

PASTOR

Rev. Courtney Jones

pastor@pilgrimageucc.org



*Lord, make me an instrument of Your peace:
 Where there is hatred, let me sow love;
 Where there is injury, pardon;
 Where there is doubt, faith;
 Where there is despair, hope;
 Where there is [shadow], light;
 Where there is sadness, joy.*

*O divine [Creator], grant that I may not so much
 see to be consoled as to console,
 To be understood as to understand, to be loved as
 to love. For it is in giving that we receive, it is in
 pardoning that we are pardoned, and it is in dying
 that we are born to eternal life. Amen*

This prayer of St. Francis, with a few editorial licenses taken by me, is timely not only because October 4 is the Feast of St. Francis but also because we are in a time of chaos and upheaval. Several folks within the congregation have come to me about their anxieties about the political season, the pandemic, and other realities we are navigating. This is definitely not a “normal year.” As much as we would love to “keep politics out of it,” I firmly believe that part of our job as Christians is to use our faith as both a source of hope and as a barometer for building beloved community, which necessarily means that in this highly politicized moment, we are called to reconcile our worldview as citizens of God’s Kin-dom and our responsibilities as members of society. I’m not here to tell you what the right answer is in reconciling the Kin-dom of God with the kingdoms of earth; it’s way beyond my purview to tell you what to think or how to vote.

It is my job to remind you that if you are struggling with making meaning in this time, if your faith feels shaky, if you are worried and need a place to set that worry, you are not alone. The good news is that our tradition is wide and deep and readily available to you: there are tools in Scripture and among our spiritual ancestors and amidst the love of this community if you need them (the Prayer of St. Francis being a prime example).

No matter what happens in November or beyond, we are in this together and responsible to one another. We go on, trying to be on the right side of history, to “bend the moral arc of the universe toward justice (roughly quoting the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.)” and remembering that “justice is what Love looks like in public (quoting Dr. Cornel West).” St. Francis’s ancient prayer is encouragement to me that by God’s grace we can be instruments of peace, sowers of love, and beacons of hope, even when we look around and see so much hatred and division. Make space for clumsiness in the pursuit of love, but don’t accept abusive behavior—God made you to be glorious, and you deserve to be treated with love and respect.

God loves you, and so do I.

Courtney

World Communion Sunday

This year, because of the pandemic, we will celebrate World Communion Sunday virtually together from our homes on Sunday, October 4. Helene O’Neill compiled some of our favorite bread recipes into a booklet that is now available electronically (if you let us know we can have one printed and mailed to you as well). Click on this link, and you will be able to choose and make a bread from the booklet to use as your Communion element this Sunday.

<https://docs.google.com/document/d/1XipMD6h9RgNGMgcCVoY4ls3wYGaxCqFvdP2YBgBKfac/edit>

We would love for you to take a picture of your bread and so we can share it everyone on Sunday. Send your photo to:

sarah.holliday@gmail.com



**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.**

*“And all who
 have this hope
 in him purify
 themselves,
 just as he
 is pure.”
 1 JOHN 3:3*

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PRESIDENT

Amy Jones

pilgrimageuccpresident@gmail.com



*“Trust that little voice in your head that says
‘Wouldn’t it be interesting if...’; and then do it.”*

– Duane Michals

Pilgrimage is currently kicking off our Season of Commitment. During this time, we ask all members to prayerfully consider how they might give their gifts of time, talent and treasure to help fulfill the ministries of our church. COVID 19 has forced most of us to change our approach to many aspects of life, church included. We haven’t been able to worship in person with one another for months now. While our COVID Task Force is diligently working on options for future in-person events, there’s no doubt that until there’s a vaccine in widespread use, there will be changes to how we gather together.

