



ANNUAL REPORT
2017-2018

An Open and Affirming Congregation

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**Pilgrimage United Church of Christ
Annual Report
2017-2018**

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PRESIDENT'S REPORT 2017-2018

To say the last year has been an eventful one at Pilgrimage could certainly be considered an understatement! Who could have possibly envisioned all the developments and changes that have come about since our last annual report?

Last summer we were just launching our 3R's facility improvement campaign, with the first phase involving a new heating & cooling system for the sanctuary. A great deal of hard work by the planning team and properties committee, combined with very generous financial support from the PUCC congregation, led to the successful installation of the new HVAC system before winter was upon us. In addition, the financial momentum continued as we were also able to raise the funds necessary to address some badly needed repairs and maintenance issues on our main building's exterior. While the 3R's project's third phase has turned out to be a bigger task than initially expected, some progress continues with needed repairs on the NGH and plans to refresh the current restroom facilities until we can finally look at "taking the big step" with the extensive fellowship hall/restroom remodeling initiative.

And, of course, we were all surprised last fall when Pastor Kim announced she was leaving Pilgrimage and accepting a call at a church in Asheville, NC. This news brought with it an entirely new set of challenges and priorities. Kim & Allen would be with us through the end of January . . . but there was so much to be considered and managed as the holidays approached. How do we best go about locating an interim? What support can we expect from the UCC Conference? How do we find supply ministers for the short term? How will Allen's departure affect our choir and the music program? And what about overall member morale, weekly attendance . . . and giving?

Thanks to a great measure of Divine guidance and an extraordinary response from our entire congregation, PUCC was able to overcome these challenges, address the needs and continue to move ahead. Many dedicated members stepped forward to serve on search committees, find (or serve as!) supply pastors, help lead the choir, handle worship service planning details, select music, etc., etc. and we still managed to provide Kim & Allen with a wonderful send-off as they headed for North Carolina. And, finally, after an intense search process, we were very fortunate to encounter Rev. Krista and are thrilled to have her serving as our intentional Interim Pastor. And, with a little luck, a new music director will also be in place by the end of the summer.

Yes, we've had a very challenging year but, in my opinion, our congregation has come through it all with flying colors. Many thanks to our excellent Council members . . . our officers, committee chairs and the many committee members who "make it happen" from Family Promise to Sunday School, from music to building maintenance, from finances to

deacon care, VBS, back-pack drives and wonderful social events. And, of course, thanks to Lynne for all her work in the office keeping us on track and organized. I know Trudy will do an outstanding job as your new Council president and, as we ramp up our efforts to search for a permanent pastor, I'm very optimistic about the year ahead for our PUCC community. As always, the church thanks you for your ongoing interest, commitment and support . . .

Ben Alspach
President

TREASURER'S ANNUAL REPORT 2017 - 2018

The 2017-2018 council year (July 1 to June 30), was a struggle of a financial period for Pilgrimage. Pledging for this period was down from the previous year as such we have been working to watch costs and where we could reduce expenses.

We did kick off the 3R's program and we were able to raise the money for the first two R's; Replacement of the HVAC unit in the main sanctuary \$15,328. The Repairs to the outside of the church new paint replacement of boards and caulking the building, \$13,700. We also raised money to pay for an architect to help with the third R, Renovation of the bathrooms and interior of the main building.

During this period, members additionally donated the following:

\$460	Neighbour's in Need
\$2,168	Deacons Fund
\$755	Christmas Fund
\$1,592	Youth Group

In addition, cash contributions were given for food for our MUST lunches, and members donated generously to other mission programs and sponsored vacation Bible school volunteers, OGHS, Flowers, Music and for the OCWM.

Geoff Heilhecker, treasurer

Financial Secretary's Report

2017-2018

Financial Secretary report for the 2017 – 2018 council year end.

History of General Fund pledges to Pilgrimage United Church of Christ since 2014.

Year:	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018
Pledging Families:	48	46	56	51	47
Pledge Total:	\$177,440	\$158,874	\$171,432	\$184,606	\$169,412
Total Contributions (including non-pledges):	\$201,684	\$222,093	\$229,617	\$203,876	TBD

The Donarius Organization Management software is still in use for contribution tracking, financial reports and statements. Quarterly statements will continue to be printed, and reports can be requested at any time.

