

“Jesus returned in the power of the Spirit to Galilee, and news about him spread throughout the whole countryside.”
LUKE 4:14

Meet Our Interim Pastor



Rev. Jess Cusick, M.Div. (she/her)

Jess is a native of Atlanta, GA, and holds a B.A. from the University of Georgia and a Master’s degree from the Candler School of Theology at Emory University. For nearly two decades, Jess held various ministerial roles all over Georgia. In 2023, Jess accepted the role of Academic Program Associate at the Candler School of Theology, leaving the local congregation but very much continuing in ministry! As a recovering fundamentalist and queer pastor, Jess is passionate about creating safe religious spaces for curiosity and acceptance. She believes the church is at its best when functioning intergenerationally and intersectionally.

Jess is married to Lauren, and together they love binge-watching bad TV, eating great Italian food, and parenting their two boys- Beau (four-legged), and Jules (two-legged). When she’s not working, Jess loves to walk and hike, cook, play cards, and do lots of yoga.

WORSHIP

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



I hope you are all as excited as I am to welcome Rev. Jess Cusick as our interim pastor while our beloved Pastor Courtney is on bed rest. Let us also continue to pray for Courtney’s well-being as well as for Auggie, Teddy and Teddy’s soon-to-be brother. I hope you will have the time to talk to Jess and welcome her into our church family.

Getting Jess on board was a large group effort thanks to our Southeast Conference leaders: Rev. Kim Wood, Conference Minister and Rev. Heather Fosburgh, Associate Conference Minister; and our Pilgrimage leaders: Pastor Courtney, Lee, Heyward, Rochelle, and Vickie.

Our music ministry, led by our music director, Asa, is also gearing up for some exciting, soulful music and spoken word.

February is Black History month, and we are showcasing influential people of color and celebrating African American culture that is sure to stir the soul! We will be adding some elements to Worship for the month of February. In addition to hymns and anthems that have been specifically curated for Black History Month, each week you will hear a profile of an African American leader whose contributions may not yet be known to you. We have also invited a younger member of our community to read a brief work by an African American poet.

Please join this month for spiritual inspiration from the pulpit and the choir.

Juliann and Vickie



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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COUNCIL MODERATOR

Lee Fadeley

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



It takes a village . . .

Or at Pilgrimage United Church of Christ, a big and beautiful faith community of Believers and Seekers in discipleship. This community encompasses our members, fellow worshipers and visitors, our Senior Minister and pulpit supply ministers, Council and committees, the Southeast Conference and the wider United Church of Christ.

The month of January was filled with examples of this wider community demonstrating its support of Pilgrimage. The Worship Committee, Pastor Courtney, the Rev. Heidi Schuler, Lynne and our conference ministers working diligently to cover our pulpit needs and keeping our congregation informed (and our first ever worship service via Zoom due to the weather!). The Properties Committee and volunteers providing their attention and labor to the Nursery renovation this winter. Ric Reitz, Lynne and Juliann communicating and coordinating with the Properties Co-Chairs to address the downed tree and electrical lines in our parking lot to keep all of us safe.

And the Executive Committee and Council providing financial guidance for our interim ministerial supply as well as the 2025 Mission Spending Plan and other preparations for the Annual Financial Meeting.

Among other topics, your Council addressed these in January:

- Approved a credit card policy drafted by Stephen Noffke.
- Treasurer Rochelle Lofstrand completed the transition to our new accounting & payroll services and reinvested our expiring CDs.
- Agreed to a path for filling the AV position.

By the time that you read this newsletter I expect that we will have successfully completed our 2025 Annual Financial Meeting, including your approval of the 2025 Mission Spending Plan and the recommendations for the Insurance Funds Allocation Plan.

Although our newsletter articles tend to share our activi-

ties and accomplishments of the past month, I hope that everyone comes away with continued confidence and enthusiasm for the future and what we can achieve together.

Lee M. Fadeley
Council Moderator

PARISH LIFE

Susan Volentine & Carol Hill, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com



In January, Parish Life teamed up with Missions and held our Annual Chili Cookoff and Bake Sale.

We had eight unique and delicious varieties of chilis to vote for - the biggest vote-getters were:

- 1st place - Jeff and Jamie Durkee - Nana Chili
- 2nd place - Monica Helms & Darlene Wagner - Venison & Lean Beef Chili
- 3rd place - Cindy Westlake - White Chicken Chili



To all the people who made chili and baked goods, and to everyone who tasted, bought tickets, voted with your dollars, and made donations to make this event a rousing success, THANK YOU!!

Over \$400 was raised to benefit Simple Needs GA! This organization helps families who are emerging from homelessness with home furnishings and household needs.

