

# PILGRIM'S



# Progress

January 2021



A monthly publication of Pilgrimage  
United Church of Christ

## PASTOR

Rev. Courtney Jones

[pastor@pilgrimageucc.org](mailto:pastor@pilgrimageucc.org)



*“Do not remember the former things,  
Or consider the things of old.  
I am about to do a new thing;  
Now it springs forth, do you not perceive it?  
I will make a way in the wilderness  
And rivers in the desert.”*

--Isaiah 43:18-19

**B**eloved,  
Happy New Year! I'm writing this in December, but when you read this, we will have survived 2020. PRAISE GOD!

There's a tendency to imagine the clean slate of a new year as an opportunity to be completely different, a time to radically uproot our routines and ruts. Scripture tells us not to dwell on what is past but to look forward to the new thing God is doing. We want to look forward with hope while not neglecting the lessons of the past year. To that end, I want to encourage us to be gentle with ourselves. The calendar has flipped, but there is no magic wand to wave that will make us entirely different from the glorious humans we have always been, no snap of a finger that will make our lives something they are not. Whatever changes we want to make for our spiritual, emotional, and physical health, this is certainly an opportunity to take stock of how we are faring and what we'd like to release that hasn't been working. We can make whatever changes we feel called to make, but the calendar doesn't dictate the right time to do the next right thing. It's always the

right time to do the next right thing, whenever we are ready, because God is always ready to journey into the next right thing with us.

God is always making all things new. We know that, because we have seen the immense creativity and innovation of our congregation in 2020; we have tried all kinds of new things and been willing to risk things not working out so that we could continue to both stay safe and grow spiritually. We have seen our resilience and how our connections to God and each other cannot be broken by physical separation. We have held on and held out in ways we could never have imagined. God has been with us, in solidarity and radical love. We don't want to lose sight of that, but we also don't want to live in the past. We want to see the glorious new things to which God is calling us, and we trust the promises of Scripture, that God will continue to be with us into the years ahead.

Have a happy, sweet, simple, gentle new year, dear ones.

Love,

Courtney

## Update on Rev. Courtney

**W**e continue to receive good news that Rev. Courtney is recovering well after having surgery on her knee on December 29.

She is being well taken care of by Auggie under the watchful eyes of Huck and Beau! Feel free to email your well wishes to:

[pastor@pilgrimageucc.org](mailto:pastor@pilgrimageucc.org)

We hope you are planning to join us this Sunday, January 3, for our Facebook Live Stream Worship Service which will be led by Rev. Kimble Sorrells.

Continued prayers of healing for our beloved pastor!



**We seek to grow  
in worship,  
learning and  
service as a  
faithful people  
of God, bringing  
hope, comfort  
and friendship  
to all, welcom-  
ing everyone  
in Christ.**

*“The true  
light, which  
enlightens  
everyone, was  
coming into  
the world.”*  
JOHN 1:9

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**Pilgrimage**  
UNITED CHURCH  
OF CHRIST

**PRESIDENT**

Amy Jones

[pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com)



*“An optimist stays up until midnight to see the new year in. A pessimist stays up to make sure the old year leaves.” -William E. Vaughan*

In general, I tend to approach life with an optimistic mindset. Admittedly, 2020 has put that to the test on multiple occasions. I’m not sure whether I’ll be the optimist or the pessimist in the above quote, but I am looking forward to ringing in a new year in a few days. I understand that nothing magical happens when the calendar moves from December 31, 2020 to January 1, 2021. There is, however, the opportunity to change our mental outlook.

I hope the year ahead is better for each of you than the one we’re leaving behind.

*“May Light always surround you;  
Hope kindle and rebound you.  
May your Hurts turn to Healing;  
Your Heart embrace Feeling.  
May Wounds become Wisdom;  
Every Kindness a Prism.  
May Laughter infect you;  
Your Passion resurrect you.  
May Goodness inspire  
your Deepest Desires.  
Through all that you Reach For,  
May your arms Never Tire.”*

- D. Simone

**CONGREGATION VICE PRESIDENT**

By Susan Volentine

[pilgrimageuccvicepresident@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccvicepresident@gmail.com)



The New Year has begun. Developing New Year’s resolutions will be different this year with the continued uncertainty in the world. We all have hopes that although 2021 is beginning worse than 2020 did, it will end much better.

This year we can learn a new skill, break a bad habit (maybe one we developed in 2020), do a good deed, listen with empathy to another, read a difficult book, write and send a letter, try a new food, focus on self-care, and/or clean out a closet. And we hope we all will be able to travel freely without stress and worry soon.