The success of this position is due to the support and commitment from the counter team.

My sincere thanks to: Greg Kask, Jeff Durkee, Susan Volentine, Sarah Holliday, Carla Martin, and Bill & Kathleen McNulty.

Respectively submitted,
Rita Mehlman
Financial Secretary

Clerk's Annual Report
July 1, 2017 – June 30, 2018

Total Membership June 30, 2017	118
<i>New Members</i>	6
<i>Inactive Members Now Active</i>	1
 September 2017	
Helene O'Neill	
Karen Cox	
Joe Martin	
Carla Martin	
 January 2018	
Tom Oleksiak	
Cathe Simonson	
 Confirmations	 1
Danielle Cahn	
 Transfers	 11
Transfer to Inactive (5)	
Transfer to Former Members (6)	
 Deaths	 0
Marriages and Unions (0)	
Baptisms (4)	
 Total Membership June 30, 2018	 115 (Includes Confirmands)

Interim Pastor's Report: June 2018

The first 60 days serving as the Intentional Interim Pastor has been spirit-led, God-ordained and full of love mixed with grace. I have identified the days as 'getting familiar' with church administration, congregational needs, and church dynamics; as well as 'firming the foundation' by gaining understanding of Pucc ministries' mission and events.

1. **Getting Familiar** – I have acclimated to the administrative role of Interim Pastor due largely in part to the assembled team comprising of: Ben Alspach (President) and the Church Council, Geoff Heilhecker (Treasurer), Sarah Holliday and Diane Reese (Worship ministry), Chris Shiver and the Properties ministry, and Julia Shiver and the Deacons ministry. A huge amount of gratitude goes to Lynne Buell (Administrative Assistant) for support during this onboarding process and providing key information for the day to day, as well as historical context.
2. **Firming the Foundation** – I held meetings with specific ministries to gain insight of current and future calendar events. The meetings also identified areas of significance for further development, sustainability and/or assessing necessary program adjustment. As Interim Pastor, I will work with and support ministries to ensure events are executed as planned.
3. **3rd Quarter Goals Include:**
 - Worship series July 2018, Family and Friends Day on Sunday, July 29, 2018, and 'Worship through the Arts' on Sunday August 19, 2018. On those two special designated dates, there will be one worship service.
 - Inquirer's Class will be held for 2, and possibly 3, member candidates, on July 1, 2018 (date to be confirmed). The format of the class will be information regarding the UCC, the history of the church, and the ministries of Pucc while lunch is served. Class 1 will last about one hour. Class 2 will be open to the congregation and will focus on UCC in more detail in a game format led by Rev. Trish Greeves. Tentative dates will be August 12 or 19.
 - Meetings to be held in 3rd quarter include – Stewardship ministry, New Council President (Trudy Stoddert) and Finance (Geoff Heilhecker).

Again, to God be the Glory for being allowed to be part of the transitional journey. I am grateful that in such a short period of time I feel the presence of the Spirit among this congregation. This affirms the possibilities that God has in store something special, just for Pilgrimage.

Submitted in Peace,
Rev. Krista

CHRISTIAN EDUCATION REPORT 2017-2018

We owe many thanks to the members of the Christian Education Committee this year – Karen Clark, Lily Appleton, Steve Owens, Victoria Owens, and youth director, Wayne Scott. Beginning in July, Victoria will replace Anne Mooney as the co-chair overseeing the adult side of CE.

Sunday School

Seasons of the Spirit curriculum was again used during the year for our children. Our thanks go out to Wayne Scott, Janet Derby, and Paula Roberts for teaching our children and youth. Due to numbers, we had a difficult time getting much consistency in the children and youth area, but we had some special Sundays periodically when the classes met.

