

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 February 11, 2024

Lent Explained (BOCW, p 233)

"Lent" comes from an old English word for springtime, perhaps connected with the lengthening of days in this time of the year in the Northern Hemisphere. The season of Lent is a time for growth in faith— through prayer, spiritual discipline, and self-examination in preparation for the commemoration of the dying and rising of the Lord Jesus Christ. In ancient Christian practice, Lent was a time of preparation for the celebration of Baptism at Easter. In many churches, it remains a time to equip and nurture candidates for Baptism or confirmation, and for the whole community of faith to reflect deeply on the theme of baptismal discipleship. Reconciliation is a key theme in the season of Lent—reconciliation with God and with one another through the grace of Jesus Christ. Lent is a period of forty days—like the flood of Genesis, Moses' sojourn at Sinai, Elijah's journey to Mount Horeb, Jonah's call of repentance to Nineveh, and Jesus' time of testing in the wilderness. The Sundays in Lent are not counted among the forty days, as every Lord's Day is a celebration of Christ's resurrection. Lent begins with Ash Wednesday and concludes at sunset on Holy Saturday, at the start of the Great Vigil of Easter.



Announcements

- **Sunday Mornings** – Your help is needed! 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 during fellowship or contact the church office for more information.
- **The Food Bank** – Is in need of cat food, breakfast cereal, 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! Next Bowling & Pizza day is February 21.
- **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, February 17. 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 every month on the second Friday. We're meeting next on Friday, March 8th 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.

This last week we went over Chapter 6, The Making of Sailors, of the Sailboat Church. This chapter spoke of the importance of sailors in a church family, willing to lay down the preverbal oars and trust in the Holy Spirit to fill the sails.

Gray then explains what makes a sailor in the church family. She begins with the need to trust Jesus. Gray points out that Jesus is often not the reason people go to church. Gray wrote, "People join or remain in churches for many reasons. For example, there are social reasons: "It's where my friends are." Sometimes people want to be part of a group doing good things in the community. Others were born into the church and continue out of habit or duty. Still others involve the family in church because they want their children to have a moral compass. None of these reasons are bad, but they are not what the church is really about. The core purpose of the church is to partner with the Holy Trinity in the salvation and recreation of the world. Christian sailors are people who intentionally commit to this mission and put themselves under the authority of the Lord and head of the church, Jesus Christ."¹ To do this, we must have an active relationship with the Holy Trinity, trusting in the life and teachings of Jesus, and what he has done and continues to do for us.

The next thing that makes a sailor, according to Gray, is becoming a disciple. A disciple is a student and follower. As Gray wrote, "No one can be an effective sailor without first being a disciple of Jesus Christ. Intellectual agreement with a set of truths about Jesus is not discipleship. Discipleship is about identity with him and commitment to his way of life." (p42) In making this commitment, as Christ's sailors, we live out the love of Christ following the examples that Jesus gave us in his own life while remaining completely dependent on God to move us forward, guiding us in all our actions.

Another mark of one of Christ's sailors is being filled with the Holy Spirit. "When the Spirit fills us, we are possessed by God and full of God. So instead of saying "she or he has the Spirit," we should really say "The Spirit has him or her!" And this possession or filling is not a one-time thing." (p 44) And as the Holy Spirit fills our sails and moves our boat/church forward, so too does the Holy Spirit fill each of us, moving us forward and guiding us through each moment of every day.

The final part of being a sailor of Christ that Gray wrote about was putting on the whole armor of God. Each piece of God's armor has a specific task to help protect us from being torn apart by the trials and tribulations we will face in day-to-day living.

