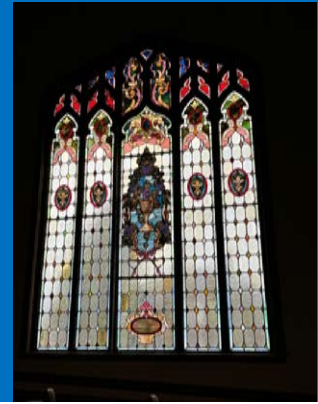


FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASTORIA

Our Mission Statement:

"To help people within a kind, safe and compassion"

Week of July 15, 2024



The 226 General Assembly Wrapped up in Salt Lake City Earlier this Month

The General Assembly, the governing body of our denomination, the Presbyterian Church USA (PCUSA), wrapped up its 226th meeting earlier this month in Salt Lake City Utah. As at most GAs, a lot was covered and accomplished. I invite you to visit <https://ga-pcusa.org/news/> for more details.

As for a little more about the General Assembly, here's something from our Book of Order:

The General Assembly constitutes the bond of union, community, and mission among all its congregations and councils, to the end that the whole church becomes a community of faith, hope, love, and witness. As it leads and guides the witness of the whole church, it shall keep before it the marks of the Church (F-1.0302), the notes by which Presbyterian and Reformed communities have identified themselves through history (F-1.0303) and the six Great Ends of the Church (F-1.0304). (G-3.0501)

Announcements

- [New Members/Inquirers Class](#) – If you'd like to learn about becoming an official member of our church family, or if you'd just like to learn a little more about our denomination, come join Pastor Paul in his office after worship on the 2nd & 4th Sundays of the month.
- [Prayer Time](#) – If you feel a call in your heart to share in conversation with our loving God in a time of prayer, please join us each Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30am in the Christian Resource Room for a time of meditation and prayer. We will use this time to share with each other and our loving God, and then listen for God's still speaking voice to respond to our hearts and minds.
- [The Food Bank](#) – Is in need of reusable bags, cat food, dog food, 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.
- [Sunday Mornings](#) – HELP! We need greeters, ushers, liturgists, & Sunday School teachers to help with our Sunday worship. See the sign-up sheet in the back of the Sanctuary or during fellowship or call the church office for more info.
- [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 August 21st.

FRIDAY COFFEE (& TEA) FELLOWSHIP

COME JOIN US

Join us every month on the second Friday for coffee, tea, treats, and fellowship. Our next gathering is August 9th in the church parlor at 10am. Come join the fun!



NOTES FROM BEYOND THE PEWS

Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

Hope and pray this note finds you well and feeling blessed.

One of my favorite passages from the Gospels is Matthew 14: 22-33,

As soon as the meal was finished, he insisted that the disciples get in the boat and go on ahead to the other side while he dismissed the people. With the crowd dispersed, he climbed the mountain so he could be by himself and pray. He stayed there alone, late into the night.

Meanwhile, the boat was far out to sea when the wind came up against them and they were battered by the waves. At about four o'clock in the morning, Jesus came toward them walking on the water. They were scared to death. "A ghost!" they said, crying out in terror.

But Jesus was quick to comfort them. "Courage, it's me. Don't be afraid."

Peter, suddenly bold, said, "Master, if it's really you, call me to come to you on the water."

He said, "Come ahead."

Jumping out of the boat, Peter walked on the water to Jesus. But when he looked down at the waves churning beneath his feet, he lost his nerve and started to sink. He cried, "Master, save me!"

Jesus didn't hesitate. He reached down and grabbed his hand. Then he said, "Faint-heart, what got into you?"

The two of them climbed into the boat, and the wind died down. The disciples in the boat, having watched the whole thing, worshiped Jesus, saying, "This is it! You are God's Son for sure!" (MSG)

What really touches me in this passage was Peter's excitement to join Jesus in his walk on the water, even in the middle of a raging storm. This says to me that, as a follower of Christ, we can do some pretty amazing things as long as we are focused on Jesus and are emulating him. But we must stay focused on Jesus regardless of how big and scary the storm is surrounding us. The minute we take our focus off of Jesus and put it on the storm, that is when we begin to sink as did Peter.