T.S. Eliot said, *“For last year’s words belong to last year’s language And next year’s words await another voice.”* I am excited to see what voices we will be able to develop this coming year. We have all been on a difficult journey and we will come out of the journey changed people with new understandings of ourselves and others.

**January Celebrations**

**BIRTHDAYS**

- 01/01 Megan Soloman
- 01/07 Maya McMahill
- 01/08 Lindsey O’Neill
- 01/09 Mark Gomillia
- 01/15 Polly Yaguchi
- 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, please let Lynne know at: [office@pilgrimageucc.org](mailto:office@pilgrimageucc.org)

## CHRISTIAN ED

By Janet Derby

[pilgrimageucce@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageucce@gmail.com)

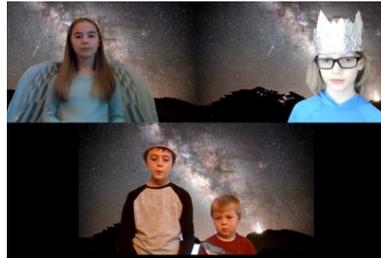


### CHRISTMAS EVE FAMILY SERVICE

A huge thank you to all the youth and children and their parents for the hard at work they put into preparing for a joyous and socially distanced Christmas Eve service.

The cast did a fabulous job in their roles.

- ◇ Scripture Reader: Emma Roberts
- ◇ The Angels: Maddie Alexander, Hannah Alexander, River Simonson (as both Gabriella and Ariel), and Emily Stoddart
- ◇ Mary & Joseph: Bella Nichols, Jackson Nichols
- ◇ The Shepherds: Jake Alexander, Cody Buenger
- ◇ The Twinkling Star: Carson Stoddart
- ◇ The Wise Ones (Mason, Braedon, and Octopus): Michael Kozak-Gula, Matthew Kozak-Gula, Noah Reed (I learned their real names this year from the Kozak-Gula family.)



Additional thanks go to Juliann Heilhecker for providing the accompaniment and to Morgan Jones for her assistance. Thanks also to Bill Dischinger for again supplying our manger.



### ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

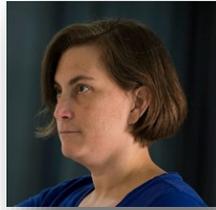
Thanks to Reverend Courtney for a fruitful and engaging four weeks looking at "*Light of the World*" by Amy-Jill Levine.

Beginning on January 10, Victoria Owens will lead us in looking at the book, "*Jesus Before Christianity*," by Albert Nolan. The author's portrait introduces us to Jesus as He was before He became enshrined in doctrine, dogma, and ritual, a man deeply involved with the real problems of His time, which are the real problems of our time as well.

If you are interested in joining the sessions, please contact us at [pilgrimageucce@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageucce@gmail.com).

## WORSHIP

*Diane Reese & Sarah Holliday Co-chairs*  
[pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com)



We are grateful to Rev. Courtney Jones for leading all of the services throughout Advent and Christmas. She provides extra opportunities for all of us to connect with one another on Zoom including Office hours for small groups, Vespers during Advent, the Breathing Room and more. Thanks to Auggie Jones for their onsite tech support during the Livestream Services. Thank you for the offsite tech support from Janet Derby during the Lessons and Carols service, to Sarah Holliday during the Vespers services and the Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols service, and to Sarah Holliday and Angela Gula for the offsite tech support for every single Livestream Service on Sunday mornings.

A variety of music and art additions were included in the services for Advent and made a huge difference in rounding out the 10:00 Livestream Services on Sunday mornings. Some extra instruments besides vocalists and piano included were a couple of trumpet players, a couple of guitarists, a clarinetist, a flute player, and in addition, a person on alto sax, tenor sax and baritone bugle. We also had some wonderful art; and especially enjoyed by all, were original drawn artworks by Matthew Gula, Michael Gula, and Noah Reed.

The weekly scripture readers throughout December were Matthew Gula and Michelle Kozak on December 6<sup>th</sup>, Noel and Ric Reitz on December 13<sup>th</sup>, Courtney and Reba Williams on December 20<sup>th</sup>, and Auggie Jones and John Leach on December 27<sup>th</sup>. We appreciate the help from all of you.

The scripture readers for the Lessons and Carols service on Zoom at 10:00 p.m. on Christmas Eve were Jaime Fulsang, Rochelle Lofstrand, Steve Owens, Ugena Whitlock, and Duke Yaguchi.

The Blue Christmas service of Thursday, December 3<sup>rd</sup> was very meaningful with helpful volunteers. Janet Derby provided us with Zoom music and art tech support. The scripture readers were Janet Derby, Juliann Heilhecker, Rev. Courtney Jones, Rochelle Lofstrand and Anne Mooney. The Sunday evening Advent Vespers services on Zoom were very prayerful and moving. The Advent Candle Lighters were Joyce Baker, Dick and Rita Mehlan, Allison Prahll and Reba and Courtney

Williams.

