

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASTORIA

Our Mission Statement:

"To help people within a kind, safe and compassionate community to know Christ and grow His Love"






Week of December 18, 2023

Feeding Those in Need in Our Community

The food bank is very thankful to all of you who volunteer and those who donate food and money. Without you it would be difficult to serve the hungry of the Astoria area. Last month we gave 426 people in 163 households 2 x3 days of emergency food. Of those 55 were classified as houseless.



Announcements

-  **A Huge THANK YOU** – A huge thank you to the children, Rebecca Duffy, Sherry Payne and the children's grown-ups, for the beautiful and joyful retelling of the Christmas story on December 10. If you have pictures of the pageant, please send them to Pastor Paul or the church office.
-  **Sunday Mornings** – We need greeters, ushers and liturgists to share the warmth of our church family with all who come to worship. Sunday School Teachers are needed too! See the sign-up sheet in the back of the Sanctuary or contact the church office for more information.
-  **The Food Bank** – Is in need of cat food, mac & cheese and volunteers. Please contact the church office for more information. The Food Bank is open Monday through Friday from 3pm – 4pm, except on holidays, and is located on the north side of the church.
-  **Bowling & Pizza** – Come join us for fun, food, and fellowship at 5 PM on the third Wednesday of each month at the Lower Columbia Bowl in Astoria. And don't forget to invite a friend! Starting again in January.
-  **PW Women's Bible Study** – Women come join in the Presbyterian Women's Bible study, **Sacred Encounters**. We'll be meeting at 10AM on the third Saturday of the month, January 20 in the Parlor. For info call the church office. For more details see: <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/sacred-encounters/>

FRIDAY COFFEE (& TEA) FELLOWSHIP

COME JOIN US

Join us on Friday, January 13th in the church parlor at 10 am for coffee, tea, treats, and fellowship. Come join the fun!



NOTES FROM BEYOND THE PEWS

Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Hope and pray you all are doing well, are staying safe and are feeling blessed.

Hope and pray too that you are able to find God's peace during this Advent season as we quickly approach Christmas. As many of us know, finding the hope, peace, joy, and love of the season isn't always easy. Just as this season reminds us of some pretty wonderful things, it can also bring to the surface some emotions and memories that make it difficult to remember those pretty wonderful things that God has given all.

For some, there are financial challenges, maybe a layoff, unexpected bills, trying to find a way to buy presents while bills are piling up. For others there are the memories of lost loved ones. These memories are often stronger this time of year and leave us feeling empty and longing for Christmases past. For others, there may be anxieties and other emotions that distract from the season. Then to add to it all, there's not as much daylight this time of year which contributes to one's energy and positivity being diminished even quicker.

And yet, even with all that can drag us down this time of year, God's hope, peace, joy and love remain. And if we can and when we can remember that Advent is a season when we await, not only the celebration of our Lord and Savior's birth, but his foretold return and God's kingdom being established throughout creation, we can hopefully realize that, yes even though there are bad things going on in and around our lives, we serve a God who loves us more than we can comprehend and that God has never, nor ever will leave us, but will rather all be there with us, no matter what we are going through. As it is written in Lamentations 3:19-24, "I'll never forget the trouble, the utter lostness, the taste of ashes, the poison I've swallowed. I remember it all—oh, how well I remember—the feeling of hitting the bottom. But there's one other thing I remember, and remembering, I keep a grip on hope: God's loyal love couldn't have run out, his merciful love couldn't have dried up. They're created new every morning. How great your faithfulness! I'm sticking with God (I say it over and over)." (MSG)

In our best times as well as our worst times, we must always be in conversation with God. And in addition to God always being there to help carry us through any troubled times, so too are our siblings in Christ. As we read in James 5:14, "If any of you are sick, they should call for the elders of the church, and the elders should pray over them, anointing them with oil in the name of the Lord." We must do our best to give that which is weighing us down and keeping us from feeling any hope, peace, joy and love to God. When we do so, it is then that we may find our attention turned from what is keeping us down, and turned to God who will lift us up. As Jesus is quoted in John 14:25-27, "'I'm telling you these things while I'm still living with you. The Friend, the Holy Spirit whom the Father will send at my request, will make everything plain to you. He will remind you of all the things I have told you. I'm leaving you well and whole. That's my parting gift to you. Peace. I don't leave you the way you're used to being left—feeling abandoned, bereft. So don't be upset. Don't be distraught.'" The Holy Trinity is always there for each of us.