As we begin to think about our Mission Spending Plan for 2021, I ask you to join me in dreaming of new ways we can be church to one another and to our community. When I dream about our future, I think of things like offering up our Next Generation House to people in our community who might need a safe place for their children to attend school virtually. It would mean increasing our internet capabilities and getting Wi-Fi in that building, but it could be a blessing to those who aren’t yet comfortable sending their kids back to face-to-face learning but don’t have reliable internet available at home. I think of opportunities to use our outdoor space for worship as an option and welcome suggestions on what we might need to do to make our space more inviting. I envision a future where we continue to offer thoughtful, spiritual online services as well as face to face worship. I wonder what things we might need to change in our space to enable us to more easily incorporate online viewers while also doing face-to-face services. I dream of members of our congregation creating new small group initiatives, some that appeal to those who want to be able to meet safely face-to-face and enjoy community and some that allow for an online only experience for those who aren’t comfortable with face to face. These small groups could focus on many different interests from book clubs, to movie/TV discussions, crafting activities and anything else members want to share with our community and volunteer to host.

My vision for us as a congregation is one where different perspectives are encouraged and supported, where we have offerings to meet the varied needs of our community and when we learn of a new need, we have the support of members and volunteers in the congregation to find ways to address them. As the needs of our congregation change, we must be willing to examine our ways of doing things and adapt when necessary. So, when you find yourself saying “Wouldn’t it be interesting if...” please make sure to share those thoughts with the rest of us. Together, we can create a vibrant, giving community of faith, flexible enough to respond to whatever the future may hold.

CONGREGATION VICE PRESIDENT

By Susan Volentine

pilgrimageuccvicepresident@gmail.com



Over the past several months I have been reflecting on what it means to belong and the biological need we have for belonging. I know I have felt a lack of belonging with the quarantine and inability to physically be in contact with others. I think we need physical contact for feelings of safety.

My daughter told me a story about the chickens at the barn where she keeps her horse. She was watching the chickens as they were pecking the ground for food. One chicken without realizing it was getting farther and farther away from the group. When the chicken realized she was alone, she quickly flapped her wings and ran back to the group. Chickens and humans are much safer in a group than alone. I have felt like that chicken over the past few months. I cannot see my flock up close and personal and cannot run back to see you all. I am grateful for the ability to see a lot of you on Zoom coffee hour and Zoom meetings. But it does not provide the sense of physical belonging that we as social animals need. The breathing room on Thursday nights led by Courtney has helped me picture myself in a field of flowers with God and I know that you all are over the horizon where I cannot see you all, but I can feel your presence. This visualization has brought me a sense of peace.

I hope these reflections of mine will help any of you out there who are also struggling with the issue of belonging.

STEWARDSHIP

Anne Mooney, Chair

pilgrimageuccstewardship@gmail.com



Now to him who by the power at work within us is able to accomplish abundantly far more than all we can ask or imagine, to him be glory in the church and in Christ Jesus to all generations, for ever and ever. Amen.
...Ephesians 3: 20-21

Re-Imagine the Church, Imagine Peace on Earth

This month we will celebrate Commitment Sunday on October 18. At this time, we will pledge our time, talents, and tithes to our church and its missions. As we approach this time, everyone is encouraged to prayerfully consider what gifts they might offer to God and the church. The scripture above reminds us that the power of God is with us and within us, encouraging our imaginations to inspire and help us be the church demonstrating God's glory in the world.

What new imaginings do you have for how we can be the church? Do you see yourself volunteering in a new way? Do you have ideas for a new mission project or a new study group? What about fellowship? Can you think of a fun and creative way to bring us together to enjoy each other's company safely? Are you called to give more to our church's Mission Spending Plan or some ministry supported by our church?

We invite you to share your ideas and to make your pledges of commitment as we "re-imagine" how to be the church and help bring peace on Earth.



We invite you to attend Parish Life's Joyful Noise event on Tuesday, October 13 at 7:00 p.m.

We will send out the Zoom information prior to the event. If you have any questions, or would like to take part as a performer, contact Katie Simmons, Chair of Parish Life at:

pilgrimageuccparishlife@gmail.com

CHRISTIAN ED

By Janet Derby

pilgrimageucce@gmail.com



Devotion Writers

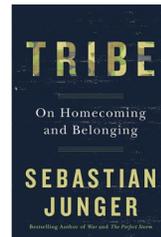
A huge thank you to our devotional writers who help to keep us connected spiritually during this time of physical separation. Writers take a portion of the upcoming week's Scripture passage and reflect on its meaning and relevance in their lives.