Many thanks for the music and artwork which have added to our Live Stream Services. The music selections have been contributed by Bill Dischinger, Angela Gula, Juliann Heilhecker, Michelle Kozak, Dan McMahill, David McMahill, Victoria Owens, Steve Owens, Diane Reese and Rochelle Lofstrand. Thank you to Matthew Gula, Michael Gula, Carol Hill, Juliann Heilhecker, Auggie Jones, Noel Reitz, Steve Owens and Duke Yaguchi for the artwork that they have submitted to be enjoyed.

We welcome any of you to submit music and art to the worship. Please email:

[pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com)

Thank you to everyone for your participation and support of Pilgrimage UCC Livestream and Zoom Worship Services. We wish many prayers and hopes for more to come in 2021.

## MISSIONS

*By Amy Nichols, Chair*  
[pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com)



November and December were busy months of giving, and Missions is so grateful to everyone who has helped make this possible!

The Thanksgiving food drive was a big hit! We collected so much food that we were able to deliver 8 traditional Thanksgiving meals complete with mashed potatoes, green beans, Sweet potatoes, corn and much more...including the turkey! We delivered them to The Extension in Marietta and to Family Promise's recent graduates. We were also able to stock the pantry at the Family Promise House just down the street. We provided lots of mac & cheese, peanut butter, delicious snacks and meal makers. Thanks to all who drove by and donated so much!

The Angel Tree was virtual this year and virtually every gift was spoken for in the first few days! We provided 20 gifts and some gift cards to deserving families from Rocky Mount Elementary School. The kids received shoes, clothes, toys and books to help make their holidays a little brighter! Thank you all for giving your time and money to make this happen so quickly!

## STEWARDSHIP

Anne Mooney, Chair

[pilgrimageucstewardship@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageucstewardship@gmail.com)



## CLIMATE CHANGE – A Christian Concern

*By Hugh Lowrey*

*O God, teach us to count our days that we may gain a wise heart. -Psalm 90:12*

**W**hy would the psalmist pray to be taught to count our days? I imagine it is a request for God to help the writer live more mindfully. Life can get pretty busy and it can also seem mundane. We often forget to appreciate the mini-blessings that occur within a day...the touch of a loved one, the taste of delicious food, a hot bath, a shared joke, or a beautiful sunset.

In this new year, I pray for awareness of just how sacred each day is. I pray that I am aware of the gifts each day brings and I pray this for each of you. I pray that we all grow to steward all that God has entrusted to us so that we grow to become the people God wants us to be.

Since this is a new year, I plan to consider a few spiritual practices to help me live out God's will for me. I thought I would share my list with you as part of my Stewardship article for January.

- ⇒ to begin and end each day with prayer.
- ⇒ find a way to demonstrate my care for at least one person each week, whether it be through a phone call, an email, or a hug.
- ⇒ do something to enrich my mind: attend a class, read a book, listen to a podcast.
- ⇒ strive to develop and maintain healthy habits of eating and exercise.
- ⇒ look for ways to be helpful like sharing a meal, doing a chore, or volunteer.
- ⇒ finally, PAUSE. Pause for at least a minute during my day to breathe and think about God and the many blessings in my life.

Wishing you peace and blessings in this new year.

**G**ood news about the climate is scarce these days. No surprise. The U.S. is getting nowhere, few other countries are doing much better and no one expects we'll achieve the goal of the Paris Accords – a minimal goal never expected to keep us free of climate grief.

Described below are a few climate problems that we or southerners after us are likely to face, considering our lack of progress, poor prospects for improvement and the time required to turn things around. It's disagreeable but is a sample, not the whole story, presented because it is so important that we all understand why action is vital, and understand the importance of persuading reluctant legislators.

Heat waves are intensifying in 60% of southern cities. By 2090, the effect of high temperatures on productivity will cost the Southeast \$47 billion annually. By 2100, South Texas will have more than 100 days annually, exceeding 100 degrees.

It is reliably forecast that sea level rise will flood almost the entire U.S. coastline in the latter half of this century. This doesn't mean always under water. It means that high tides and even minor storm surges will cause such frequent flooding in low lying areas, in and out of cities, that these places will become impractical to live in. The estimated cost is \$60 billion in lost property and related lost productivity.

Farmland will face species migration, with crops and sea life that once thrived in the Southeast moving north to survive. It's already happening in Central America. Farmers leave home because they can't grow their familiar crops anymore. There will be hugely increased human migration, within and between countries, as populations seek more livable conditions.

