

PILGRIM'S Progress

January 2025

"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



tics cultivate compassion for ourselves and others; this is the way of Jesus.

In 2025, I invite us to let life break our hearts open; by sitting in discomfort and ambiguity as we face unknown futures, with hearts open to possibility, I hope the Divine offers peace, wisdom, hope, and creativity for the living of these days. And always, lots of joyful surprises and grace along the journey.

God loves you, and so do I. Happy 2025!

Courtney



PUCC Vision Statement

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

Dear Beloved,

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year! Our Advent/Christmas/Epiphany worship series is *"Words for the Beginning."* What beginning is God calling you to undertake this year? What opportunities for spiritual and/or physical change are showing up in your life?

This is my annual reminder that there is no magical "New Year, New Me." The strike of a clock doesn't change us; intention and practice do. There is no size, no number on a scale, no habit breaking that will magically make us more grounded or resilient. True resilience requires admitting our powerlessness over compulsive behaviors—from food and drink to physical activity to reaching for the distraction of a screen—and beginning to sit with the discomfort that drives our compulsions. True resilience asks us to be honest with ourselves and those we love about how we feel. It asks us to practice setting boundaries and caring for ourselves and others with intention and purpose. Ultimately, such prac-



We have received the schedule for our 2025 Family Promise hosting weeks. Our first week is January 19 through January 26th.

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 break-fast and lunch. It's a beautiful experience and a chance to work together for the sake of Love.

If you have any questions, see or contact Dick or Rita Mehlan.

The sign-up link is below where you can choose how you would like to take part.

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/10C0B4CAAAD2DA3FCC25-54172950-family/106516880#/>

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Pilgrimage
UNITED CHURCH OF CHRIST

COUNCIL MODERATOR

Lee Fadeley

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



Ready, Set, Go 2025

Each new year brings me new hope and new beginnings. If 2024 is any indication, I am excited about the potential and progress for Pilgrimage.

First, I am looking forward to the Parish Life Chili Cook Off and potluck in the middle of January (see the Parish Life announcement in this newsletter). It is the perfect season for chili and perhaps a good time to reflect on the abundance *and* scarcity of food, sharing, and maybe gluttony.

We are looking forward to attending our Annual Congregational Financial Meeting on Sunday, January 26th where we will present our **2025 Mission Spending Plan** and the results of the **Congregational Involvement in Insurance Allocation Plan** input and the Council recommendations. Members should expect to see an email 2 weeks prior to the meeting containing information about both topics. The picture of how we may develop and blossom, both spiritually and physically, is developing very nicely.

Your Council and Executive Committee members experienced another fruitful month in December. The December Council meeting lasted well into the evening as we critically examined and refined the many budget requests and goals for the **2025 Mission Spending Plan** – I am impressed with how the Council unselfishly collaborated to match the needs of Pilgrimage vs. the expected revenues, sometimes sacrificing the requests and dreams for their committees in order to arrive at a budget without a deficit.

Your Treasurer, Rochelle Lofstrand, has been working with our new QuickBooks Online Accounting Service bookkeeper to get us ready for day one in January. She reported that the “look back” for all of 2024 is complete and shared some of the new tools that will help us better manage our finances.

Laurie Spenser and Sarah Wilson, our Properties Chairs, provided a timely update about our new pest control and exclusion measures, the new and long overdue HVAC maintenance agreement, and led a discus-

sion about a strategy to expand and improve our house-keeping services. Sarah has also begun discussions with architects so we can plan, budget and proceed responsibly for renovations based on a feasibility study.

Sven Olensky, Communications Chair, provided a report full of recommendations and opportunities such as cost savings for our internet/phone bundle, the creation of a QR code on our bulletins for electronic donations, options to address our church email constraints, and a wonderful example of how Pilgrimage may use social media clips to promote our message to a wider audience of seekers.

The Executive Committee provided an update to the Council about the selection of a business brokerage account for Pilgrimage. Using a business brokerage account will eliminate the need for Pilgrimage Officers to use their personal information and credit checks when applying for investments such as CDs and money market accounts while avoiding any opening fees, ongoing account fees, or minimum balances. A bonus is the wide variety of investment choices to meet future needs and interest rates that are better than some of the local banks. We will maintain at least two to three Officers on the account so we have multiple eyes on the account.

