

PILGRIM'S Progress

January 2023

I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. —JEREMIAH 29:11

PASTOR

Rev. Courtney Jones

pastor@pilgrimageucc.org



Dear Beloved,

Happy New Year! I hope your holidays were what you needed them to be and that 2023 is looking promising for you. On Christmas Eve, I preached an extemporaneous sermon reminding us all to “be not afraid.” This holiday season, and for some of us the entire year of 2022, seemed to be especially fraught with complications. There has been a lot of grief and disappointment—heightened, perhaps, by the fact that we had high hopes for how life would look post-pandemic.

The miracle of Christmas is that God saw how hard it is to be human and still chose to experience the totality of this human condition. The opportunity of Christmas is to remember that Christ teaches us that relationship is the heart of the spiritual life: that God so desired to be in relationship with humanity that God chose to put on human skin. The lesson of Christmas, then, is that when we are scared, grieving, disappointed—the times when we’d most like to run away and isolate—those are the exact moments when we are called to lean into relationship. Those are the moments when we need to dig deep and find the courage to reach out, because those are the moments when grace is most available.

In the new year, I hope you’ll resolve to reach out and utilize your church family to support you in the ups and downs of our human existence. Please call, text, or email me; you have no idea how much I want to walk with you through good times and not-so-good times. Reach out to your deacon and/or to your friends in the congregation. Participate in something new and make some new relationships. We are in this together, and we need each other to survive.

I’m always happy to make appointments to meet in person or on Zoom, but I also keep regular hours at church, during which time you are welcome to drop in. My new office hours are as follows:

- Monday 12:30-3:30
- Wednesday 3:30-5:00 and 6:00-7:00
- Thursday 12:30-4:00

God loves you, and so do I.

Courtney



We will have one service at 10:00 a.m. on New Year's Day, Sunday, January 1, 2023, and Communion will be served.

So let's celebrate the New Year and pass on our traditional Sunday attire by wearing comfy pajamas--keeping in mind that this service is live-streamed in prime time!

Of course if you prefer, you can wear your conventional apparel.

Either way, we hope you will attend worship and join everyone to ring in a new year in reverence and fellowship.



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.

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Pilgrimage
UNITED CHURCH
OF CHRIST

CONGREGATION PRESIDENT

By Rochelle Lofstrand

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



STEWARDSHIP

Anne Mooney, Duke Yaguchi, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com



I hope you all had a wonderful Advent and Christmas! I know that I am thankful to have Pastor Courtney back in the pulpit and a beautiful baby boy joining the Pilgrimage Family.

Council has been preparing for our Congregational Meeting on January 29th in between the 10:00 AM service and the Chili Cook-Off. We will be voting on the 2023 Mission Spending Plan as well as a Vision Statement that will help us focus our work for the next couple of years.

Council has not yet approved a vision statement but our current rough draft is:

An Open and Affirming faith community where we live out Christ's love as our authentic selves through acceptance, learning, service, and action.

I'd love to hear any feedback you have about this statement and whether you think this is the direction PUC should be heading in the future. I'll be putting information together for a separate eblast prior to our January Council meeting so that I can gather your feedback and present it to Council.

Blessings to you in the new year!

Rochelle



New Year—New Us!

As 2023 approaches, Pilgrimage is getting on the "New Year, New Me" bandwagon...well, just regarding our website.

We'd like to do a little refresh and are looking for volunteers to provide statements of why

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ is so important to you. We would also like a photo of you that you have or we can have our church photographer take one following worship one Sunday.

If you are interested in being featured on our website, please email Lynne at office@pilgrimageucc.org, or chat with Trudy in person before or after worship.

⁴ I thank my God always for you, because of God's grace that was given to you in Christ Jesus. ⁵ That is, you were made rich through him in everything: in all your communication and every kind of knowledge, ⁶ in the same way that the testimony about Christ was confirmed with you. ⁷ The result is that you aren't missing any spiritual gift while you wait for our Lord Jesus Christ to be revealed. —1 Corinthians 1:4-7 CEB

Happy New Year!

We are so grateful to all of you for your pledges for 2023. We are also thankful for all of you who have stepped up to serve in leadership and volunteer service positions this past year. Like Paul says in his letter to the church in Corinth, we have been blessed through the gifts of our Creator, and our stewardship is a testimony of our gratitude and love for our church community.

Looking forward in 2023, we continue to seek a co-chair for Worship to assist Diane Reese. Please prayerfully consider if you are being called to assist in leading our Worship Ministry. This ministry has a deep bench of volunteers who help with ushering, greeting, decorating our sanctuary with banners, coordinating scripture readers, and meeting with Rev. Courtney, Asa, Anna, and the Worship Team to make sure our worship runs smoothly.

Beginning in February we will assemble a Nominating Committee to begin our search for our 2023-24 Council leadership.