Special thanks to Helene for selling tickets, and also to everyone who helped set up, tear down, clean up, sell tickets, and keep everything going!

Get your recipes ready for next year!

Carol and Susan

MISSIONS

Cindy Westlake, Chair

pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com



It's February, and if you are new to PUCG, you will quickly learn that means **Undie Sundays!**

Throughout the month we will be collecting items for the clients of MUST Ministries. Please bring new socks, underwear and t-shirts for all genders and all ages.

Don't forget the babies with diapers in size 2 and pull-ups. Let's see if we can build a tower of undies!

Thank you to everyone who helped with our latest **Family Promise** week! As always, it was a wonderful experience. Our next week is April 13-20.

DEACONS

Pat Kask & Rita Mehlan, Co-Chairs

pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com



Have you marked your calendars for Saturday, February 8th at 5:00 p.m.?

Join us for the Deacons' Annual Potluck & Trivia Night! This is always a fun event that offers fellowship, food, and TRIVIA!!! This year's theme is "Holidays" which will have questions regarding various customs and traditions.

The potluck will begin at 5:00 p.m. Bring your favorite dish to share. Trivia will follow dinner.

We hope to see you all there!



February 4, 2025 @ 7:00 p.m.

Hosted by Laurie Spencer

Book for discussion:

"The Measure"

by Nikki Erlick

PUCG Probability Group



After a long hiatus, the PUCG Probability Group will be resuming regular meetings. The PUCG Probability Group is historically a men's fellowship group, but all are welcome if you enjoy playing poker. We usually gather on a Friday or Saturday evening, have some food and beverage, and play Texas Hold 'Em. As part of the evening we also take a collection to contribute to PUCG.

Our first meeting of 2025 will be hosted by Stephen Williams and Wayne Scott on Friday, Feb 21 starting at 6 PM. If you would like to learn more about or participate in the PUCG Probability Group gatherings, please see Stephen Williams or Wayne Scott after worship or send Wayne an email message to: neuton25@yahoo.com

We look forward to welcoming new people and getting to know them better over some friendly poker games!

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!

December (Month to Date) Operating Expenses

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ			
Statement of Activities			
Date Range: Dec 1st 2024 - Dec 31st 2024 Filtered by: Fund, Core Account			
Accounts	Actual Dec 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	Budget Dec 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	Budget Over/Under Dec 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024
Revenues			
General Fund	30,723.56	19,846.98	10,876.58
Total Revenues	\$ 30,723.56	\$ 19,846.98	\$ 10,876.58
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	11,735.66	11,393.06	(342.60)
Pastor Expenses	208.32	467.50	259.18
Properties			
General Properties Exp	2,223.67	2,543.33	319.66
Property Insurance	0.00	800.00	800.00
Utilities	1,813.53	1,216.68	(596.85)
Total Properties	4,037.20	4,560.01	522.81
Worship Expenses	150.00	1,021.68	871.68
Communications, Admin & Office	492.14	790.66	298.52
Christian Education	90.00	216.68	126.68
Other Expenses	415.77	33.34	(382.43)
Total Expenses	\$ 17,129.09	\$ 18,482.93	\$ 1,353.84
Net Total	\$ 13,594.47	\$ 1,364.05	\$ 12,230.42

December (Year to Date) Operating Expenses

Pilgrimage United Church of Christ			
Statement of Activities			
Date Range: Jan 1st 2024 - Dec 31st 2024 Filtered by: Fund, Core Account			
Accounts	Actual Jan 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	Budget Jan 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024	Budget Over/Under Jan 01, 2024 - Dec 31, 2024
Revenues			
General Fund	249,774.29	238,163.85	11,610.44
Total Revenues	\$ 249,774.29	\$ 238,163.85	\$ 11,610.44
Expenses			
Staff Compensation	135,614.33	135,262.49	(351.84)
Pastor Expenses	5,881.30	5,610.00	(271.30)
Properties			
General Properties Exp	29,287.65	31,400.00	2,112.35
Property Insurance	14,426.00	15,551.00	1,125.00
Utilities	14,802.01	15,235.00	432.99
Total Properties	58,515.66	62,186.00	3,670.34
Worship Expenses	3,345.64	12,550.00	9,204.36
Communications, Admin & Office	11,450.53	14,193.00	2,742.47
Missions	12,000.00	12,000.00	0.00
Christian Education	1,625.18	2,800.00	1,174.82
Other Expenses	7,395.30	730.00	(6,665.30)
Total Expenses	\$ 235,827.94	\$ 245,331.49	\$ 9,503.55
Net Total	\$ 13,946.35	(\$ 7,167.64)	\$ 21,113.99

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

1. Revenue Performance

*Total actual revenue was \$249,774.29, exceeding the budgeted amount of \$238,163.85 by \$11,610.44

2. Cost Management & Budget Variances

*Total expenses were \$235,827.94, under budget by \$9,503.55

*Notable overages:

~Legal-IRS expenses of \$4,215.48 (unbudgeted)

~Other miscellaneous expenses of \$3,049.68 (unbudgeted) for Pest Control.