During the year, the Christian Education committee also facilitated the following educational opportunities:

- Adult Bible Study led by Steve Owens at 8:30 am on Sunday mornings
- Adult Sunday School that included Reader's Theater, Group Prayer, and a Lenten Study on Christian Discernment. Leaders included Kim Buchanan, Anne Mooney, Steve Owens, Rochelle Lofstrand, and Victoria Owens.
- Spiritual Seekers met monthly to study texts by Richard Rohr and Marcus Borg under the leadership of Trish Greeves
- A workshop on Spiritual Meditative and Prayer Practices by Victoria Owens
- A mid-week Disciple II course led by Victoria Owens
- Field trip opportunities to experience Taizé worship facilitated by Victoria Owens

Vacation Bible School

This year's VBS, with the theme of *Living Water*, was held in June of 2018 with 30 students. The children made 60 lunches for the MUST summer lunch program, planted flowers in the garden, worked on a new banner, and packed backpack items for the Backpack drive. Thanks also again go to the congregation for their support and to Kim Buchanan for again composing our theme song. We had 16 youth helpers and 16 adults, along with many sponsors and snack helpers.

New Leadership

Beginning in July, Victoria Owens will replace Anne Mooney as CE co-chair overseeing the adult side of Christian Education. Thanks to Anne for her service and dedication this year and to Victoria for her willingness to step into this role.

*Respectfully submitted,
Janet Derby, Anne Mooney, co-chairs*

Annual Report - Youth Program

JUL 2017 - JUN 2018

Worship

The youth continued to perform the worship volunteer responsibilities as greeters, ushers, and scripture readers on the third Sunday of each month. We had a total of 10 youth serve as worship volunteers at some point throughout the year.

Winter Youth Retreat

We had six Pilgrimage youth participate in the UCC Winter Youth Retreat in January. This year's theme was "Are you good?" Throughout the exploration of this topic we kept our focus on God's love for us - that we are inherently good because we were fearfully and wonderfully made by our Creator to be exactly who we are meant to be. *Special thanks to Lily Appleton and Stephen Williams for chaperoning the trip and to the Kask's for lending us their van for transportation.*

Other Youth Activities

This year the youth were also given opportunities to participate in the following activities/events.

- Monthly Youth Luncheons
- Youth Family Picnic
- Halloween Party/Dance w/ Cobb Gay Straight Alliance
- Seven Bridges Day Mission Trip
- Youth Fireside Chat - *Thank you, Deb Loche, for hosting the event!*
- The Last Walk

Wayne Scott
Youth Director

Deacon Annual Report for 2017-2018

Over the past year, the deacons have provided communion weekly for the 8:30 service, monthly for the 10am service, and have participated in all extra worship services, providing communion as needed. We met in October, January, and May. The deacons as well as Rev. Trish had a final meeting with Pastor Kim in January to discuss the continuation of pastoral care in the interim.

We welcomed a new deacon, Stephen Williams.

The deacons had good participation for the MUST Thanksgiving collection. We had Trivia Night in February. The theme was Valentine's Day. It was well attended.

We will be working with Missions to have the Betty Roth Memorial Backpack and School Supply drive. This will take place in June and July.

Doctor of Friendship nomination forms went out the end of May and we hope to make that award at the first of July.

The deacons continued to receive support through the 5th Sunday Deacon Fund collection. These funds have gone to members of the congregation in need.

The deacons hosted, with Parish Life, two events, a party and a reception, to recognize and honor Pastor Kim and Allen. Both were very well attended.

Respectfully submitted,

Julia Shiver
Chair of Deacons

MISSIONS COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORT 2017-2018

The Missions Committee continued the tradition of the backpack and school supply drive for underprivileged children in Cobb County in memory of Betty Roth. We are beginning this project again as we enter the 2018 Fiscal Year in partnership with the Deacons and VBS.

Rita Mehlan has done a wonderful job leading the MUST lunch program every 5th Tuesday. The last luncheon of this year fed 103 and continues to attract volunteers who serve at the lunch, donate money, or bake chicken. We are extremely grateful for Rita and all the parishioners who support this worthwhile endeavour. We will continue this mission which showcases PUCC's value of extravagant hospitality.

After much debate, prayer, and discussion regarding PUCC's commitment to Family Promise, we have made a commitment to continue in 2019 with three hosting weeks, one fewer than we have done in the past to put less strain on the committed volunteers to this project. We will continue to try to recruit more parishioners to go through the training, do overnights, and cook and deliver meal items. Rita Mehlan and Sue Stanton have graciously agreed to coordinate the hosting weeks and meals next year. Deb Loche will be stepping down after three amazing years of service in this capacity. We are indebted to her generous spirit, steadfast commitment, time and talents. Officially, after our October 2018, hosting week, she will pass the baton to Rita and Sue.

