

# 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 August 26, 2024**



## **Church Budget Update**

*In the interest of bringing members up to date on our budget situation, this will be quick update.*

*Our total budgeted income for 2024 was about \$141,000. To date, through July, we have received about \$86,000, or 61 percent of budget. Of our total budget, \$83,000 was in pledges from members and other individuals. Through July, we have received \$58,000, or about 70 percent of pledges. Thank you to all who have kept your pledges current! You have helped us stay "afloat" during the first 7 months of the year.*



*However, our expenses through July have run ahead of our income, as we have spent \$99,000 so far and we have taken the action of borrowing \$10,000 from our Investments account so we could pay our bills in July. Additionally, we have some major expenses looming on the horizon as the year goes on, including our liability insurance premium and our natural gas heating bill, which will be cranking up again this fall.*

*Our Treasurer, Mary, tells us that there's no need for undue concern, as we often run in an income deficit this time of year and income always picks up by November and December. The Session just wants members to be aware of our situation and also wants to thank all of you for your continuing support through your gifts and your prayers.*

*Tom Scoggins*

*Stewardship Chair*

## **Announcements**

- **[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.
- **[Coffee, Tea & Friday Fellowship](#)** – Join us every month on the second Friday for coffee, tea, treats, and fellowship. Our next gathering is September 13<sup>th</sup> in the church parlor at 10am. Come join the fun!
- **[Women's Bible Study](#)** – Returning Saturday, September 21 at 10am, facilitated by Hazel Davidson at the Davidson's home. The study is titled Let Justice Roll Down. See <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/justice/> for more details.
- **[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.
- **[Prayer Time](#)** – Join us every Tuesday and Thursday at 9:30am in the Christian Resource to pray for our church family, our community and the rest of God's creation.

## NOTES FROM BEYOND THE PEWS

### *Thoughts from Pastor Paul*

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

This week I feel called to talk a little about “values”. It seems a catch phrase that is used a lot these days by people running for political office. Statements like, “They threaten our values...” or “A candidate with good values.” It has been used so long and so often that its definition has become, I believe, lost or watered down.

Granted, I still have a lot to learn in my Christian walk, but one thing I have learned is that you can't, and must not, put God in a box. And although we may consider ourselves conservative or liberal, we must not categorize God or any other part of the Holy Trinity as conservative or liberal. God is God. And whenever I am working on a sermon, I strive for and pray that instead of coming from either a conservative or liberal approach, I am coming at it from God's approach. And with the help of Jesus' teachings and his life examples, and the guidance of the Holy Spirit, I feel pretty confident that, most of the time I am successful. On different occasions, I have been told that I was not conservative enough by some and not liberal enough by others. In each of these moments I was a little upset at first, but then I realized that, while in human terms this may have been a criticism, I felt relief when I remembered that it was not people's agendas that I was trying to satisfy but rather God's. It reminds me of Ezekiel 33:31 “So they come to you as people do, and they sit before you as my people. They listen to your words, but they refuse to do them. Though they speak of their longing for me, they act out of their own interests and opinions.” (CEB) Again, we must strive not to be either conservative or liberal, but rather Christ like.

Now, with all that said, back to the earlier comments about “values”. What are Christ like values? First, they are neither conservative nor liberal; instead they are Christ's. And Jesus made it very simple for us when he answered the question, “Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?” We find Jesus' reply in Matthew 22: 37-40, “You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands.” So, what should our Christian values be based on? If you're thinking love, then you're on the correct path. Remember too that the Greek word for love used is the self-less, put the other person first type of love. Agape love. And as 1 John 4:8 says, “The person who doesn't love does not know God, because God is love.” (CEB) And that is how I discern if I'm on God's path or somewhere else. Am I showing and sharing that agape love?

Regarding political candidates using the term “values”, if they're talking “Christian Values”, they better be showing and sharing agape love. For example, if they are putting God's creation above money and power; if they are concerned that all people, regardless of social or economic standing are getting the health care and resources that they need; if they support peaceful responses over showing force, they are showing and sharing God's agape love and true Christian values. If in doubt, pray for discernment and then ask that time-tested question, “What would Jesus do?”