We can always use additional writers. If you are interested, please contact the Christian Education chair at:

pilgrimageucce@gmail.com

The Seekers Group

The Seekers class completed their *Green Faith* study by presenting a wonderful worship service on September 27th. Several of the group's members would like to continue their environmental advocacy efforts by creating a Creation ministry team. If you are interested in joining this effort, please contact Laurie Spencer or Kathleen McNulty.

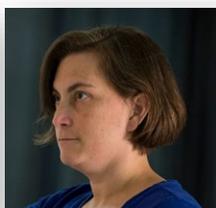


October Book Club

Our October Zoom meeting date is Tuesday, October 6 at 7:00 p.m. The book for discussion is "Tribe, On Homecoming and Belonging" by Sebastian Junger. Choose your favorite part of this book to share with the group. If you would like to join us, contact Fran Howard at 770-425-4567 or roberthow@aol.com for questions.

WORSHIP

Diane Reese & Sarah Holliday Co-chairs
pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com



MISSIONS

By Amy Nichols, Chair
pilgrimageuccmissions@gmail.com



Many thanks to Rev Courtney Jones for her continued strength and dedication pulling together the congregation of Pilgrimage and for creating ways to communicate with many of us virtually during the pandemic. Her Sunday morning livestream messages continue to be so inspirational and powerful and help make connections to the world around us. We also thank Auggie Jones for the many ways they support Rev. Courtney and the live stream services.

Thank you to the scripture readers for each Sunday. The scripture readers for Sunday, September 6th were Emily Stoddert and Trudy Stoddert and on September 13th, the Stewardship team included scripture readers Kathy Moncreiff and Duke Yaguchi. Sunday, September 20th, we heard Lily Appleton and Dan Wilson read scriptures with the Bi Flag in the background. The Seekers group with leadership from Trish Greeves inspired us during the September 27th service.

The leadership of Anne Mooney during September and October for this Season of Commitment has been wonderful including her sermon presentation on Sunday, September 13th. The theme is Re-Imagine the Church-Imagine Peace on Earth. Thank you to Duke Yaguchi for the artwork for the theme with the title, "Bridge Over Troubled Waters". The messages of hope for our church, our planet and the world are very inspirational.

We appreciate the music selections contributed by Juliann Heilhecker, Dan McMahill, Carol Reed and Diane Reese. Thank you to Juliann Heilhecker, Auggie Jones, Noel Rietz and Duke Yaguchi for the artwork that they submitted. We welcome folk to submit music and art to the worship email at:

pilgrimageuccworship@gmail.com

Many thanks to everyone who continues to support Pilgrimage UCC virtually during this time and to those who participate in the many opportunities which are available to us online as a congregation.

It's October which means, despite the pandemic, that we have much to look forward to, including cooler weather, beautiful fall foliage and the 50th Atlanta Pride Celebration! The first celebration was held in June of 1970, but the organizers moved the date to October in 2009 so as to keep participants out of our scorching Atlanta heat and to coincide with National Coming Out Day. This year, due to the need for social distancing, all events will be held virtually [beginning October 9th](#) and continuing through the 11th. At the time this newsletter article was due, details had not yet been posted but we will keep you informed as we get more information. In the meantime, you can read the Atlanta History Center's blog post about the [history of Pride Parades](#) in Atlanta and check out Wesley Chenault's wonderful piece, [Atlanta Since Stonewall, 1969-2009: A Local History](#), which "brings to life a segment of the city's LGBTQ past... Through photographs printed materials, ephemera and links to digital content, it presents diverse narratives of a marginalized people's lived experiences in the South's gay epicenter."

