

# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASTORIA

## *Our Mission Statement:*

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

## Week of July 28, 2024



### Book of Order Tidbit

W-2.0302: Deacons - Deacons are called to lead the congregation in compassion, witness, and service, representing the ministry of the church in the world and the presence of the world in the church. While deacons have no particular responsibilities for the ordering of worship, the session should ensure that deacons (where present) have regular opportunities to lead in worship, and that their ministries of compassion, witness, and service are reflected in the public services of the church.

Our deacons are:

- Mike Curtis
- Jenny Curtis
- Jay Kirkpatrick
- Diane Hankins
- Joan Scoggins
- Hazel Davidson

### Announcements

- **The Food Bank** – Is in need of reusable bags, cat food, dog food, breakfast cereal, canned soup 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, pizza, and fellowship at 5 PM on at the Lower Columbia Bowl in Astoria. And don't forget to invite a friend! Our next bowling & pizza night is Wednesday, August 28<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

### 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 9<sup>th</sup> in the church parlor at 10am. Come join the fun!



Coffenburg Lake at Ft. Stevens' State Park Shelter C



Join us August 4 at 10AM, For Our Combined Worship & Picnic Potluck with Our Sister Church, Pioneer Presbyterian Church in Warrenton



Scan with your phone for directions.

## NOTES FROM BEYOND THE PEWS

### *Thoughts from Pastor Paul*

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

There is little doubt that we are blessed to live in such a beautiful place. Even though I have not traveled anywhere near as much as so many others, the different places I have been to seem to have their own unique beauty. For example, I've always loved traveling through the Columbia River Gorge from one end to the other. On the west end of the gorge, the sheer cliffs with the many waterfalls, together with the magnificent Columbia River are quite breath-taking. As you head east, along the mighty Columbia, those sheer cliffs begin to give way to rolling hills that go on as far as the eye can see. Although the eastern end is a great contrast to the western end, it still takes my breath away with its own beauty. In short, God's creation is a true gift to all that should be cherished and enjoyed with the reverence it deserves.

It's sad though that, for many centuries, instead of taking care of this wonderous gift from God, so many have abused it for their own gain and/or lack of concern. Genesis 1:28, God tells Adam and Eve, "Prosper! Reproduce! Fill Earth! Take charge! Be responsible for fish in the sea and birds in the air, for every living thing that moves on the face of Earth." (MSG) God didn't tell them to exploit creation, God told them, and tells us, to be responsible for it. When my dad handed me the keys to his car, he made me responsible for it. And, if I had treated my dad's car the way we have treated God's creation, my dad would have never let me even see his car again.

God even told Moses on Mt. Sinai, the same place Moses received the ten commandments, "Speak to the People of Israel. Tell them, When you enter the land which I am going to give you, the land will observe a Sabbath to God. Sow your fields, prune your vineyards, and take in your harvests for six years. But the seventh year the land will take a Sabbath of complete and total rest, a Sabbath to God; you will not sow your fields or prune your vineyards...The land gets a year of complete and total rest." (MSG, Leviticus 25:1-5) But as the corporate world seeks to make better profits than the previous year, allowing land a Sabbath is just not cost effective. So instead of allowing creation to rest and rejuvenate, even though there might be adverse side-effects, chemicals are added to the soil so that it will still produce.

Our denomination, the PCUSA, in 1990 at the 202<sup>nd</sup> General Assembly, adopted Restoring Creation for Ecology and Justice, which calls our denomination to engage in the tasks of restoring creation. To help our denomination live into this, Earth Care Congregations were established. "Earth Care Congregations are congregations that have committed to the "Earth Care Pledge" and accomplished a specific number of actions toward caring for God's earth in four categories: worship, education, facilities, and outreach."<sup>1</sup> As the Earth Care Congregations guide states, "Our faith urges us to strive for eco-justice: defending and healing creation while working to assure justice for all of creation and the human beings who live in it. This call is rooted in the human vocation of "tilling and keeping" the garden from Genesis 2:15, as well as Christ's charge to work with and for the most vulnerable. Because of their love for Christ who is firstborn of all creation (Colossians 1:15), churches are challenged to live in a manner consistent with God's call to not only care for creation, but commune with creation."