3. Bottom Line Performance

*Net result was a surplus of \$13,946.35, significantly better than the budgeted deficit of (\$7,167.64)

*This positive variance of \$21,113.99 was achieved through:

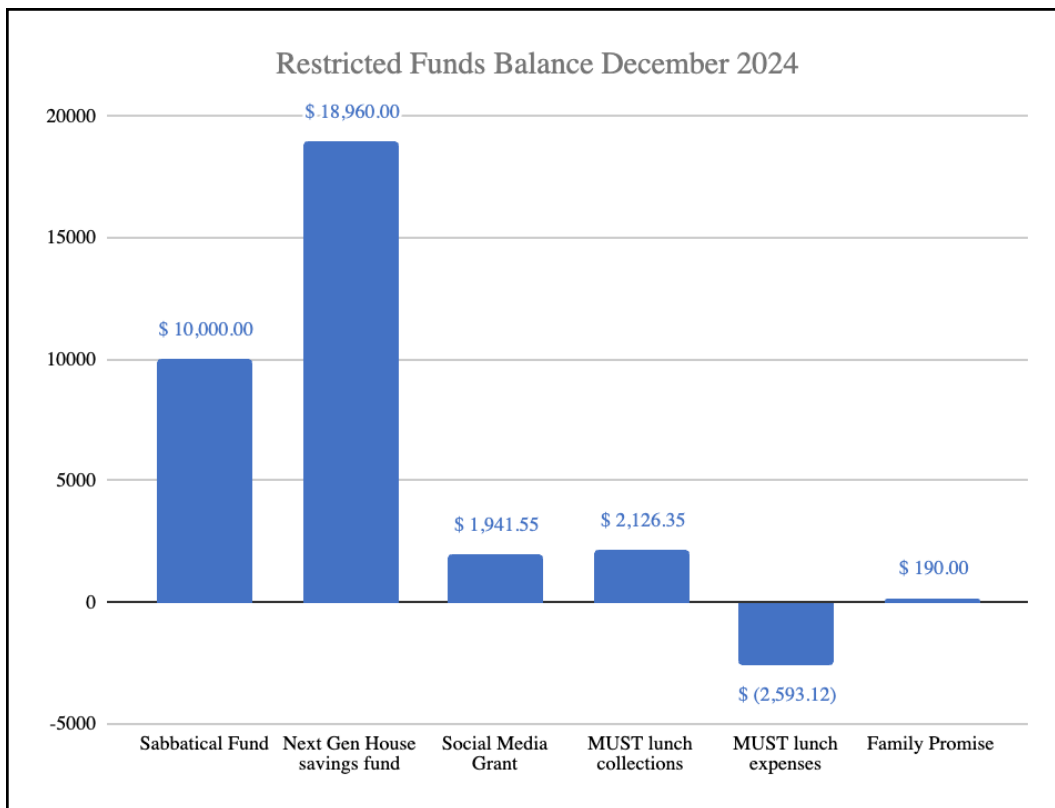
~Revenue overperformance: +\$11,610.44

~Expense management: +\$9,503.55

*Staff compensation, the largest expense category at \$135,614.33, stayed very close to budget with only a \$351.84 variance

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. I reported on these things during our annual financial meeting.

At the end of December we had \$68,908.35 in our bank accounts. Our restricted funds account balance is \$33,748.44, leaving us with a balance of \$35,159.91 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 December, we earned \$ 19,796.62 of interest, and our current balance is \$ 562,257.60. 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

<p>Pastor Music Director Accompanist Administrative Assistant</p>	<p>Rev. Courtney Jones Asa Bradley Anna Mbiad Lynne Buell</p>
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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.

February Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

02/03	Lorelle Mills
02/04	Larkin McDuffie
02/05	Jaime Fulsang
02/07	Devin Scott
02/08	Ezra Loche
02/17	Matthew Wyne
02/28	Eli Scates

ANNIVERSARIES

02/22 Jeff & Jamie Durkee

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

The Month in Sundays

Feb.	2	Communion Both Services Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Choir Rehearsal (11:30 a.m.)
Feb.	9	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Missions Comm. Mtg (9:15 a.m.)
Feb.	16	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.) Choir Rehearsal (11:30 a.m.)
Feb.	23	Worship (8:30 & 10:00 a.m.)