



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



Just Who are We Anyway. . .

The first thing we read in our sacred story is that God "created the heavens and the earth." In the sacred story of creation, we are told that we are created in the likeness of the Creator.

The most amazing thing is that there is *anything* at all. The next amazing thing is that we are a part of it and have consciousness to know that we are a part of it.

We can live sinking into it, being absorbed by the needs to eat, needs for security, the drive to procreate (like all other lower living forms around us), or we can maintain a conscious distance and become observers and players in the dance of creation.

Most people forgo the human capacity for conscious living and succumb to the daily demands and distractions of just getting by. Even though we are supposedly the most advanced civilization that ever has been, and we have technologies that previous generations would think miraculous, we are the most medicated and distracted people ever. With all our advancements, suicide and depression are epidemics. We self-medicate through various legal and illegal substances.

We lose ourselves in time/awareness killing activities like celebrity fascination, entertainment distractions, buying into the cultural game of "getting ahead," all insuring we stay safely in a state of unconsciousness.

Our culture tells us to be good producers and tireless consumers. The better we are at producing and consuming, the more "successful" we are deemed to be. The problem is that even when people are really good at producing and consuming, they don't seem to be happy. Suicide and substance abuse are just as high among the high achievers in this value system as they are among the "failures."

It would seem that we were not created in the image and likeness of the "producer consumer" value system. It seems that we have forgotten that we are created in the image and likeness of the creative force of the universe. It is that breath that fills our lungs and seeks to be expressed in our living. We are created with a capacity for JOY! The one who created us and breathed joy-life into us is not glorified by us barely hanging on and getting by drugged, distracted and dumbed down. God is glorified in our living as we claim our "I am-ness" in Spirit and express our nature as creative loving joy filled people!

What an honor and pleasure it is to be part of this congregation's story! Please understand that I am here for you. Do not hesitate to

engage me. I am here for your spiritual growth, to engage you and helping you find and step into mission is life's main purpose. We are the children of God! We are the body of Christ! We are people of faith and hope in an age of despair, distraction and apathy! We need each other and the world needs us!

Blessings and Peace,
Pastor Phil

SE Conference Annual Meeting

Preparing Well for Who God
Is Calling Us to Be



Registration is now open for the 60th Annual Meeting of the SE Conference UCC in Atlanta! First Congregational UCC in Atlanta is hosting beginning Friday, August 21st at 1PM. Friday evening, there is the 60th Anniversary Banquet as part of the Annual Meeting, but you can register for the banquet even if you are not attending the Annual Meeting. There is detailed information and a number of options available by clicking on the registration button using the link below:

[Annual Meeting - SEUCC](#)

We look forward to getting together with members and clergy within the SE Conference!

Many Gifts One Spirit

Thank you for your generosity! Together, we donated 38 backpacks and 143 packs of school supplies to 'Kids Care' for its back-to-school giveaway. Your support helped many Cobb County students start the school year prepared and encouraged.

Our next special drive will be in October, when we will support "Warm Up for MUST" by collecting coats, hats, scarves, and other cold-weather items. In the meantime, the needs of our neighbors continue. Please remember the bins in the entryway for clothing and non-perishable food donations for MUST. Their most-needed items include peanut butter, jelly, boxed noodles and grits, mac and cheese, and pasta sauce. Please see the flyer near the bins for additional items needed.

June and July exemplified our latest theme of "Many gifts, One spirit". This was embodied by new members joining; members being commissioned for pastoral search committee; installing of our newest council; enjoying special music by different members of our congregation.

Congratulations and welcome new members: Susanna and Mark Davis, Mark Drewry, Nancy Harrison, Anna Pieroni, Sam and Jaime Robards, Karen Roberts, Kendall and Jacob Thiessen, Sabrina Heller, Jake Daron, and Stephanie Parker. These new members bring with them diverse talents and gifts to our congregation from financial expertise to creative talents. We also commissioned our Pastoral Search Committee which is a very serious commitment to finding our next settled pastor that will lead us into our next chapter. Thank you, Melissa Delisle, Jeff Durkee, Lee Fadeley, Sabrina Heller, Ross, McDuffie, Anne Mooney, Stephanie Parker, (back-up: Bill Dischinger, and Clay Roth) for taking on this very important task.

I also want to thank Rochelle Lofstrand for filling in for Pastor Phil and preaching a very powerful sermon on June 28 as we celebrated the anniversary of becoming Open and Affirming.

The choir takes some much-needed time off in the summer, but that does not mean there was not some very special music to be performed by our very own gifted musicians in our congregation. Thank you to Bill Dischinger for singing "God Bless the USA", Diane Reese for playing "My Soul Cries Out", and Jerry VanVickle & Cary Lee for performing their own soulful rendition of "Amazing Grace".

I am also very happy to announce that the choir will be back in full force for Rally Sunday, August 9th.

Thank you to everyone for making our worship services spiritually meaningful!

Gratefully,

Juliann Heilhecker

What Is the Pastor-Parish Relations Committee?