Our session is looking into what it would take to become an Earth Care Congregation, but in the meantime, I encourage each of us to take the steps to act as an Earth Care individual. Making choices that help to support the gift that God has given us in this beautiful, diverse world that is God's creation. You can follow this link to find out more about being an Earth Care Congregation:

[Earth-Care-Congregation-Application-for-ECCs.xlsx \(live.com\)](#)

<sup>1</sup> <https://www.presbyterianmission.org/resource/earth-care-congregations-guide-greening-presbyteri/>

Together, and with God’s help, we can restore God’s creation for future generations to the way God intended it.

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 <sup>nd</sup> & 4 <sup>th</sup> 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	
August	4	Sunday	Worship & potluck with Pioneer 10am at Ft. Stevens’ 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
			Session Meeting – 2pm in the Christian Resource Room
	18	Sunday	Book Study – The Bible’s Yes to Same Sex Marriage – following worship in the Christian Resource Room
	25	Sunday	Fellowship & Worship at Astor Place at 2pm & Clatsop Retirement Village at 3pm
	28	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
- Duffey 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.

## **New Members/Inquirers' Classes**

Wondering what it means to be a Presbyterian? Wondering what church membership is all about? Wondering why church membership is important? Well, come join us for a New Members' class and we'll do our best to answer all your questions. Whether you're interested in joining, just wanting to find out more information, or maybe you're a current member that just wants a refresher course, all are welcome to attend. Join Pastor Paul in his office after worship on the 2<sup>nd</sup> & 4<sup>th</sup> Sundays of the month. The next class will be on Sunday, August 25.



## **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.

Unless the Holy Spirit says otherwise, we will continue this every following Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30am in the Christian Resource Room unless otherwise noted.

We hope to see you there.



## *Book Study Beginning Sunday, August 18 – The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage by Mark Achtemeier*

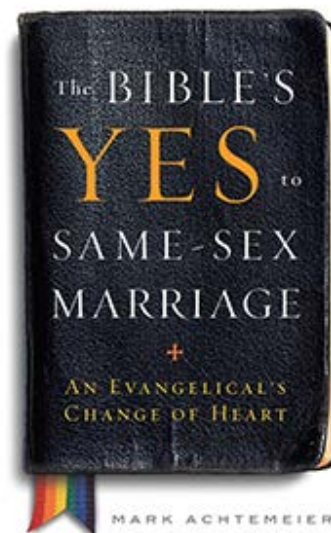
In the early 2000's, Mark Achtemeier embarked on a personal journey with the Bible that led him from being a conservative, evangelical opponent of gay rights to an outspoken activist for gay marriage and a fully inclusive church. In *The Bible's Yes to Same-Sex Marriage*, Achtemeier shares what led to his change of heart: the problems with excluding groups of people and the insights into the Bible's message that led him to recognize the fullness of God's love and support for LGBT persons. Readers will discover how reading snippets of Scripture out of context has led to false and misleading interpretations of the Bible's message for gay people. Achtemeier shows how a careful reading of the whole Scripture reveals God's good news about love, marriage, and sexuality for gay and straight people alike.

**Meeting Sundays following worship in the Christian Resource Room beginning August 18. So, come, fellowship & learn!**

Copies of the book are available for Nook and Kindle or in print at:

- <https://www.barnesandnoble.com>
- <https://www.amazon.com>

If you would like a copy of the book, please contact the church office.