Sisters and brothers, seek not to be conservative or liberal; rather seek to be Christ like in your heart, mind and in your actions.

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	28	Wednesday	Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship at the Lower Columbia Bowl at 5pm
	29	Thursday	Worship Team meeting at 12noon in the Christian Resource Room
September	2	Monday	Labor Day – Church office and Food Pantry closed
	3	Tuesday	Facilities Team Meeting – 11am in the Christian Resource Room
	13	Friday	Coffee, Tea & Friday Fellowship – 10am in the Church Parlor
			Jonathan Rundman Concert 7pm – Naselle Lutheran Church
	17	Tuesday	Session Meeting at 4pm in the Christian Resource Room
	19	Thursday	Collaborative Conversations – Discerning the Future of Your Church Property – 1:30pm in the Christian Resource Room or via Zoom
			Deacons Meeting at 4:30pm in the Christian Resource Room
21	Saturday	Women's Bible Study 10am at the Davidson's home	
25	Wednesday	Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship at the Lower Columbia Bowl at 5pm	

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

- Sara Jackson – Healing, peace and discernment
- Deborah Towner – healing, peace and discernment
- Family & Friends of Pat Fox in their time of mourning
- Crystal Oliver – Healing, Strength & Peace
- 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
- 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.

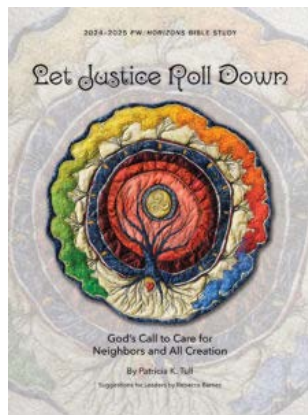
Those seeking justice and equality.

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.



## **Women's Bible Study – Let Justice Roll Down: God's Call to Care for Neighbors and All Creation**

Join us the third Saturday of the month beginning Saturday, September 21 at 10am at the Davidson's house.

We are called to care for neighbors and God's creation with all our hearts, with particular care for society's least powerful members who are disproportionately impacted by unjust systems. In God's first instructions to the nation of Israel we hear "you shall not pervert the justice due to the poor" (Exodus 23:6); in Moses' final speech at the promised land's border, he reiterated, "Justice, and only justice, you shall pursue" (Deuteronomy 16:20); and from Amos, the earliest recorded prophet, "Let justice roll down like waters, and righteousness like an everflowing stream" (Amos 5:24). Scripture reminds us that we are called to speak out to urge our society to act for just transitions in this fast-changing world.

See <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/justice/> for more information.

Contact the church office for a copy of the Bible Study book and for any other details.

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

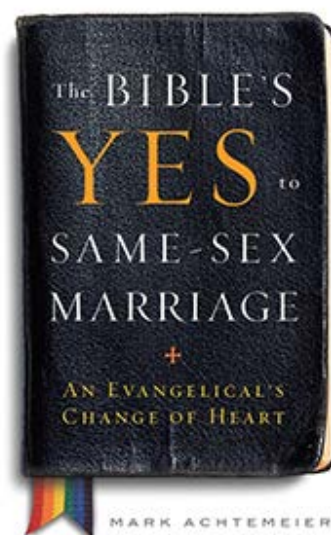
Wondering what it means to be a Presbyterian? Wondering what church membership is all about? Wondering why church membership is important? Well, come join us for a New Members' class and we'll do our best to answer all your questions. Whether you're interested in joining, just wanting to find out more 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, September 8.