I fear that Congress will sink Biden's climate plans. Unfortunately, if no one else in a congressperson's political party has openly faced facts, then doing so takes courage that's rarely displayed.

## COMMUNICATIONS

Angela Gula, Chair

[pilgrimageucccommunications@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageucccommunications@gmail.com)



### *Our New Logo!*

Nearly a year ago, Pilgrimage received grant money from the UCC to help us rebrand and reach out as we welcomed our new pastor. Not long after we welcomed Reverend Courtney, COVID changed the way we gathered, worshiped, and connected.

As we continue to worship in new ways, our digital presence has become a critical piece of how we worship and reach others both near and far. While online services certainly can't replace in person worship, they have allowed us to share God's love with people from across the nation.

Over the past few months, the council has been working with a graphic designer to update our digital artwork and logo and add new images that show who we are and what we believe. Overall, the logo for Pilgrimage hasn't changed. You'll continue to see the distinct purple hands in all of the new logos, but you'll notice a newer font and variations of the logo.

Over the next month you'll begin seeing the updated logo during online worship, on our website, social media accounts, and print materials. You'll also start seeing new images we had created to help us spread the word of God's unconditional love for everyone.

## PROPERTIES

By Chris Shiver

[pilgrimageuccproperties@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccproperties@gmail.com)



Starting January 8, we will have a new professional cleaning service at PUC - Janitize.

They will be cleaning once a week on Fridays during this time when we are still only having minimal activities at the church.

God willing, when the vaccines sufficiently reduce the COVID-19 risk, and we can resume at least some of our in-person worship and other activities, then we will have them shift to cleaning twice a week.

We should also all express our appreciation to Juliann and Geoff Heilhecker for regularly cleaning the church, and doing a great job of it, during these last few months while we were searching for a new cleaning service.

Please keep practicing good health measures, and I'm looking forward to when we can all be together again.

Have a Blessed New Year!

## Deacons Fund Offering

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 31.

The Deacon Fund specifically helps those in need within the Pilgrimage community. You can help support each other by contributing to the Deacon Fund.

If you are able, let's continue to love and help each other by making a donation to the Deacon Fund.

You can mail a check to the church or use PayPal or ZellePay to send your donations. Please write "Deacon Fund" in the memo section of your payment. Thank you for your on-going support!

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

[pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com](mailto:pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com)

## STAFF

**Pastor**  
**Administrative Assistant**

**Rev. Courtney Jones**  
**Lynne Buell**

### Pilgrimage UCC's Emails

Pilgrimage UCC Website:	<a href="http://www.pilgrimageucc.org">www.pilgrimageucc.org</a>	Worship:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com</a>
Pastor-Rev. Courtney Jones	<a href="mailto:pastor@pilgrimageucc.org">pastor@pilgrimageucc.org</a>	Christian Education:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccce@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccce@gmail.com</a>
Office-Lynne Buell:	<a href="mailto:office@pilgrimageucc.org">office@pilgrimageucc.org</a>	VBS-Janet Derby:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccvbs@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccvbs@gmail.com</a>
Whole Council:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageucccouncil@gmail.com">pilgrimageucccouncil@gmail.com</a>	Communications:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageucccommunications@gmail.com">pilgrimageucccommunications@gmail.com</a>
Council President:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com</a>	Missions	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com</a>
Treasurer:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com">pilgrimageucctreasurer@gmail.com</a>	Properties	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccproperties@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccproperties@gmail.com</a>
Council Fin. Secretary:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccfinsec@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccfinsec@gmail.com</a>	Stewardship	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com</a>
Deacons:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com</a>	Parish Life:	<a href="mailto:pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com">pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com</a>

### **Meeting Schedule for Committees & Small Groups**

Book Club via Zoom (Fran Howard) .....	1st Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.
Pilgrimage Council (Amy Jones, Pres.) .....	Second Thurs. of the month via Zoom (7 p.m.)
Sandwich Club Support Group via Zoom .....	Quarterly Meetings
Spiritual Seekers' Group via zoom .....	4th Tuesday of the month—7:00 p.m.
PFLAG .....	Contact: <a href="https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-marietta">https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-marietta</a>

*This listing includes the group name, followed by the coordinator or director in parenthesis then the meeting days, locations and times. If your group should be added to this list, please e-mail [office@pilgrimageucc.org](mailto:office@pilgrimageucc.org).*

## The Month in Sundays

<b>January 3</b>	<b>Worship—Rev. Kimble Sorrells Preaching 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream Communion</b>
<b>January 10</b>	<b>Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream</b>
<b>January 17</b>	<b>Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream</b>
<b>January 24</b>	<b>Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream</b>
<b>January 31</b>	<b>Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream Deacons Fund Offering</b>