When we remember this, when we remember that wondrous event of that first Christmas morn and the gift that God gave all of creation in Jesus' birth and life, and the positive ripple effects that it has had on God's creation, it is my hope and prayer that the hope, peace, joy and love of God and the season will be rekindled in your heart and life.

Remember the words from Luke 2:11-14, "Your savior is born today in David's city. He is Christ the Lord. This is a sign for you: you will find a newborn baby wrapped snugly and lying in a manger." Suddenly a great assembly of the heavenly forces was with the angel praising God. They said, "Glory to God in heaven, and on earth peace among those whom he favors.'" (CEB) No matter what is going on in your life, may God's hope, peace, joy and love fill your whole being this Advent and Christmas season and every other day of the year and may you feel the rich blessings of the Holy Trinity each and every day.

Please stay safe. If you'd like to hear from me, please give me or the church office a call and let me know.

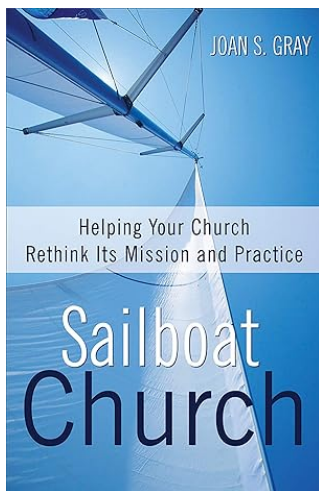
Blessings, peace, and merry Christmas,

Pastor Paul

Fun, Food & Fellowship at the Thanksgiving Dinner

A big thank you to all who made the Thanksgiving Dinner and Silent Auction a big success!
The silent auction raised \$2,581 toward the purchase of a new dishwasher!





Join us each Sunday following worship in the Christian Resource Room for the book study of **Sailboat Church**.

Next Class January 7 – Chapter 4

Are we a rowboat church or a sailboat church?

Rowboat churches depend largely on human effort. When church budgets shrink and membership declines, rowboat churches frantically row harder against a current, often frustrated and disappointed at their efforts. Sailboat churches, on the other hand, take up the oars, hoist sails, and rely on the Holy Spirit to guide them.

Arguing that churches should be "sailboats," Joan S. Gray encourages readers to shift concern from the many daily, practical concerns of their local church to fresh ideas that can be found using the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The book includes forty days of sailing prayers, quotes from Scripture, brief reflection questions, and an extensive bibliography that is arranged by theme. Perfect for groups to read together, this book will help leaders reframe their church's mission and practice with the Holy Spirit as their guide.

Copies available in the church office or you can purchase them online from Amazon at: <https://a.co/d/fB97Clr>
A Kindle version is also available.

Zoom Fellowship

Join us, every Sunday at 2PM for Zoom Fellowship. This is a great way for those who are unable to make it to Sunday worship, or other local events to reconnect with our church family. We look forward to seeing you!

If you would like to join the fellowship, please follow this link:

<https://us02web.zoom.us/j/9291402896?pwd=ejY1TGs5U1pkWE5EdFRyTy9hT1J4Zz09>

- Meeting ID: 929 140 2896
- Passcode: 344110

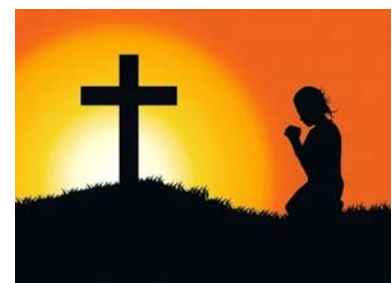
FPC Astoria Calendar

December	24	Worship Service 10am
	24	Lessons and Carols Candlelight Service 7PM
	31	Combined worship with Pioneer Presbyterian at FPC Astoria – 10AM
January	7	Coffee Fellowship & Sailboat Church Book Study following worship in the Christian Resource Room
	9	Session Meeting at 4:30PM in the Christian Resource Room
	12	Friday Coffee, Tea & Fellowship – 10AM in the Parlor
	17	Bowling & Pizza at Lower Columbia Bowling at 5PM
	20	Women's Bible Study – 10AM in the Parlor
	21	Annual Congregational Meeting following Worship

Prayers of the People –

Please send prayer requests to the church office

- Brodie MacDonald – Continued Healing
- Katy Paz – Healing & Peace
- Butch & Vinie Elliot – Healing & Peace
- Gerald Smith – Healing, Peace & Discernment



Continued Prayers for God's Creation

All those touched by mass shootings and other crimes of hate and violence.