## **Book Study – 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. So, come, fellowship & learn!**



# Jonathan Rundman

**Finnish-American Concert**

**Friday, September 13, 7PM**

**Naselle Lutheran Church**

**Suggested donation \$10**

**Finnish Reception following**



## 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
    - Tuesday, September 3, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
    - Tuesday, September 17, Historic Landmarks Commission at 5:30PM.
    - Tuesday, September 24, Planning Commission at 5:30PM.
  - Astoria School District
    - Wednesday, September 11, Regular Board Meeting at 7PM.
  - Clatsop County
    - Wednesday, September 11, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
  - Clatsop Community College
    - Thursday, September 12, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
  - Astoria School District –
    - Wednesday, September 11, at 7PM.
  - Port of Astoria
    - Tuesday, September 3, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

## Working for Justice and Peace in September

National Hispanic Heritage Month [Sep 15–Oct 15]; <a href="http://hispanicheritagemonth.gov">hispanicheritagemonth.gov</a>	
1	World Day of Prayer for the Care of Creation; <a href="http://creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html">creationjustice.org/world-day-of-prayer-for-the-care-of-creation.html</a> A Season of Peace begins; <a href="http://presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/season-peace">presbyterianmission.org/ministries/peacemaking/season-peace</a>
2	Labor Day; <a href="http://presbyterianmission.org/story/labor-day-prayer/">presbyterianmission.org/story/labor-day-prayer/</a>
8	International Literacy Day; <a href="http://en.unesco.org/commemorations/literacyday">en.unesco.org/commemorations/literacyday</a>
9	J&P Book Discussion Group online, 6:30–8:30 PM (Eastern) on <i>Poverty, By America</i> by Matthew Desmond. Register at <a href="http://presbyterianwomen.org/justice">presbyterianwomen.org/justice</a>
21	International Day of Peace; <a href="http://presbyterian.typepad.com/peacemaking/2010/08/celebrate-the-international-day-of-peace.html">presbyterian.typepad.com/peacemaking/2010/08/celebrate-the-international-day-of-peace.html</a>
27	Native American Day; <a href="http://pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/nativeamerican/pdf/celebratingnativeamericanday.pdf">pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/nativeamerican/pdf/celebratingnativeamericanday.pdf</a> and <a href="http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_Day">en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_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-rvsvd-2.pdf">https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2023/12/2024-JP-Calendar-FA-rvsvd-2.pdf</a>	

## 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:

- ✚ [As the body of Christ, we have unique resoures and connections that we can share](#)
- ✚ ['Faithful Fridays' live events offer PC\(USA\) co-moderator a chance to connect accross the miles](#)
- ✚ [Confronting Christian Zionism webinar moderator reflects on seiries, speakers and advocacy](#)

# Southern California immigration and refugee task force hears from PDA

[Disaster Response](#) August 22, 2024

## Susan Krehbiel and Omar Salinas Chacón update Presbyterians concerned about the current state of the southern border

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service



Photo by Greg Bulla via Unsplash

LOUISVILLE — Gathered online Wednesday night for their quarterly meeting, members of the [Presbytery of the Pacific](#)'s [Immigration and Refugee Task Force](#) heard from the [Migration Accompaniment Ministries](#) of Presbyterian Disaster Assistance. Nearly 30 people attended the meeting to hear from PDA's Susan Krehbiel and Omar Salinas Chacón, as well as local advocates.

“This is a people who act for justice, and we lift up all we do to you,” said the task force's Wendy Gist during an opening prayer.

Gist is the Mission Advocate for Hunger, Poverty and Peacemaking Issues for the [Presbytery of San Gabriel](#) and the [Presbytery of San Fernando](#), which also participate in the task force.

Krehbiel, PDA's Associate for Migration Accompaniment Ministries, identified PDA's role as two-fold: it's a ministry of relief and response to national and international disasters, and it provides aid to refugees and displaced persons, including resettlement.

“Omar and I are focused on the work with displaced persons,” she said, which worldwide numbers about 117.3 million forcibly displaced people, according to the United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees' [Global Trends report](#).

Ever since the 225<sup>th</sup> General Assembly (2022) declared it, the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) [has been a sanctuary and accompaniment church](#), Krehbiel noted. “Providing safety, security and hope to people new to our communities is part of our identity as the PC(USA),” she told the task force. “Our place as a church institution of predominantly Western European heritage is the act of accompaniment and solidarity.”