Gray suggests that we view the armor of God as spiritual practices that protect us as we seek to resist that which is not of God. The first practice is to keep focused totally on Jesus in every aspect of our lives. The second practice is to make sure we are practicing right living. As Gray wrote, "People should be able to see the light of Christ shine through our presence and our behavior every day." (p 46)

The third practice Gray wrote about was practicing faith. Faith is keeping focus on God no matter how bad things seem to be. Gray uses the example of the Apostle Paul and Silas, who were stripped, beaten and put in prison after doing God's work. Gray wrote, "Rather than bemoaning their fate or railing against the injustice of their arrest, the story says that at midnight they were praying and singing hymns to God (Acts 16:16-40). That is faith in action!" (p. 47)

The fourth practice is to remember that we have a God who saves us. Remember this helps to save us from two kinds of despair. The personal despair about ourselves and those we love and the despair about our world. We must remember that God's never-ending love and grace is meant for

all, and that God is in the process of saving the world and that we are called to be part of God's work.

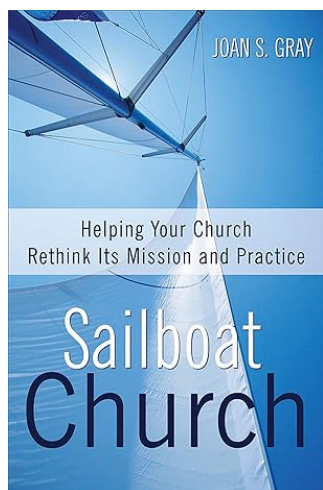
The fifth and final practice is looking to the power of God's word for our lives and mission. We must do more than read scripture, we must let scripture work on and in us so that we can truly be shaped into the people God calls us to be. We must look at scripture, with the guidance of the Holy Trinity, remembering that it must be taken as a whole with God's love as the foundation.

The next class is on February 18 when we will sail into Chapter 7, **From Rowboat to Sailboat: Raising the Sails**. If you've not been able to join the book study, but feel called to, you are always more than welcome to join. If, for whatever reason you can't join, I still urge you to read this powerful and amazing book. God is calling all of us to raise the sails and let the Holy Spirit move us forward.

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 and shalom,

Pastor Paul



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

Next Class February 18 –
Chapter 7

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.

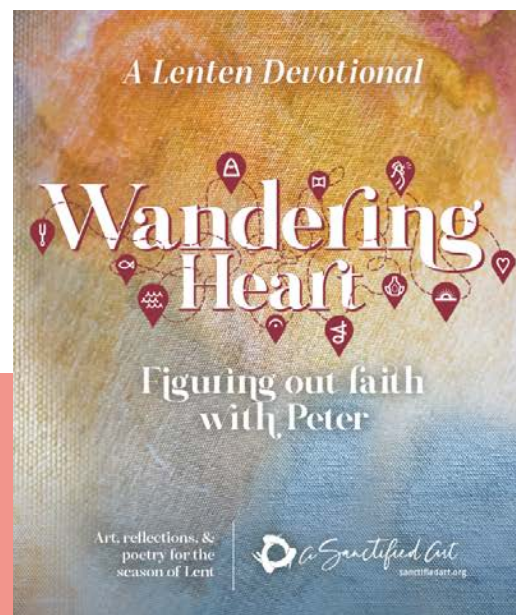
Arguing that churches should be "sailboats," Joan S. Gray encourages readers to shift concern from the many daily, practical concerns of their local church to fresh ideas that can be found using the guidance of the Holy Spirit. The book includes forty days of sailing prayers, quotes from Scripture, brief 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.

Lenten Devotionals Available

Beginning the First Week in Lent and concluding the Second Week of Easter, this devotional follows Simon Peter's journey with Jesus (as outlined in our Wandering Heart series). It includes weekly reflections with art, hymns, poetry, commentary, and journaling prompts. We encourage you to read the devotional at your own pace, looking for the ways your own story may be reflected in Peter's faith journey. As we wander through Lent, let us tune our hearts to sing God's grace. May we rest in streams of mercy, never ceasing.

Copies are available in the back of the sanctuary or by contacting the church office.