We are also deepening our relationship with Family Promise through our participation in the GRACE program which provides childcare for graduates of the program while they attend Saturday meetings that provide additional support and assistance for independent living. In addition, we will provide food boxes once per year by raising \$100. Our first food box collection will take place in September 2018. The boxes are delivered to Family Promise headquarters where families can pick them up if they need extra assistance with food, or they can be used at the center for clients receiving services there.

We participated in a 7 Bridges mission in the fall. Youth and adults met on a Saturday and delivered food, prayer, and hygiene kits to the needy and homeless served by this organization. We are planning another Saturday event in the Fall of 2018 and hope to make this a quarterly mission event at PUCC.

We also worked with the Deacons to provide Thanksgiving baskets and, at Christmas, gifts were collected for families in need at Argyle Elementary through a Christmas Giving Tree and gift cards were collected for a Family Promise family in need of extra support due to the mother being diagnosed with cancer and undergoing treatments.

In February, we held “Undie Sundays” to collect personal items - underwear, socks, and undershirts - for MUST Ministries.

Our committee helped to organize, with Stewardship, a ‘Spring Into Action’ Fair highlighting all the ways to get involved at PUCC with our active committees. The fair took place over two Sundays and was a great success with most committees adding a few new members and all committees having the opportunity to share what they do with the congregation-at-large.

The Neva Reitz Memorial Book Drive was, once again, extremely successful. We delivered nearly 400 books in May to Harmony Leland Elementary in Mableton. Literacy Coach Sengretta Shepherd was extremely thankful for our gift that provided books for their summer reading program to underserved youth.

We have also begun exploring the idea of adding an international mission to our outreach. UCC and Disciples of Christ Global Ministries offers opportunities to provide support to missionaries, sponsor children or elders, or travel to serve one of many of their ministry partners. Specifically, we will explore ideas with their Caribbean Initiative (Haiti or Jamaica) or possibly Honduras.

The Missions Committee would like to thank Christy Stanley for her service and commitment to PUCC, Family Promise and the larger community. Though she has moved on to another church, she and her family will always be a part of the PUCC community. We are also extremely indebted to Deb Loche for serving as the Family Promise Coordinator for three years. We are very grateful to the many individuals who have given of their time and talents but wanted to specifically recognize these two ladies as they resign from their positions as Co-Lead of the Missions Committee and Family Promise Coordinator, respectively.

June Adams
Co-Chair

Cathi Cahn
Co-Chair

Communications Committee 2017 – 2018

This year the communications committee focused on updating and improving Pilgrimage UCC's brand and presence in the community. As a result, emphasis was placed on increasing our social media presence and taking on several large-scale projects. These projects included a change in the email messaging system, implementation of a media release policy, and a website update. Details of each project are provided below.

Facebook & Live Streaming

The communications committee continues to use Facebook Live as a way to stream our weekly reading and sermon to the Pilgrimage community. Additionally, we have tried to increase engagement on our social media platforms by creating an Instagram account and using more visual posts.

Email Messaging System

In an effort to reduce cost, a change was made from Constant Contact to MailChimp. The MailChimp platform provides the same level of service for our e-Tidings and other e-Messages, but at no cost. The change was facilitated with the help of Janet Derby and Lynne Buell and all e-Tidings messages have been sent using MailChimp since March 2018.

Personal Media Release Policy

As a way to protect the members of our congregation, personal media release policies allow individuals to determine how they would like their image to be used on digital platforms. While discussion about implementing a personal media release policy had happened in the past, no policy was ever put into place. This year, we created a media/photo release form that allowed members to specify if, or how, they would like their image used in all digital areas (social media, advertising, website, YouTube, etc.) The responses from these forms were compiled into a database that the communications committee will use as it updates social media platforms and the website.

Website Update

The new Pilgrimage UCC website will be released on July 1, 2018. While the old website contains useful information, the compatibility of the site with mobile devices is limited. Additionally, the typical lifespan of a website is 2-3 years; our current website is 8 years old. The new website will contain more forms of media to provide prospective visitors an even better idea of who we are and what we believe.