Let’s get excited about the new year - I look forward to seeing you at the Annual Financial Meeting.

Lee Fadeley
Council Moderator



All Pilgrimage UCC members are invited to attend our Annual Financial Congregational Meeting on Sunday, January 26th immediately following the 10:00 worship service.

Council will present their proposed 2025 Mission Spending Plan as well as the results of the Congregational Involvement in Insurance Allocation Plan, including the Council recommendations. Member feedback is encouraged, and we hope you will plan to join us for this very important discussion.

Two weeks prior to the meeting, an email will be sent containing important information about both matters.

PARISH LIFE

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



Happy New Year!

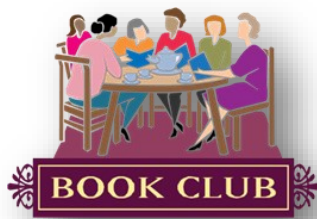
To start out the year in a fun way, Parish Life is proud to partner with Missions and host our first event of the year, our annual **Chili Cookoff and Bake Sale** on Sunday, January 19 after the 10:00 service. We will sell tickets for \$1 each to vote for our favorite chilis and to purchase the baked goods.

You can sign up to bring your special chili, baked goods or drinks. Details are in the comments in the link.

We will award first, second, and third place for the chilis that receive the most tickets. Again this year, the proceeds will benefit **Simple Needs Georgia**, an agency that provides the basic needs of families moving from homelessness to homes. Please join us for this meaningful (and delicious) event!

Here is the Sign up Genius link:

[PUCC 2025 Chili Cookoff & Bake Sale Fundraiser!](#)



January 7, 2025 @ 6:30 p.m.

Hosted by Jamie Durkee

jjdurkee11@gmail.com

Book for discussion:

“The Soul of an Octopus”

by

Sy Montgomery

DEACONS

Pat Kask & Rita Mehlan, Co-Chairs
pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com



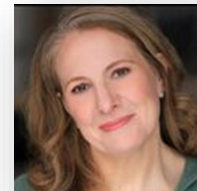
Mark your calendars for Saturday, February 8th at 5:00 p.m. for the annual Deacon Potluck and Trivia Night!!!

Join us for fun, fellowship, food, and TRIVIA!!! This year’s theme will be “Holidays” (traditions, food, etc.) and is sure to bring surprises and laughs.

The potluck will begin at 5:00 p.m. Bring your favorite dish to share. Trivia will follow dinner. This is always a fun event, so we hope to see you all there!

WORSHIP

Juliann Heilhecker & Vickie Zuffoletti, Co-Chairs
pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com



As we leave behind the old year and welcome in the new year, I want to thank all our volunteers who helped the worship services run smoothly from the mundane to when we had to make last minute changes. We are truly blessed to have a community that can step up and give of their time when it is needed.

Speaking of volunteers, we could still use a few more ushers. Please feel free to ask Vickie Zuffoletti or Juliann Heilhecker for more information.

May everyone have a blessed new year full of love, peace, joy, and may our faith give us strength, courage, and compassion to face whatever lies ahead.

Respectfully,

Juliann and Vickie

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com

MISSIONS

Cindy Westlake, Chair

pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com



Our Missions special collections drive for January will benefit Lost-n-Found Youth. This Atlanta organization works to end homelessness for LGBTQ+ youth (ages 18 -25). This year they are asking for donations from their Amazon wish to be sent directly to their shelter.

You can access their wish list here:

https://www.amazon.com/hz/wishlist/ls/3TLJEI80IX1A7/ref=nav_wishlist_lists_3

In order to help us keep track of our donations, please let the Missions Committee know what you have ordered. You can contact the committee at:

pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com

...or speak to Cindy Westlake. Thank you for helping us support this important cause!



The Properties Committee is getting ready to do a PUC Nursery Facelift, and they are looking for folks who are willing to help with painting, cleaning, laying new flooring (LVP), and any other small task to improve the church nursery for our little ones.

This work will be done some time in January, and in order for the committee to begin scheduling some dates for the calendar, they would like to see who is interested and what your availability will be.