FPC Astoria Calendar

February	13	Session Meeting at 4 PM
	14	Ash Wednesday Service 5:30 PM in the Marcotte Chapel
	17	Women's Bible Study – 10AM in the Church Parlor
	21	Bowling & Pizza at Lower Columbia Bowling at 5PM
	24	FPC Astoria Leadership Training – 9AM – 4PM at Pioneer Presbyterian

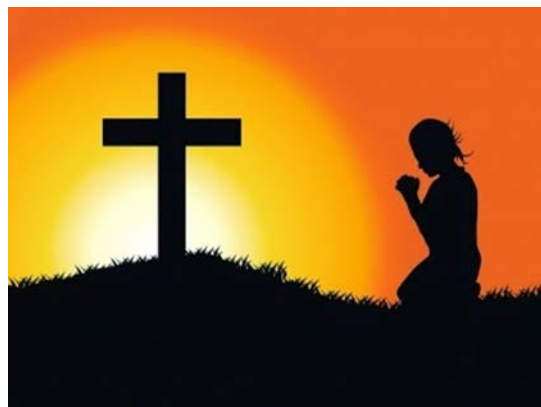
Working for Justice and Peace in February

All Month:	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Black History Month; blackhistorymonth.gov • National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, teendvmonth.org 	
Date(s)	Event
1	National Freedom Day, state.gov/national-freedom-day-deepening-our-resolve-to-fight-human-trafficking
1-7	World Interfaith Harmony Week, worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com
11	Souper Bowl of Caring, tacklehunger.org
12	International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers, redhandday.org One Billion Rising for Justice, onebillionrising.org
14	Ash Wednesday; presbyterianmission.org/resource/ash-wednesday-service-baptized-dust/ From the Presbyterian Women in the PCUSA https://www.presbyterianwomen.org

Prayers of the People –

Please send prayer requests to the church office

- Mary Wheaton – Healing
- Tom & Mardee Spaan – Healing & peace
- Duffy Mueller – Healing, Peace & Discernment
- 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 seeking 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.

We Welcome Our Newly Installed Ruling Elders!



Bob & Erin Magie

Church Directory

Next time you're at church, please take a moment to review the church directory. Let us know if your contact information needs updated or included.



We hope to have an up-to-date church directory before Easter.

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
 - Tuesday, February 13, Historic Landmarks Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Tuesday, February 20, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
 - Tuesday, February 27, Planning Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Wednesday, February 28, Parks Board at 6:45PM
 - Clatsop County
 - Wednesday, February 14, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
 - Clatsop Community College
 - Thursday, March 14, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
 - Astoria School District
 - Wednesday, February 14, School Board Meeting at 7PM.
 - Port of Astoria
 - Tuesday, March 5, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

Help is a Little Closer for Those in Need of Affordable Housing

County pledges help for affordable housing project in Astoria¹

A \$125,000 promise to Copeland Commons

By Olivia Palmer, The Astorian

Jan 25, 2024

An Astoria affordable housing project is one step closer to fruition after a pledge from Clatsop County. At a meeting on Wednesday night, county commissioners approved a \$125,000 pledge for Copeland Commons. The money — which comes out of the county’s share of American Rescue Plan Act funds — will be made available once the project has been approved by the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department.

In 2019, members of Astoria’s First Presbyterian Church purchased the Old State Hotel on Marine Drive. Since then, the group has formed a nonprofit with the vision of bringing more than 60 units of studio, one- and two-bedroom apartments to the building. The group is partnered with Innovative Housing Inc., the nonprofit developer that renovated the former Waldorf Hotel next to City Hall into the Merwyn Apartments. Copeland Commons, an affordable housing project, is planned for a former hotel building on Marine Drive.

Bill Van Nostran, the former pastor of First Presbyterian Church and the registered agent for Copeland Commons, said the county funding will play an important role in closing a \$1.5 million funding gap. “It just is all coming together,” he said. “This is the closest we’ve ever been to making application to OHCS.”