Angela Gula, Communications Chair

Parish Life Committee 2017 – 2018

Parish Life's goal is to bring our congregation together for pot luck suppers to break bread and have some fun doing it. We held six events this year with many thanks to Carol Hill, Helene O'Neill, Diane Reese, Susan Volentine, and Rita Mehlan.

Sep 2017	Goodbye Summer – Hello Fall Fried Chicken Fest
Oct 2017	Trunk or Treat
Nov 2017	Thanksgiving Supper
Jan 2018	Assisted Deacon's with Kim & Allen's going away party
Apr 2018	Easter Egg Hunt
Jun 2018	Hot Dogs and & Ice Cream

Thanks to all of you who made the pot luck tables full. There is always an abundance of food demonstrating PUCC's warm hospitality. And to all of you who always pitch in moving chairs and tables and helping with set up and dishes. The comradery is always a big part of these events.

Also, a word for our Hospitality Team... these behind the scenes folks help to fill in when we need extra help with food or events. It's a "help if you can" group. If you want to help out at PUCC but don't have time for a committee, consider pitching in with this wonderful team.

Jamie Durkee
Chair Parish Life

PROPERTIES ANNUAL REPORT

2017 - 2018

By Chris Shiver

Summarized below are significant activities or projects by Property Team members in the past year:

- The Growth Task Force lead by Bill Dischinger & Ric Reitz has made significant progress since they were formed in February 2016, including implementing the “3Rs” campaign with three phases of fund raising & specific buildings improvements. This past year the group has fully completed Phase 1 (replacement of the sanctuary HVAC system), and Phase 2 (refurbishment of main building exterior claddings and trim) thanks to generous contributions from our members. A special work day was also performed to rebuild our exterior underground drains for the roof gutter downspouts in preparation for the now completed replacement of the gutters and downspouts as part of Phase 2. Phase 3 (renovation of the main building bathrooms, fellowship hall & rear auxiliary office/storage) is currently on hold until the church is financially able to move forward based on cost estimates provided by the group & our consulting architect.
- We recently performed a work day to renovate the NGH exterior including replacement of all of the seriously deteriorated trim & painting (more painting needed). Other work needed on the NGH including repair of subfloor damage & replacement of carpet is on hold pending completion of a quotation from this leased building owner (ModSpace) on several re-lease & repair or replacement options and a council decision on same. The NGH was tested for mold within the walls in October 2017 with none detected. The current lease expires at the end of August 2018.
- As part of the Phase 2 project, the drop ceiling tiles in the narthex were replaced thanks to a generous donation from Ric Reitz.
- In that past year the Properties Team has conducted four work days (including the drain work day noted above) devoted to landscaping and building maintenance activities. Major tasks accomplished included significant pruning of trees and shrubs, removal of some dead or dying larger trees, cleanout of storm water drains and swales, spreading of large quantities of tree mulch in areas without grass, creation of a rock garden feature out front (thanks to the creativity of Laurie Spencer), and pressure washing of walkways. I am grateful for the hard work of many members of our congregation working together in these efforts.
- Special thanks go to Geoff Heilhecker, Tony Mills & others who responded promptly to several incidents of trees falling on the property and performing cut up & removal of the remains. In a significant incident earlier this year they very

quickly removed a tree that fell onto the main driveway that was preventing all access by vehicles to the church parking lot. The playground fence was also repaired after being damaged by a falling tree.

- Based on the recommendations of Laurie Spencer we will consider doing some future planting and at least a partial restoration of our currently extensive but inoperable irrigation system. This will likely involve Church Council decision making regarding the costs.
- After the kitchen dishwasher failed it was replaced, thanks to the generous donation of the Cahn family.
- The failed attic folding stairs were replaced with a more reliable metal construction unit.
- Outdoor lighting on the NGH end of the main building has been restored after all three fixtures has failed resulting in a significant improvement in visibility in that area after dark. The new lighting is also much more energy efficient LED type. Various failed florescent lighting fixtures within the main building were also rebuilt or replaced.
- Fire ant mound building is a chronic problem all around our yards in the spring, summer and fall, and the playground region is one area they really like. Frequent granular bait/poison applications are keeping them regulated but parents need to monitor small children outside to both keep them out of the poisons and any active nests.
- Another chronic issue is with accidental triggering of the entry alarm system for the main building &/or issues of failing to shut off lighting & water when the church is closed. Properties will continue to work with the congregation to emphasize proper procedures & taking responsibility by those requiring building access.