Finally, if you have not made a pledge yet for 2023, it is not too late! We will be approving our Missing Spending Plan on January 29. Your pledges help us make wise budget decisions. You can find a pledge form on the table in the narthex. Simply place it in an offering plate or email our financial secretary, Rita Mehlan, to make your pledge. (pilgrimageuccfinsec@gmail.com)

With gratitude,

Anne Mooney and Duke Yaguchi
Stewardship Co-Chairs

CHRISTIAN ED

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



Michael the donkey told the tale from the animals' perspective with help from Cody the stable boy, Lena the angel, Ryan, playing both the star and Joseph, Audrey as Mary, Isaac as the messenger, and Jackson providing the narration.

Special thanks also to Morgan Jones for helping with rehearsals, Anna Mbiad for accompanying the children, Rochelle Lofstrand for choreographing our dancers, and Juliann Heilhecker for leading the bell choir.

Family Christmas Eve Service



Host Week January 8 - 15, 2023

Our Family Promise hosting week is quickly approaching! By working together we can make this another successful week.

One of my favorite parts of Christmas Eve is the lighting of the candles and singing *Silent Night*. It is a beautiful hymn which creates a sense of peace.

If you are preparing food, please note that we currently only have one family. This family is a mom, dad and baby. We will use gift cards to purchase food for the baby (7 months) once we meet the family and can determine their needs.

Yet when you consider the events of that first Christmas, it probably was not so peaceful or quiet. It likely was more like the family service with animals making all kinds of noise and humans not quite knowing how it would turn out.

There are also tasks that involve dinner hosts, overnight volunteers, and set-up and tear-down.

If there are any changes to the families that we are serving, we will contact you with updates.

Thank you so much for your continued support!



Please click below to select the slot that you would like to volunteer for:

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/30e0a4baeaf2ca4fc1-family2/20312460#/>

Questions can be directed to Sue Stanton at:

sstan35378@gmail.com

I want to thank our children and youth for bringing us the joyful story of that first Christmas. Atlas the cow, Theo the sheep, Eli the hamster, Matthew the owl, and

WORSHIP

Diane Reese, Chair

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com



We welcome back, Rev. Courtney Jones, as she returns from Family Leave! Everyone is so excited for you, Auggie, and sweet little Teddy. Courtney began leading services on Sunday, December 18th and we are so happy to have her back. Many thanks go out to Rochelle Lofstrand for her pastoral leadership on Advent 1 and Advent 3 for both worship services. Also, thank you to Rev. Tim Downs who led the services on Advent 2.

Advent was an incredible time for worship! On Saturday, Christmas Eve, the Family Service at 5:00 p.m. and the service of Lessons and Carols at 10:00 p.m. offered beautiful music led by our Music Director, Asa Bradley and our Accompanist, Anna Mbiad, which included the choir and the handbell choir.

The Blue Christmas service, on Thursday, December 1st, was very moving and inspirational. Thank you to Rev. Trish Greeves and the folks who helped with that service. The scripture readers were Anne Mooney, Ken Moss, Alicia Ottley, Laurie Spencer, and Cindy Westlake.

We would like to acknowledge the Scripture readers for the month of December:

- December 04: Michelle Brumfield & Joyanna Wyne
- December 11: Rochelle Lofstrand (both services)
- December 18: Syd Bowcott & Melissa Fadeley

Scripture readers for the Christmas Eve services were:

- 5:00 p.m. – Matthew Gula, Atlas Parker & Jackson Nichols
- 10:00 p.m. – Greg Kask, Pat Kask, Anne Mooney, Alicia Ottley, Noel Reitz, Dan Wilson, Duke Yaguchi

The worship committee is looking for volunteers to stay after the 10:00 service on Sunday, January 8th, to take down the tree, and pack the Chrismsons, wreaths, and creche in order to safely store these items until Advent 2023.

Please contact Diane Reese at:

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com

...if you can help.

If you are interested in being a scripture reader, an usher, or a greeter on a rotation schedule or just at times and dates you prefer, please email the worship committee at pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com.

Thank you to everyone who helps PUCC as needed for every worship service. One of the many volunteers who step up weekly include Bill Dischinger who cleans the sidewalks in the fall with his leaf blower every Sunday morning before the 8:30 service. He also makes sure the banners are hung every Sunday and represent the liturgical messages.

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.

MISSIONS

Cindy Westlake, Chair

pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com



Thank you to everyone who made our Angel Tree a success. We were able to provide gifts for 50 children at Simple Needs Georgia!

While we don't have a special project for January, remember that we are always looking for food donations for MUST Ministries.

Right now they are especially in need of cereal, pasta and pasta sauce, ramen noodles, peanut butter and rice (1-2 lb. Bags). Leave your donations at the box right inside the entryway.

PARISH LIFE

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



CLIMATE CHANGE – A Christian Concern

By Hugh Lowrey

Chili Cookoff & Bake Sale Fundraiser

Parish Life is hosting the 2023 Chili Cookoff and Bake Sale Fundraiser on Sunday, January 29!