Siblings in Christ, with all that is happening in the world, and with the uncertainty of the elections in November, there is little doubt that we are in the middle of a storm and that that storm could possibly increase in intensity. But, if we have faith in our faith, and keep focused on the Holy Trinity, our fears will be replaced with God's peace or shalom. This doesn't mean that the storm necessarily stops, instead, it means that it doesn't affect you the way it did those on the boat who were focused on the storm and were, "...scared to death." It is indeed my prayer that the storm doesn't intensify come November, but regardless of if it does or doesn't, as long as we continue our focus together on God, Jesus, and the Holy Spirit, we will endure.

When, together, we stay focused on Jesus, remembering to follow his commands to selflessly love God and one another, we may not literally find ourselves walking on water, but we may find that we are able to do some pretty amazing things in spite of the storm. So, keep up the faith and trust the Holy Trinity to see us through.

Please be safe and take care of yourselves. Be kind to those around you, and that includes yourself. If you'd like to hear from me, please give me or the church office a call and let me know. Don't forget to not just invite someone to church or a church event, bring them! See you at church!

*Blessings and shalom,
Pastor Paul*

FPC Astoria Calendar

2 nd & 4 th Sundays		New Members/Inquirers Class in Pastor Paul's office following worship	
Every Tuesday & Thursday		Prayer Time at 9:30am in the Christian Resource Room	
July	18	Thursday	Deacon's meeting at 11am in the Christian Resource Room
	23	Tuesday	Session Meeting at 2pm in the Christian Resource Room
August	4	Sunday	Worship & potluck with Pioneer 10am at Coffenbury Lake, Shelter C
	5-11	Mon-Sun	Pastor Paul on vacation (<i>no New Members/Inquirers Class</i>)
	9	Friday	Friday Coffee, Tea & Fellowship – 10am in the church parlor
	13	Tuesday	Building Liaison Meeting – 11am in the Christian Resource Room
	21	Wednesday	Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship at the Lower Columbia Bowl at 5pm

Prayers of the People – Please send prayer requests to the church office

- Family & Friends of Juanita Price in their time of mourning
- Crystal Oliver – Healing, Strength & Peace
- Family & Friends of Bob Girard in their time of mourning
- Rebecca Springle – Her mother's cancer & father's bodily challenges
- Jennifer & Timothy Kramer – Healing & discernment
- George Willsie - Healing
- JoAnn Feary – For complete healing
- Fred & Norma Novak – Healing, peace and discernment
- Jackie Templeton – Remembering her husband of 60 years, Mike, who died a year ago.
- Bob Blue – Mourning the loss of his wife, Barbara.
- Glen Ahrens – healing of his knee so that he retains full use of it.
- Marcella Price – Healing & Peace
- Michael Smith – Healing & Discernment
- Linda from Chicago – Healing & Discernment
- Joanna from Seaside – Healing & Discernment
- Kari Stedman – Healing & Discernment
- Patti Brockhoff – Healing & Discernment
- Will Sheridan – Healing & Discernment
- Alice Burgess – Healing & Discernment
- 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.

Getting Involved in the Community

- ✚ Volunteers are needed for the church's food bank to stock shelves and to help serve customers.
- ✚ Attend a local public meeting:
 - City of Astoria
 - Monday, August 5, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
 - Tuesday, August 20, Historic Landmarks Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Tuesday, August 27, Planning Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Wednesday, July 24, Parks Board at 6:45PM
 - Clatsop County
 - Wednesday, July 24, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
 - Clatsop Community College
 - Thursday, August 20, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
 - Astoria School District - Wednesday, August 14,
 - Budget Hearing at 5:45PM.
 - School Board Meeting at 7PM.
 - Port of Astoria
 - Tuesday, August 6, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