The Pastor-Parish Relations Committee (PPRC) supports a healthy relationship between the pastor and congregation so our church's ministry can thrive. The committee serves as both an advisory group to the pastor and a support group for pastoral leadership, helping encourage open communication, shared expectations, and care for the well-being of both pastor and congregation.

- Share ideas, hopes, feedback, and concerns from the congregation with the pastor.
- Help interpret the pastor's roles, needs, boundaries, and leadership opportunities to the congregation.
- Provide a confidential, supportive space for listening, encouragement, and ministry planning.

The PPRC also offers a way for the congregation to suggest ministry opportunities, celebrate successes, provide constructive feedback, and express care for the pastor's spiritual, emotional, and personal well-being.

The committee is not a place for anonymous complaints, bypassing church decision-making processes, personal agendas, or opposition to the pastor's leadership. While the PPRC encourages reflection on our shared ministry, it does not lead or provide input for pastoral evaluations.

PPRC Committee as of May 2026:

Susan Volentine, Lee Fadeley, Anne Mooney, Amy Jones, and Rochelle Lofstrand.

Parish Life Event

In celebration of the beginning of a new Faith Formation year, Parish Life is hosting a potluck lunch featuring chicken, side dishes, and desserts on 8/09.

We warmly invite everyone to join us for this special occasion.

Please use the SignUp Genius link below so that we know how to organize around what you are planning to bring:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C094BAEAB2DA6FB6-64856154-rally/14624646#/>

We look forward to celebrating with you!

Carol and Susan
Parish Life Co-Chairs

Vacation Bible School *by Janet Derby*

I read recently that **Exploring Pandemic Impact in Congregations study** found that pre-pandemic, 36% offered VBS, but at the height of the COVID pandemic, only 17% offered VBS. By 2022, there was some increase, but still only 31% of congregations were hosting this type of activity.



We are fortunate at Pilgrimage to have a congregation that enables us to offer this ministry to our children. This year, another great VBS is in the books! We welcomed 24 children with the assistance of 23 adult and youth volunteers. During the week, we heard parables of Jesus, enjoyed delicious snacks, made fun crafts and learned some wonderful songs. In addition, we planted zinnia seeds that we donated to a church's community garden, put together hygiene kits for MUST, made welcome signs for the church, decorated pots for our volunteers, and made pet beds for an animal shelter.

We are grateful for everyone who helped make the week so joyful, meaningful, and memorable. Thank you to our children, families, volunteers, and congregation for sharing your time, gifts, and enthusiasm—we look forward to seeing how these seeds of faith, service, and community continue to grow!

Christian Education *by Janet Derby*

Confirmation Class

Confirmation classes will begin at the end of summer for students in grades 7-12. Our kickoff will be a family picnic and opening session for the youth. The date and time will be determined soon. After that, the class will meet once a month after the 10AM worship service. It is a 2-year program which will run through May 2028. Please let Janet Derby know if you have any questions and if you think your youth would be interested in being a part of it.

Rally Sunday

Rally Sunday will be held on August 9 as we celebrate the beginning of a new Faith Formation year. We're excited to share that several events will be taking place that day, and we'd love for you to join us.

- The choir will return!
- Bibles will be presented to children and youth
- *So What?* Sunday school will be offered following the 10:00 worship service*
- Potluck sponsored by Parish Life following the 10AM service

* So What? Sunday School

For those who wish to have a further discussion about what was heard during worship – here is your chance. Pastor Phil will lead a Sunday school class during August and September which will focus on the Scripture and sermon of that day. A brief introductory meeting about this opportunity will take place on Rally Sunday before the potluck.

Book Club

Book Club resumes Tuesday, August 4! They will meet at the church in the Sanctuary at 7PM, and Susan Volentine will lead the discussion about "We All Live Here" by JoJo Moyes. Please consider books you think the group would be interested in for October and November. If you bring snack, we ask that you leave it in the kitchen so that we do not disturb the outside group meeting in the Fellowship Hall.



THE SEEKERS

The Seekers Group will meet next on Tuesday, August 25th 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, August 22nd 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."

August EVENTS

- 08/04 Book Club 7PM
- 08/09 Rally Sunday & Potluck
- 08/11 Council Mtg 7PM
- Sandwich Club 08/22 3PM
- Search Committee Mtg 08/24 7PM
- 08/25 Seekers Group 7PM



STAFF

Interim Pastor, Rev. Phil Price

<mailto:pastor@pilgrimageucc.org>

Music Director, Jake Daron

Accompanist, Anna Mbiad

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BIRTHDAYS

08/03 Julia Shiver
08/14 Jennifer Brumfield
08/15 Eden White
08/24 Bruce Brumfield
08/25 Mark Davis
08/30 Laurie Spencer

ANNIVERSARIES

08/14 Kathleen & Bill McNulty
08/20 Amy & Wade Jones

If we missed someone, email Lynne at:
office@pilgrimageucc.org