Right after the 10:00 service, we will have a CHILI COOKOFF and BAKE SALE Fundraiser in the Fellowship Hall to help with our current church General Fund deficit!

You can make any type of chili - red meat, chicken, turkey, vegetarian, mild, spicy - it's a tasting, and a contest, as well as a fundraiser!

Please remember to bring cash or checks to stuff the jars to vote for your favorites, and to purchase the baked goods. (Sorry, no IOU's will be accepted!) Power strips will be provided for crockpots, as well as tasting cups and spoons.

Think of a good name for your chili, that's part of the fun!

A Signup Genius and more information will be coming out soon to sign up for desserts to bring for the bake sale.

Can't wait to see you there!

Please contact your Parish Life co-chairs with any questions, Carol Hill and Susan Volentine, at:

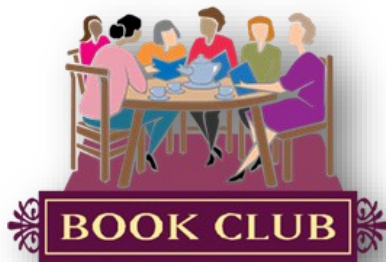
pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com

There is surprising news from Saudi Arabia and the oil states on the Persian Gulf. They apparently understand the dismal future prospect for sale of petroleum as the world's fuel, and they are ambitious to continue to occupy a powerful position in the fuel market, as it changes away from petroleum. They have begun preparation for the day when hydrogen could become a mainstay fuel. They see themselves as having potential advantages in producing it.

The combustion of hydrogen releases abundant energy, and the only by-product is water, but hydrogen is expensive to manufacture without producing greenhouse gas, and also is expensive to ship. Extracting "green" hydrogen (no greenhouse gas emission), from water takes lots of electric power. However, solar power is cheap and getting cheaper, and its interruption when the sun goes down may be no problem when the only purpose is manufacturing hydrogen. Few places in the world can offer the intense sunlight and endless space for solar panel farms of which the Arabs can boast.

Their alternate approach is to make "blue" hydrogen from natural gas. This is currently the cheapest approach but produces greenhouse gas that must be sequestered underground – a process yet to be perfected. To ease the shipping and handling problem, gaseous ammonia may be manufactured from hydrogen, and shipped instead. When ready to use the hydrogen, it can easily be extracted from the ammonia without emission of greenhouse gas.

These Arab states are vigorously fighting to keep petroleum on the market, but it is good to know that they recognize they are unlikely to succeed and are preparing an alternative. The only oil-rich country making no provision for the day its oil market dries up, is Russia. When asked about global warming, Putin has said that warming would benefit his country by making its cold places more inhabitable.



**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



Probability Group Fellowship

The Probability Group is meeting at the home of Dick Mehlan on Saturday, January 21, 2023 at 6:30 pm.

If you are interested in an evening of fellowship, food, good conversation and an exploration of probability, please contact the host, Dick Mehlan, at:

re_mehlan@bellsouth.net

...to RSVP.

Hope to see you there!



MUST Lunch

On Tuesday, January 31st, we will serve the guests of MUST Ministries a nutritious lunch. Lunch is served at:

MUST Hope House
1297 Bells Ferry Rd
Marietta, GA 30066

We will need 3 -5 volunteers to help cook starting at 10:15 a.m. and 3 -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

Deacons Fund

During the year when there are five Sundays in a month, we ask for your support and donate to the Deacon Fund. We will be receiving this offering on January 29. The Deacons Fund specifically helps those in need within the Pilgrimage community. You can help support each other by contributing to the Deacon Fund. You can mail a check to the church or use PayPal or ZellePay to send your donations. Please write "Deacons Fund " in the memo section of your payment. Thank you for your ongoing support!

Address questions or concerns to Juliann Heilhecker or Stephen Williams, Deacon Co-chairs, at:

pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com

STAFF

| | |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Pastor Music Director Accompanist Administrative Assistant | Rev. Courtney Jones Asa Bradley Anna Mbiad 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.

January Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

01/01 Megan Solomon
 01/07 Tony Prahl
 01/08 Lindsey O'Neill
 01/09 Mark Gomillia
 01/15 Polly Yaguchi
 01/17 Mia McMahill
 01/23 Chris Lumpkin
 01/25 Monty Wyne
 01/27 Dana Martin
 01/30 Clay Roth

ANNIVERSARIES

01/16 Pat & Greg Kask
 01/31 Dana & Dawn Martin

If we missed someone,
email Lynne at:

office@pilgrimageucc.org

The Month in Sundays

| | | |
|------|----|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Jan. | 1 | New Year's Day—Pajama Sunday! Worship (10:00 a.m.) Communion |
| Jan. | 8 | Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Take Down Christmas Decorations Family Promise Host Week Begins |
| Jan. | 15 | Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) |
| Jan. | 22 | Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) PFLAG Meeting |
| Jan. | 29 | Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Deacons Fund Special Offering Congregational Meeting (11:15 a.m.) Chili Cook-Off & Bake Sale |