Please email:

pilgrimageuccproperties@gmail.com

...or see Sarah after church on Sunday.

January Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

01/07 Tony Prah
01/08 Lindsey O'Neill
01/09 Mark Gomillia
01/17 Amber McDuffie
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

TREASURERS

Rochelle Lofstrand, Treasurer
 Stephen Noffke, Asst. Treasurer
pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com

Stephen and I look forward to continued transparency and communication regarding our financial standing.

Please email me if you have any questions!

November (Month to Date) Operating Expenses

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ Statement of Activities			
Date Range: Nov 1st 2024 - Nov 30th 2024 Filtered by: Fund			
Accounts	Actual Nov 01, 2024 - Nov 30, 2024	Budget Nov 01, 2024 - Nov 30, 2024	Budget Over/Under Nov 01, 2024 - Nov 30, 2024
Revenues			
General Fund	27,289.52	19,846.98	7,442.54
Total Revenues	\$ 27,289.52	\$ 19,846.98	\$ 7,442.54
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	12,251.16	11,393.06	(858.10)
Pastor Expenses	1,456.79	467.50	(989.29)
Properties			
General Properties Exp	5,739.29	2,543.33	(3,195.96)
Utilities	947.54	1,375.43	427.89
Total Properties	6,686.83	3,918.76	(2,768.07)
Worship Expenses	1,289.32	1,311.68	22.36
Communications, Admin & Office	1,141.32	790.66	(350.66)
Missions	3,000.00	3,000.00	0.00
Christian Education	90.00	216.68	126.68
Other Expenses	2,725.97	33.34	(2,692.63)
Total Expenses	\$ 28,641.39	\$ 21,131.68	(\$ 7,509.71)
Net Total	(\$ 1,351.87)	(\$ 1,284.70)	(\$ 67.17)