Last month the Missions Committee began sending out weekly *Faith In Action* emails highlighting social justice issues reflecting the values and priorities of the UCC. Each week you will find links to information where you can learn more about the issue, legislative action you can take and volunteer opportunities. Topics so far have included voting rights, the refugee resettlement program and the Covid-19 Relief Bill. These emails are sent out through Pilgrimage Google Groups. If you need help joining the group please contact:

office@pilgrimageucc.org



ONA (Open and Affirming)

By Sarah Holliday & Ugena Whitlock

LGBTQ+ History Month is an annual month-long observance of lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender history, and the history of the gay rights and related civil rights movements. LGBTQ+ History Month originated in the United States as Lesbian and Gay History Month, and was first celebrated in October 1994. It was founded by Missouri high-school history teacher Rodney Wilson. Wilson, the first openly gay public school teacher in Missouri, originated the idea, served as founder on the first coordinating committee, and chose October as the month of celebration.

October was chosen by Wilson as the month for the celebration for several reasons. The first and second Marches on Washington, in 1979 and 1987, were in October. National Coming Out Day is on 11 October, chosen to mark the date of the Second March of Washington for Lesbian and Gay Rights in 1987. October is within the academic calendar year, and as an educator, it was important to Wilson that teachers and students have a date for awareness building and celebration. LGBTQ+ History Month is intended to encourage honesty and openness about being LGBTQ+. In 1995, the National Education Association indicated support of LGBT History Month as well as other history months by resolution at its General Assembly.

Events like this and annual pride celebrations often seem "too much" when we find ourselves in a supportive community like Pilgrimage UCC. We don't have to worry about which denomination ordained the first openly gay man - we did! We don't have young people pretending to be something they're not, and we should be so proud of ourselves for that. However, none of that was possible at all times in history. In fact, many LGBTQ+ people had to suppress that part of their identity; sometimes they were erased from history altogether. So, although LGBTQ+ people have existed everywhere throughout history, the communities in the U.S. began to work to build visibility and acceptance starting in about the middle of the 20th century. By 1987, the LGBT ACT UP

movement was formed to end the AIDs pandemic and improve the lives of those living with AIDS. During the month of October, take time to think about the life stories and journeys of those in your life who identify as LGBTQ+, whether yourself or people you know and love.

Here's some trivia:

- 1623: Francis Bacon, a noted gay man who coined the term "masculine love," publishes "The Advancement of Learning—an argument for empirical research and against superstition." This deductive system for empirical research earned him the title "the Father of Modern Science."
- 1886: We'wha, a Zuni Native American from New Mexico, is received by US President Grover Cleveland as a "Zuni Princess." They are an accomplished weaver, potter, and the most famous Ihamana, a traditional Zuni gender role, now described as mixed-gender or Two-Spirit.
- 1962: Illinois becomes the first U.S. state to remove sodomy law from its criminal code.

To learn more, visit:

<https://www.glsen.org/lgbtq-history>

Think about how far we've come and how much further we can go!

Blessing of the Animals

Many churches in the United States celebrate *the Feast of St. Francis of Assisi* on October 4 each year. *The feast* commemorates the life of *St. Francis*, who was born in the 12th century and is the Catholic Church's patron *saint* of animals and the environment. It is a popular day for pets to be "blessed".

We will hold our annual Blessing of the Animals service in the church parking lot on Sunday, October 4 at 4:00 p.m. Masks and social distancing are required.

Below is the link to the sign up for this special in-person service. You have to sign up to attend, and there is a maximum number of people we are able to accommodate, so sign up soon!

You will receive a waiver to sign and bring with you once you sign up! See you soon!

<https://www.signupgenius.com/go/5080C4DA9AB2DA4FE3-blessing>



The Southeast Conference (SEC) of the United Church of Christ is the regional body of the United Church of Christ within the states of Alabama, northwestern Florida, Georgia, Mississippi, South Carolina, and Tennessee (except the city of Memphis). It maintains headquarters in Atlanta.

In addition to the conference minister, an associate conference minister implements programming to provide educational, youth, and evangelistic ministries for the churches. The Conference holds its annual meeting every June, and is governed by a board of directors between those meetings. The board consists of officers and representatives elected by delegates to the annual meeting, themselves in turn elected or appointed by the local congregations.

Rev. Char Burch is our Interim Conference Minister, and she serves in a part-time capacity. Rev. Heather Fosburg is our Associate Conference Minister, and she serves full time. Both of these wonderful humans have visited Pilgrimage in the last couple years and preached from our pulpit.