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## *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.
  - Clatsop County
    - Wednesday, August 14, 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; <a href="https://pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/hiroshima-day-prayer">pda.pcusa.org/pda/resource/hiroshima-day-prayer</a>
8-11	2024 Churchwide Gathering of Presbyterian Women; <a href="http://presbyterianwomen.org/gathering">http://presbyterianwomen.org/gathering</a>
9	International Day of the World's Indigenous People; <a href="https://un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day">un.org/en/observances/indigenous-day</a>
11	Day of Prayer for the Peaceful Reunification of the Korean Peninsula; <a href="https://pcusa.org/resource/sunday-prayer-worship-for-peaceful-reunifica-78123">pcusa.org/resource/sunday-prayer-worship-for-peaceful-reunifica-78123</a>
18	Public Education Sunday; <a href="https://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/child">presbyterianmission.org/ministries/compassion-peace-justice/child</a>
19	World Humanitarian Day; <a href="https://worldhumanitarianday.org/">worldhumanitarianday.org/</a> or <a href="https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Humanitarian_Day">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/World_Humanitarian_Day</a>
From the Presbyterian Women in the PCUSA   <a href="https://www.presbyterianwomen.org">https://www.presbyterianwomen.org</a> <a href="https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2024-JP-Calendar-FA-rvsd-2.pdf">https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2024-JP-Calendar-FA-rvsd-2.pdf</a>	

## What's Happening in Our Session

### From Your Clerk of Session

When the session reviewed Pastor Paul's contract, which was up for renewal on July 15 on his one-year anniversary, it was decided to seek to change his contract from a temporary supply pastor to permanent, installed pastor. The following letter was submitted to the Presbytery's Committee on Ministry. The next step will be on November 1<sup>st</sup> and 2<sup>nd</sup> in Medford Oregon when the Presbytery votes to approve the new call status, requiring a 3/4 vote in the affirmative to pass. At that point there will be a called congregational meeting to vote to approve Pastor Paul as a permanent, installed pastor.

God Bless,  
Rebecca

DATE: July 18, 2024

As Clerk of Session for First Presbyterian Church Astoria, Oregon, we would like the Presbytery of the Cascades to grant an exception through G-2.0504c to allow Rev. Paul Davidson, currently serving as Stated Supply, to convert the pastoral relationship to Installed Pastor.

- As required, the session and members of the church met with COM-NW members Jim Wallace and Derek Richman on July 17, 2024, and shared the following reasons and rationale as to why the church believes this is in the best interest of the church, congregation, the mission, ministry and future of First Presbyterian Church, Astoria.

### Rationale

- Paul has been with the church just over a year and has demonstrated a passion for the congregation and ministry that is a great fit for First Presbyterian Church, Astoria.
- Paul is very community minded, helping the congregation find ways to share their church with the larger community.
- Session members value his energy and enthusiasm. Though no one can chart the future, church members feel he is the right person to lead the congregation in their setting and these challenging times.
- The congregation loves Paul and his family, even as he has fallen in love with the people of the congregation and community.
- While it would be possible to go year to year with a Stated Supply contract, we believe the Spirit has been at work in bringing us together, and would like to validate that relationship and have the assurance of a strong and stable future by making this an installed position.

### Finances

- While pledging has fluctuated over the last decade, the session is confident that with the stability of current membership giving, the steps we are taking to lease or rent space in the building, along with some investment income held by the church, will be sufficient to meet our financial commitment to Paul going forward.

#### Search

- We took the Stated Supply route in calling Rev. Paul Davidson due to the concern that the traditional lengthy search process would be detrimental to the congregation and the stability needed at this time. That concern of finding pastoral leadership, even for a church that has the ability to support an Installed Pastor, is magnified in smaller communities like Astoria.
- It had always been the intent of the congregation to make this an installed position. The process of going from Stated Supply to Installed Pastor had previously worked for the church and the Session understood it to be an acceptable and approved process by Presbytery.
- Because this was a search for a Stated Supply pastor, the church was not able to use the CLC system.
- Therefore, we used every means possible for an open and national search, contacting various presbyteries, seminaries, churches, pastors, 6 months of ads in The Presbyterian Outlook, and our own website.
- This resulted in 5 individuals who expressed interest. Of those who expressed interest, 3 were given consideration. Of those given consideration, 2 pastors (after on-line meet and greets, Zoom interviews, reference checking and watching on-line sermons) were brought in for onsite interviews and to preach at a nearby church. These two individuals included: Pastor Paul and a female clergy person whose current church was being closed. We felt both had strengths and were Spirit led and thought both would be a good fit but felt Pastor Paul "checked more of our boxes" for the present and long term. We made it clear to these individuals that even though the contract was for one year, we were hoping for a longer commitment.