November (Year to Date) Operating Expenses

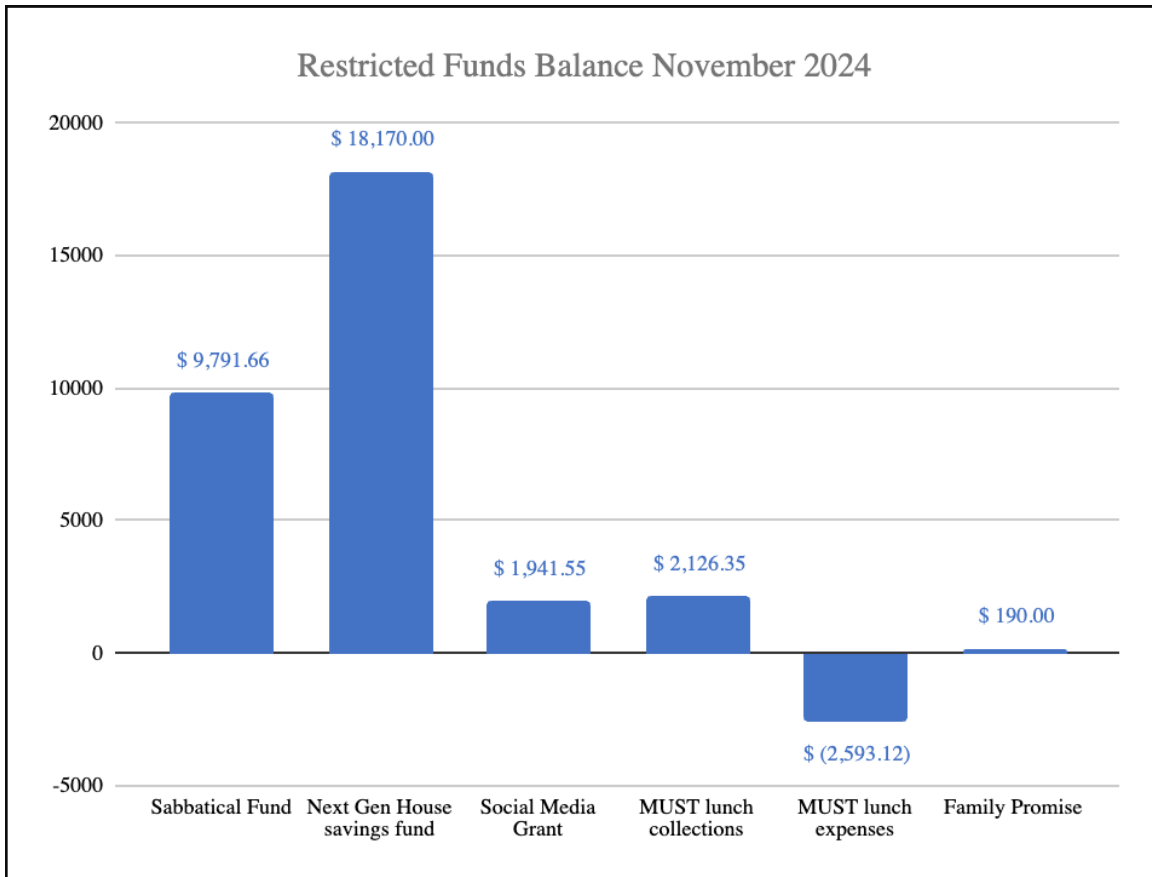
Pilgrimage United Church of Christ Statement of Activities			
Date Range: Jan 1st 2024 - Nov 30th 2024 Filtered by: Fund			
Accounts	Actual Jan 01, 2024 - Nov 30, 2024	Budget Jan 01, 2024 - Nov 30, 2024	Budget Over/Under Jan 01, 2024 - Nov 30, 2024
Revenues			
General Fund	219,050.73	218,316.87	733.86
Total Revenues	\$ 219,050.73	\$ 218,316.87	\$ 733.86
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	123,878.67	123,869.43	(9.24)
Pastor Expenses	5,672.98	5,142.50	(530.48)
Properties			
General Properties Exp	27,063.98	28,856.67	1,792.69
Property Insurance	14,426.00	14,751.00	325.00
Utilities	12,988.48	14,018.32	1,029.84
Total Properties	54,478.46	57,625.99	3,147.53
Worship Expenses	3,195.64	11,528.32	8,332.68
Communications, Admin & Office	10,958.39	13,402.34	2,443.95
Missions	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00
Christian Education	1,535.18	2,583.32	1,048.14
Other Expenses	6,979.53	696.66	(6,282.87)
Total Expenses	\$ 218,698.85	\$ 226,848.56	\$ 8,149.71
Net Total	\$ 351.88	(\$ 8,531.69)	\$ 8,883.57

Based on the financial reports provided, here are some key trends for Pilgrimage United Church of Christ for October and Year-to-Date:

1. Giving Exceeding Budget for November: The General Fund shows pledged giving of \$24,805 against a budget of \$16,803, exceeding expectations by \$8,002. This suggests strong financial commitment from the congregation.
2. Property Expenses Significantly Over Budget: There was a significant variance in property expenses, particularly with pest services showing \$4,889 in actual expenses. This was due to hiring a pest control company for rodent control.
3. MUST Lunch: This month we exceeded our giving for our MUST lunch funds. We won't be serving lunch for a few months and we anticipate receiving donations.

During November and December, Rochelle has been working on two major things - our 9-month CDs will expire at the end of December, and we are moving all of our accounting services to Quickbooks. More will be reported in our next newsletter article.

At the end of November we had \$51,059.51 in our bank accounts. Our restricted funds account balance is \$29,087.53, leaving us with a balance of \$21,971.98 in our Operating Funds. Our Restricted Funds Balance details are shown below:



The insurance payments were deposited into interest-bearing accounts in March. Our initial deposit was \$542,460.98. Through November, we earned \$ 17,696.53 of interest, and our current balance is \$ 560,157.51. All treasurer-related requests should be sent to pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com. Both Stephen 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.

Rochelle Lofstrand, Treasurer

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 (Lisa Toomey)	1st Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.
Pilgrimage Council (Lee Fadeley, 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

Jan.	5	Communion Both Services Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.)
Jan.	12	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Missions Comm. Mtg (9:15 a.m.)
Jan.	19	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Chili Cook-Off & Bake Sale (11:30 a.m.) Family Promise Host Week Begins
Jan.	26	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Annual Congregational Financial Meeting (11:30 a.m.) PFLAG (1:00 p.m.)