Working for Justice and Peace in August

6	Hiroshima Day; pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/hiroshima-day-prayer
8-11	2024 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women; http://presbyterianwomen.org/gathering
9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People; un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day
11	Day of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula; pcusa.org/resource/sunday-prayer-worship-for-peaceful-reunifica-78123
18	Public Education Sunday; presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/child
19	World Humanitarian Day; worldhumanitarianday.org/ or en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Humanitari-an_Day
From the Presbyterian Women in the PCUSA https://www.presbyterianwomen.org https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2024-JP-Calendar-FA-rvsd-2.pdf	

Find Out More About What's Happening in our Denomination

Find out more about what is going on in our denomination, the PCUSA, by visiting and subscribing to the PC(USA) News at <https://www.pcusa.org/news/>

Current stories include:

- ✚ [Can you help an International Peacemaker?](#)
- ✚ [The full circle of gun violence prevention](#)
- ✚ [The limits of forgiveness](#)

National Council of Churches decries Supreme Court ruling criminalizing unhoused persons

Communication July 15, 2024

<https://www.presbyterianmission.org/story/national-council-of-churches-decries-supreme-court-ruling-criminalizing-unhoused-persons/>

The NCC calls on people of faith among its 37 member communions to take action in their local community

by the National Council of Churches | Special to Presbyterian News Service

“Do not neglect to do good and to share what you have, for such sacrifices are pleasing to God.” — Hebrews 13:16

The National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA strongly opposes the Supreme Court’s recent decision in [City of Grants Pass, Oregon v. Johnson](#), which allows the enforcement of laws regulating camping on public property and has significant implications for homeless individuals across the nation.



Photo by Nathan Dumlao via Unsplash

The ruling determined that such enforcement does not violate the Eighth Amendment’s prohibition against cruel and unusual punishment, overturning lower court decisions that sided with the plaintiffs based on *Martin v. Boise*. That ruling, issued without dissent, upheld the finding by the 9th Circuit that persons experiencing homelessness could not be punished for sleeping in public spaces when no alternatives were available.

The Supreme Court’s ruling not only overturns a broadly agreed upon precedent but represents a systemic failure to support those most in need. According to the U.S. Department of Housing and Urban Development, approximately 653,100 people in the U.S. experienced homelessness on a single night in 2023, a 12% increase from 2022. Black Americans and other people of color are disproportionately affected. This growing crisis severely impacts the most vulnerable, leading to poor health, lack of safety, and limited access to education and employment opportunities.



Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie

“Jailing people experiencing homelessness will do nothing to address the poverty crisis in Grants Pass or anywhere else in this country. Indeed, it will likely worsen the crisis due to the collateral consequences of having a criminal record,” said Bishop Vashti Murphy McKenzie, NCC President and General Secretary. “All this will continue to feed the mass incarceration of those who are poor and will disproportionately affect people of color who have been targeted by policies including Jim Crow segregation, redlining, and various forms of housing discrimination that still exist today.”

The NCC’s steadfast commitment to justice and support for the unhoused community is rooted in our faith and guided by our Christian mandate to love and serve our neighbors. We are dedicated to creating a future where systemic change addresses poverty, the lack of affordable housing, and inadequate social services.

Our efforts include advocating for legislative reforms, supporting transformative local and national programs aimed at ending homelessness, and raising awareness about the challenges faced by the unhoused. Alongside coalition partners, we have advocated for upholding lower court decisions in *City of Grants Pass v. Johnson*. Through collaboration with diverse organizations, faith communities, and advocates, we amplify our impact and foster meaningful change.

Proverbs 29:7 reminds us, “The righteous know the rights of the poor; the wicked have no such understanding.” Addressing homelessness is essential for creating a just and compassionate society. We urge all who are a part of our member denominations to take action in their local communities, recognizing that change begins at the grassroots level. The NCC provides resources and support to congregations and faith communities to engage in this vital work. Together, we can build a society that reflects the values of justice, compassion, and dignity for all.

Serving as a leading voice of witness to the living Christ in the public square since 1950, the [National Council of the Churches of Christ in the USA](#) brings together [37 member communions](#), including the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), and more than 30 million Christians in a common commitment to God’s love and promise of unity.

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.

REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



Thanks to Ian (See Mark 4:35-41)

06-23-2006

JUST GIVE ME FIVE MORE MINUTES



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