will be shown in reports starting next month. They are going into new insured, interest bearing accounts so their reporting will be separate from the Operating Fund and the Restricted Fund accounts.

Update on our IRS penalty issue: I called them back in early February and determined that we needed to send our request to waive the penalty to a different address than where I sent the documentation in December. I created another letter and attached all previous correspondence and documentation and sent it out certified mail on Friday February 2. If the penalty is not waived, we will still owe approximately \$4,045. We have received a letter dated February 13, 2024 that states they haven't resolved the matter and will contact us within 60 days with our reply. I will update everyone once more information is available.

All treasurer related requests should be sent to pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com. Both Rochelle and I have access to that account so we will each be able to respond. If you have any questions or concerns, please don't hesitate to reach out.

Amy Jones

STAFF

Pastor Music Director Accompanist Administrative Assistant	Rev. Courtney Jones Asa Bradley Anna Mbiad Lynne Buell
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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 Moderator:	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-Asa Bradley:	abradi47@aol.com		

Meeting Schedule for Committees & Small Groups

Book Club via Zoom (Fran Howard)	1st Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.
Pilgrimage Council (Ken Moss, Moderator).....	Second Thurs. of the month—7:00 p.m.
Sandwich Club Support (Trish Greeves)	Monthly—3:00 p.m. Saturday
Spiritual Seekers' Group (Laurie Spencer)	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

April	7	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Communion (Both Services) Choir Rehearsal (11:30 a.m.)
April	14	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Missions Comm. Mtg (9:15 a.m.) Family Promise Host Week Begins
April	21	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Choir Rehearsal (11:30 a.m.)
April	28	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) PFLAG (1:00 p.m.)