The SEC Board is comprised of a mix of lay and ordained congregants from around the UCC:

Moderator Rev. J R Finney from Covenant Community Church, Birmingham AL; **Vice Moderator Ugena Whitlock from Pilgrimage UCC**, Marietta GA; Secretary Gavin Warren, Holy Trinity Community Church, Nashville TN; Treasurer Heith Battles from Covenant Community Church, Birmingham AL; Chair, Commission on Ministry Ann Michele Rogers-Brigham from Safe Harbor Family Church, UCC, Clinton MS; Chair, Nominating Committee Rev. James Bowman Harris from United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN; Chair, Personnel Committee Penny Hensley from Phoenix Christian Church, UCC, Wildersville TN; Chair, Stewardship & Finance Juanita Simmons from Victory for the World, Stone Mountain GA; Member At Large Ginnie Ferrell from First Congregational UCC, Atlanta GA; Member At Large Hannah Mays from United Church of Cookeville, Cookeville TN; Member At Large Jennifer Crane Crenshaw from Brookmeade Congregational Church, Nashville TN; Member At Large Raymonda Speller from Community Congregation UCC, Montgomery AL; Member At Large Bennie R. Liggins from Unity UCC, Montgomery AL; Member At Large Holly E. Kendal from Emmanuel UCC, Greenville SC.

The SEC 54th annual meeting was originally scheduled for June 2020. Usually, this is a two day event, and it was to be held in Montgomery AL, with many small group events for youth, music, etc., and opportunities for the group to visit historic civil rights sites in Montgomery. The SEC board had been working very hard and had great visiting speakers lined up including Rev. Traci Blackmon.

The global pandemic forced the SEC board to move the meeting online, so it was hosted as a Zoom Webinar on Saturday, September 26. Pilgrimage was represented by Ministerial delegate Rev. Courtney Jones; lay delegates Diane Reese, Anne Mooney, and Sarah Holliday; and by Board member, Ugena Whitlock.

They opened with music and a slideshow of all the churches in the congregation. Pilgrimage UCC was well identified with photos of our exterior, our choir, and our altar table. These pictures were taken by Rev. Fosburgh from her visit last year, and it was delightful to see the Sanctuary from the pulpit point of view.

The Worship service opened with the passing of the peace from many of our congregations - Pilgrimage's video was included, and you can see us on the YouTube video. If you do watch the YouTube, you'll see that they had some technical glitches and were forced to postpone the Worship service portion of the day.

The business meeting opened with Rev. JR Finney reviewing the agenda and moving into the business of the meeting. Rev. Traci Blackmon - Associate General Minister, Justice and Local Church Ministries, UCC had shared a welcoming video as she was unable to attend directly.

There was a small amount of discussion around the budget, although no concerns were raised. The Proposed Bylaw Amendments were a response to the COVID pandemic and the language included was provided by the UCC's Counsel. In short, they add to the bylaws that meetings can happen digitally, as needed.

Ugena Whitlock then took over from Rev. Finney and presented the candidates for our new Board of Directors, Nominating Committee, and General Synod Delegates. They represent a diverse cross-section of our conference, and the slate was passed unanimously. **Notably, our own Ugena Whitlock was elected Moderator of the Conference! Congratulations, Ugena!!**

...Continued on page 7

UCC SEC Annual Meeting continued...

Rev. Finney returned and presented the Proposal and vote to begin the Search for a Conference Minister. This will be a big task for the entire conference, especially the new Board. There was a great deal of discussion about how the SEC's office would be structured and it is most likely that Rev. Fosburg's position will be eliminated in favor of a full-time Conference Minister and a part time staff person. Rev. Burch spoke in favor of the proposal and the Treasurer Heith Battles provided the fiscal context for the change. The motion passed, and there is now an opportunity for folks to be a part of this search committee; nominations for this committee are due by October 10. Visit the SEC website for the details.

The meeting closed with video contributions from the Rev. John Dorhauer – General Minister and President, UCC and Min. Carrole Moss, the SEC's Generosity Coordinator, thanks from Rev. Finney, our Ugena Whitlock, and Rev. Burch.

You can review the entire meeting by watching the SEC YouTube channel.