Honestly, we were surprised we didn't receive more applicants. But we believe the Spirit has led Pastor Paul and First Presbyterian Church in Astoria to join together in this relationship to do God's work. We look forward to hearing from Presbytery. If any further information is needed by those involved in the discernment process, please do not hesitate to contact us.

God Bless,  
Rebecca Duffy  
Clerk of session

First Presbyterian Church of Astoria

## ***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:*

- ✝ [\*Election season divisiveness prompts prayer vigil in Washington D.C. with PCUSA & other faith groups\*](#)
- ✝ [\*Jinishian Memorial Program offers self-sufficiency and hope to Armenians\*](#)
- ✝ [\*Summer fellows make impact at Office of Public Witness and the Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations\*](#)

# East Texas PC(USA) pastor celebrates Creation during the April 8 solar eclipse

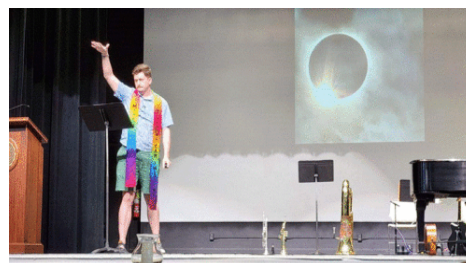
**Communication** July 29, 2024

## Synod School's closing worship preacher wasn't so sure he'd get to witness the rare cosmic event

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service

STORM LAKE, Iowa — The Rev. Brendan McLean is associate pastor of [First Presbyterian Church](#) in Tyler, Texas, one of the communities shrouded in darkness for nearly two minutes during the April 8 solar eclipse.

Only just before it happened, someone forgot to urge the clouds over Tyler to go away.



The Rev. Brendan McLean, associate pastor of First Presbyterian Church in Tyler, Texas, preaches during closing worship at Synod School Friday. He displayed pictures he and his friends took of the April 8 solar eclipse. (Photo by Kim Coulter)

“I felt like I had a front-row ticket,” said McLean, the preacher during closing worship at Synod School on Friday. “But I was watching it from the balcony behind a pillar.”

But at 1:43 p.m. Central Time, the sky grew dark like twilight, the clouds parted, “and I could see the total solar eclipse,” he said. “How incredible it was to see it with my own two eyes — with solar eclipse glasses on.”

For two minutes, McLean and millions of other North Americans “experienced a world fundamentally different than the ordinary world we experience every day, a world where we experienced the shadow of night when we virtually always experience the light of day,” he said. “It was other-worldly.”

Later, he and his friends shared pictures of what they'd seen via social media. He called the nearly two minutes “unadulterated and unfiltered communion with the cosmos,” and he preached Friday using [Job 12:7-13](#) as his text.

“This passage from Job tells us the whole of Creation — every part of the universe — calls us to awe and reverence of God.”

Job's “beautiful theological statement” is the answer to Job's “friend,” Zophar, who's sure Job did something wrong to justify all his suffering. “Job knows this is entirely untrue,” McLean pointed out. “Our suffering is not connected to God's retribution.”

The wisdom of God is not something we can grasp, “and yet all of Creation — the entirety of the cosmos — has something to tell us about God,” McLean said. If we want to encounter God, “all we need to do is simply ask the cosmos, the world around us, at any given time. We are surrounded by



the beauty of Creation that calls to us ... We are made and claimed as God's children and are redeemed and resurrected in Jesus Christ."

"Friends, all of Creation is waiting to tell us something about God," he said. Unlike that solar eclipse, "the window of opportunity to observe something about God is as wide and big as you can imagine — and yet more."