After entering a contract with Copeland Commons, Innovative Housing identified an estimated \$1.5 million budget shortfall and asked the nonprofit’s board to raise that amount before submitting an application to the state. Last year, they missed the deadline — but this spring, Van Nostran is hopeful they’ll have the funding in hand.

In addition to the \$125,000 pledge from the county, Copeland Commons has also received a \$500,000 pledge from Columbia Pacific Coordinated Care Organization and additional support from the county through a brownfield grant program. They’ve also raised about \$25,000 locally and have been promised \$300,000 from a local nonprofit, Van Nostran said.

In past years, the Oregon Housing and Community Services Department reviewed applications through a competitive scoring system. This year, all applications will be reviewed.



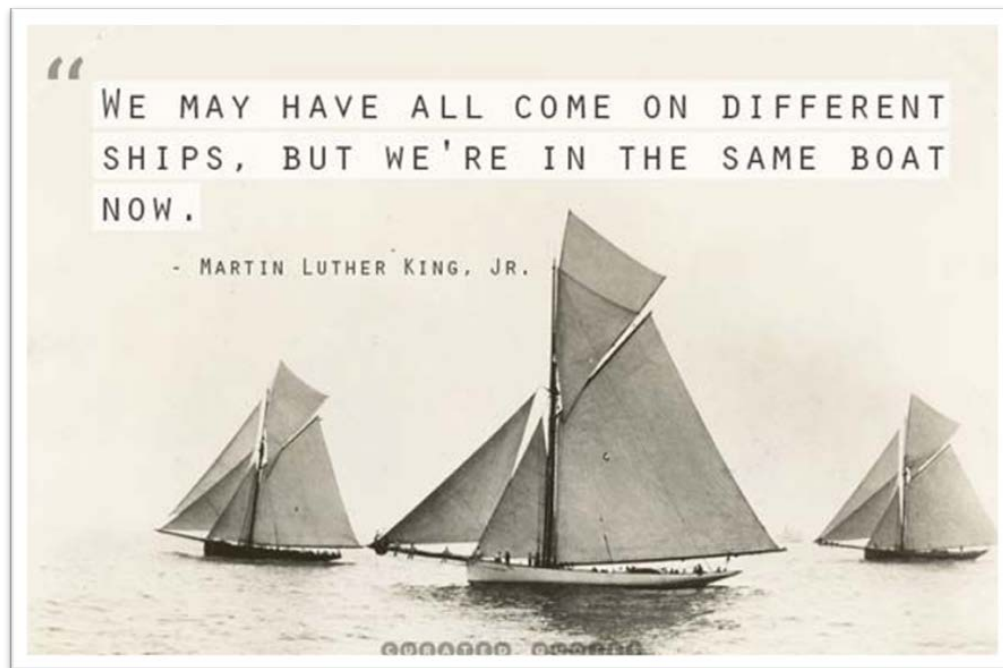
¹ https://www.dailyastorian.com/news/local/county-pledges-help-for-affordable-housing-project-in-astoria/article_830d2558-bbd2-11ee-8c85-9fabab9ad2c8.html

"IHI took a look at the whole thing and the new decision-making procedure, and said, 'Boy, if the local board could raise a million and a half dollars, we would really feel confident going in, in April in the 2024 round,'" Van Nostran said.

Van Nostran said Copeland Commons has already received bids from multiple contractors. Assuming the project is approved this funding cycle, he added, they could get authority to access federal housing funding as early as July. To him, the county's pledge is one step in Copeland Commons' long journey toward making the affordable housing project a reality.

"This is a culmination of six hard years of work," Van Nostran said.

Olivia Palmer Reporter



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 always available for emergencies.

Email: pastorpaul@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 Jesse Caldwell (See Exodus 20:1-21) 02-07-2001

I DON'T KNOW ABOUT YOU, BUT I'VE ONLY
FOUND A COUPLE THAT WORK FOR ME



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



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