Monthly council meeting minutes are now available on the Member Information page of the Pilgrimage UCC website:

<http://pilgrimageucc.org>

The Member Information page requires a login which is quick and easy to set up. Members can also access the online directory, photo directory, newsletters, daily devotionals, Deacon list, and calendar of events in one place.

If you don't have a member login to the website you can follow the directions linked below to set one up today!

[Member Information Directions](#)

Pilgrimage UCC Media Opt-Out Form

As we add more media into our virtual worship service we want to be sure we are fully respecting your wishes regarding the sharing and use of your image on our social media platforms.

If you have no concerns regarding your image, video, or name being shared on our digital platforms you don't need to do anything.

If you would prefer we not use you or your child's images in print or digital materials, we ask that you complete the Media Opt-Out Form.

This form and additional information can be found on our website:

<https://www.pilgrimageucc.org/mediapolicy>

October Celebrations

BIRTHDAYS

10/01 Jason Fulsang
10/02 Adrian Puente
10/04 Sarah Holliday
10/11 Michael Hyland
10/12 Kellyn Nally
10/14 Sunny Alexander
10/17 Jean Ward
10/18 Palmer Farrar
10/19 Geoff Heilhecker
10/22 Rachel Puente
10/22 Aiden Scates

ANNIVERSARIES

10/20 Janet & Ken Derby
10/22 Stephen Williams & Wayne Scott

If we missed someone, please let Lynne know at: office@pilgrimageucc.org

“God as Priority”

By Hugh Lowrey

Pandemic perils, plastics pollution, police performance. Problems sore.
Russian rogues, run-down roads, race relations. Grief galore.
Milling marchers, missing monarchs, mauled minorities. More and more.
Malcontents will agitate, foes dispute, press publicize.
Each ill demands attention NOW. What to prioritize?

Covid sickens; covid kills, covid beats a deadly drum,
But some day vaccine there'll be and covid will succumb.
Fish and whales eat plastic rubbish, die and disappear,
But some day plastics that decay will turn up. Have no fear.
Police all gentle, wise and strong? Not likely. We can try.
And some day we'll amalgamate – no blacks or whites – Oh, my!
Add more woes to this sad list; man still comes out alive,
Unless you add in “climate change”. Will man that threat survive?

The climate threat should be described, to know whereof we speak.
Remember, it's still tame and mild, is nowhere near its peak.
We've seen wildfires that burn whole towns, drought that stays and stays,
Hurricanes that cause great floods, sitting still for days.
We've seen the tides swamp coastal towns while bright the shining sun.
And sudden, vicious winter storms that all New England stun.
All this and more goes on today while we sit on our hands.
What will finally befall us if we flout our earth's demands?

Many people think we'll act to tame our wayward world,
That if we don't, we're done for. To oblivion we're hurled.
What's more likely is our tardiness as we disaster quell;
That this list of cruel misfortunes may our valued culture fell:
Inundated coastal cities. Tropic heat destroying life.
Crops that will refuse to grow. Widespread famine. Strife.
All the world will be the victim; all the world will feel the hurt,
Save with dispatch and with promptness, global warming we avert.

The polls say that we are concerned o'er climate's awful threat.
Must we be desperate with fear, with terror be beset
Before we turn to our God? God's love and power we seek
And let God bring us wisdom; strength where we are weak.
God can give us unity and mend divisions, hate.
And the will to work together to avoid our hovering fate.
We can win if in humility we seek God's blessings now
Leave off our animosity and in God's presence bow.

STAFF

Pastor **Rev. Courtney Jones**
Administrative Assistant **Lynne Buell**

Pilgrimage UCC's Emails

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Deacons:	pilgrimageuccdeacons@gmail.com	Parish Life:	pilgrimageuccparishlife@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 (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: https://pflag.org/chapter/pflag-marietta

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.

Church-related Activities Are Meeting Via Zoom.

The Month in Sundays

- October 4** **Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream**
World Communion Sunday
- October 11** **Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream**
Stewardship Commitment Sunday
- October 18** **Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream**
- October 25** **Worship 10:00 a.m. Facebook Live Stream**