"All we need to do is stay curious and ask, open our ears and our eyes to see that God is good and that Christ died and rose for us, all of us," McLean said. "The God who is more than we can ask or imagine — it is that God who loves you, who cares for you, and who wants you to flourish — not because you've earned anything, but because you are you, and God loves you for it. Amen."

As part of worship, children and youth were given special sunglasses and told, "When you put them on, you can see the kingdom of God." They and all the others in worship were the recipients of a reproduction of a two-sided watercolor signed by most of the 540 people who attended Synod School and bearing this saying: "Remember, God is able to do more than all we ask or even imagine."

*Synod School celebrated its 70<sup>th</sup> anniversary this year. It's put on each summer by the Synod of Lakes and Prairies and held at Buena Vista University in Storm Lake, Iowa. Learn more [here](#).*

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### **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.*

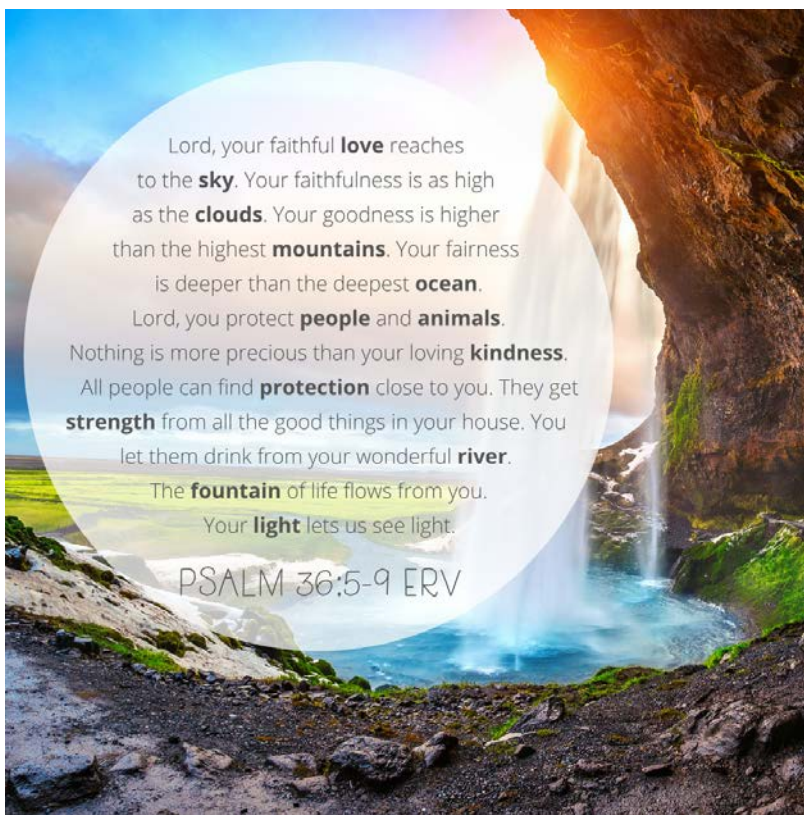
**Email:** [pastorpaul@fpcastoria.org](mailto:pastorpaul@fpcastoria.org) **Phone:** 971.606.5606

### **Prayer Requests & Newsletter Articles & Information –**

The newsletter is published the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 4<sup>th</sup> 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 1<sup>st</sup> or 3<sup>rd</sup> week of the month.





Lord, your faithful **love** reaches to the **sky**. Your faithfulness is as high as the **clouds**. Your goodness is higher than the highest **mountains**. Your fairness is deeper than the deepest **ocean**.  
Lord, you protect **people** and **animals**. Nothing is more precious than your loving **kindness**. All people can find **protection** close to you. They get **strength** from all the good things in your house. You let them drink from your wonderful **river**.  
The **fountain** of life flows from you.  
Your **light** lets us see light.

PSALM 36:5-9 ERV



## 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](http://www.fpcastoria.org) | email: [office@fpcastoria.org](mailto:office@fpcastoria.org) | phone: 503.325.1702



An Open & Affirming Church Family



Scan for directions