“Names matter,” she said, displaying in her presentation words in the current political lexicon, including “detainees,” “invaders,” “illegals” and “threat to national security.” Such words “are often used to distance ourselves from our neighbors,” Krehbiel said.

When we're talking about people seeking asylum — people on the move — “it's helpful to remember they are families, asylees, neighbors, women and children,” Krehbiel said. “The more we can normalize the people coming to our borders, the easier it is to build that empathy.”

Displaying a map highlighting border-crossing locations between Texas and California, Krehbiel said that “on any given day, you will find differences from one spot to another.” Each month, Chacón and Krehbiel participate in a call with people providing services along the border. Most recently, they learned that the number of asylum seekers in San Diego is down, and fewer people are being released to the streets. “We consider that pretty good news,” Krehbiel said.

In El Paso, Texas, numbers are low enough that “they’re telling [volunteers], ‘You can have a break. We don’t need shelter volunteers right now.’” A few hundred miles away in Del Rio, Texas, service-providers are seeing up to 100 people a week, especially from the Dominican Republic, Ecuador and Colombia, including families and pregnant women.

The number of border apprehensions goes up and down each year, Krehbiel said, with about 1.7 million in 2021 and 2022, about 2.5 million last year, and fewer than 2 million so far this year.

“The statistics we choose to look at matter,” she said. “We often see a rise in the fall, a drop at Christmastime, and then in February the numbers tend to go up again.” The varying figures “sometimes has to do with changes in U.S. policy at the border, and other times with changes in their own countries,” she said.

U.S. policy changes in May and June further limited opportunities for asylum at the U.S. border. One change to the [CBP One](#) mobile app now requires asylees to proactively make the claim that they’ll face harm if they return, rather than the government asking if the asylee fears harm upon return. “That’s the shout test,” Krehbiel said. “If you don’t shout out, you won’t have access to asylum.”

Chacón highlighted two upcoming campaigns for which people can volunteer, both with ties to the [Interfaith Immigration Coalition](#). One is the [Let Asylum Seekers Work](#) campaign; the second is the This is Welcome campaign. Whichever way the Nov. 5 election turns out, “We are trying to get the new administration to adopt a more compassionate policy,” Chacón said. “We need to counter messages with messages of our own.”

“Our faith compels us to do that,” he said of the coalition, which includes 15 faith traditions. “Our faith is not monolithic.”

Coalition members are also working to mitigate against [Operation Lone Star](#), Texas’ response to what Gov. Greg Abbott calls a “border crisis.” The state’s response has included installing razor wire and deploying the Texas National Guard and Texas Department of Public Safety to the southern border.

“Migrant advocates call it racial profiling and unconstitutional policing,” Chacón said, adding most of the people prosecuted since the policy was enacted in 2021 have been U.S. citizens, and most arrests have been for trespassing.

“We are working on a toolkit to help congregations talk about Operation Lone Star and how to advocate against this law,” Chacón said.

## How Presbyterians can help



Chacón suggested people on the call work with “refugee-serving organizations” on needs that include housing, financial support and advocacy. “A lot of you are already doing this work, especially advocacy,” Chacón said. “Your legislators need to hear from you about what’s happening on the ground. If all they hear is the negative press, they will vote against migrants.”

“The strongest thing we have learned to do is share the stories of people who do come,” Krehbiel said.

*The Immigration and Refugee Task Force is a partnership of the [Presbytery of the Pacific](#) and [Presbytery of San Gabriel](#)'s Immigrant Accompaniment Ministry. The task force is guided by [PC\(USA\) policy statements](#) that call for just and humane immigration law and policies.*

*Additional resources from Presbyterian Disaster Assistance are [here](#), [here](#), [here](#) and [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.

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Thanks to Michael Dale (See John 2:1-11)

08-02-2010

THE WINE IS GREAT ... IS THERE ANYTHING AT ALL YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE STEAK?



## 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



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