The people of Ukraine, the Gaza Strip, and other parts of the world as their lives have been torn apart by war.

Those struggling for justice and equality.

Those suffering from oppression and violence.

Those who are forced to flee their homes, risking life and limb for the hope of a better life.

For those who prioritize profit over God's creation, that their hearts be changed to make serving and saving God's creation their one priority.

God's creation as it seeks to survive mankind's exploitation and global climate change.

The Votes are In!

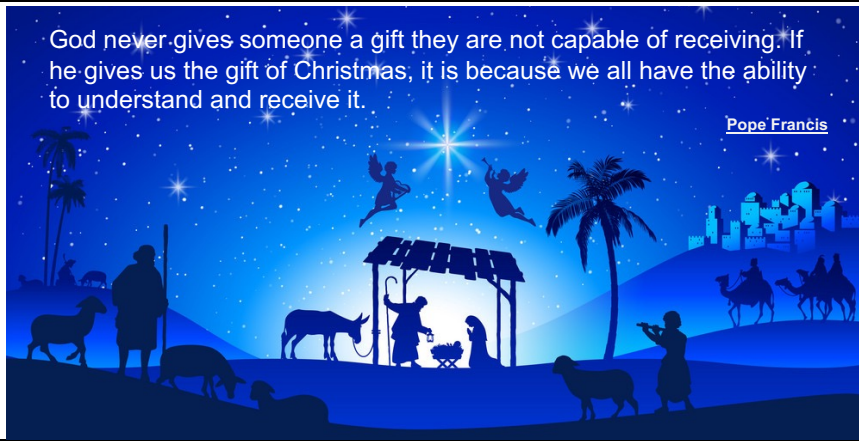
Because of all the positive input from many of you, your Session has unanimously voted to become part of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians. Our church family not only welcomes everyone who wishes to worship with us, we also accept everyone. Membership in Covenant Network of Presbyterians is one of many ways for us to share our Open & Affirming attitude with the rest of our community and the world. This also helps members of the LGBTQIA+ community to know that they truly have a safe place to worship and fellowship and that they would be welcome to join and be an active part our church family.

For more information about the Covenant Network of Presbyterians, see: <https://covnetpres.org>



Getting Involved in the Community

- ☪ Volunteers needed for the church's food bank to stock shelves and to help serve customers.
- ☪ Attend a local public meeting:
 - City of Astoria
 - Thursday, January 4, Design Review Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Tuesday, January 9, Historic Landmarks Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Tuesday, January 23, Planning Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Wednesday, January 24, Parks Board at 6:4PM
 - Clatsop County
 - Wednesday, January 10, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
 - Clatsop Community College
 - Thursday, January 11, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
 - Astoria School District
 - Wednesday, January 10, School Board Meeting at 7PM.
 - Port of Astoria
 - Tuesday, January 2, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.



Office Hours –

Monday through Thursday – 9:00 am to 12 noon

Pastor Paul’s Office Hours & Contact Information

Pastor Paul is in the church office during office hours and is available by phone, text or email most times.

Please note, Pastor Paul takes his Sabbath every Friday but is available on Fridays for emergencies.

Email: pastor paul@fpcastoria.org

Phone: 971.606.5606

Prayer Requests & Newsletter Articles & Information –

The newsletter is published the 2nd and 4th week of the month.

If you have anything that you would like included, please send it to the church office by 12 noon on Wednesday on the 1st or 3rd week of the month.

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Thanks to Keisha Jenkins (See Matthew 2:1-12) 12-22-20

I SURE HOPE MY WIFE LIKES MYRRH



First Presbyterian Church of Astoria

1103 Grand Avenue, Astoria OR 97103

Join us every Sunday at 10AM for a family friendly, Christ centered worship where all are welcome & accepted.

www.fpcastoria.org | email: office@fpcastoria.org | phone: 503.325.1702



An Open & Affirming Church Family



Scan for directions