Stewardship Committee Report

2017-2018

Time and Talent Stewardship

The year has been busy for the Stewardship Team. Matthew Alexander and Victoria Owens co-chaired the team together. While Matthew was primarily in charge Time and Talent Stewardship and Victoria was primarily in charge of Financial Stewardship, they worked together to accomplish most of the goals set out. Primary among these goals was to get a full team of council chairs and a full Executive Committee. In order to do this the following council chairs had to be filled:

1. Vice President
2. Clerk
3. Financial Secretary
4. Stewardship co-chair
5. 2 Missions co-chairs
6. Communications chair

Each position was sought to be filled through discernment and attention to the gifts and talents of the individual to fill the position. The Stewardship Team did well in accomplishing that goal and ensuring that chairs of each team were enthusiastic about the role they were taking on. In the future, the Stewardship Team will continue to seek out ways to help members of the congregation better understand their gifts and talents so that they will find places that best utilize their gifts and talents.

Stewardship, along with the Missions Team, also worked together to have a “Spring into Action” Fair. This fair, held in April 2018, gave congregation members an opportunity to meet the chairs of each team and learn about the different opportunities of service at Pilgrimage. The fair was successful by having a number of people sign up to serve in different positions. Future fairs will be of benefit to continue to give the congregation an opportunity to sign-up and serve.

Financial Stewardship

In August of 2017 when Victoria Owens became stewardship co-chair, planning for the fall pledge drive began in concert with Pastor Kim Buchanan. In worship, talks by church members about their financial giving, a skit performed by the co-chairs, and a brief message on the spiritual meanings undergirding the Christian’s grateful response to God were put in front of the worshiping congregation. In addition, two letters, with pledge cards enclosed, were mailed to each member of PUCC.

Consecration Sunday was held on October 29, 2017, with Rochelle Lofstrand preaching. Within this service congregants were invited to bring their pledge cards forward in prayerful consideration of their response to God's providence.

A follow-up letter was mailed to the membership in November of 2017. As of June 2018, 41 pledges are on record. Within that group a handful of members have pre-paid their full pledge in recognition of financial needs that have arisen and a decline in weekly giving. The church council responded to this decline by proposing and implementing a program called, "Give Me Five." A modest increase in pledging and/or giving (by \$5, 5%, \$500, etc.) has been reported by the financial secretary and the treasurer.

While not in debt, and able to meet expenses (as reported at the June Church Council meeting on June 14, 2018) our ability to hire a new music director is in doubt at the present time. The historic generosity of this congregation will be tested as our interim period continues into God's future dreams and desires for Pilgrimage United Church of Christ.

Respectfully submitted,

Matthew Alexander, Stewardship Co-Chair

Worship Committee Report 2017—2018

In our report for calendar year of 2017 to 2018, the Worship Committee would like to express many thanks to the Search Committees. The Accompanist Search Committee in the Fall of 2017, who helped us find our amazing Piano Accompanist, Lidia Kovaleva. We were notified of both Kim Buchanan and Allen Mullinax resigning their positions as of the end of January 2018. Thanks to the very diligent work of the Intentional Interim Search Committee, we now have Rev. Krista Forbes leading us at Pilgrimage UCC as of April 2018.

We would also like to thank our three dedicated folks who provided Pulpit Supply at Pilgrimage for many weeks. They are Matthew Alexander, Trish Greeves, and Rochelle Lofstrand.

We thank the Music Director Search Committee who have also worked hard to help fill the position. We hope to hire Tony Bernard based on that search. In the absence of a Music Director, we have had two members direct the choir and hand bell choir for many months. They are Juliann Heilhecker and Victoria Owens, who have been tireless and dedicated in their service to Pilgrimage. We send thanks, love and congratulations to Lidia, Victoria, and Juliann, and all of the people who make our welcoming worship work.

Sarah Holliday and Diane Reese
Co-Chairs