



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 September 9, 2024

Parents, Families, and Friends of Lesbians and Gays (PFLAG) Coming to Astoria

PFLAG

We are working to host a PFLAG chapter at First Presbyterian Church of Astoria.

For over fifty years, PFLAG has been where LGBTQ+ people, families, and allies have come together in pursuit of justice and affirmation—and always leading with love.

What began as a letter led to a march, which launched a meeting and birthed a movement of millions.

Since its earliest days, PFLAG has been the connector for LGBTQ+ people with community, parents with resources, and allies with tools, bolstering the LGBTQ+ movement with strength, power, and love.

If you would like to be a part of this wonderful and exciting opportunity to support starting a new PFLAG chapter here in Clatsop County, please contact the church office.

For more information about PFLAG visit: <https://pflag.org>

Announcements

- **Coffee, Tea & Friday Fellowship** – Join us every month on the second Friday for coffee, tea, treats, and fellowship. Our next gathering is September 13th 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 Davidsons' home. The study is titled **Let Justice Roll Down**. See <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/justice/> for more details.
- **Women's Retreat & Bible Study** – Ladies, save the date for fun & fellowship in Seaside, October 17 through October 19.
- **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.
- **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.
- **Post-Doom Panel Discussion** – Wednesday, October 16 at 3pm in the Marcotte Chapel. See below for more details.
- **Bowling & Pizza** – Come join us for fun, pizza, and fellowship at the Lower Columbia Bowl in Astoria. And don't forget to invite a friend! Our next bowling & pizza night is Wednesday, September 25th at 5pm.
- **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.

Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

As I was pondering and praying about writing this week's note, I started to thumb through some of the epistles. When I opened Philippians 4: 1-9 and began to read the translation found in The Message, my heart jumped for joy. This passage from the Apostle Paul's letter to the church in Philippi seems so appropriate in a time where everything seems to be spinning out of control, when people have been finding themselves falling into depression, stretched far too thin, anxious or angry and frustrated about everything and anything. In his letter, the Apostle Paul tells us to not give in to these emotions and to stay focused on God and Christ's teachings. Paul knew first-hand about troubling times. He wrote this letter from prison while he was awaiting his death sentence to be carried out. Yet even in what would seem the darkest of times for anyone, with the help of the Holy Trinity, Paul found light, God's light. In that light, he found hope, joy and love.

Paul wrote,

Celebrate God all day, every day. I mean, revel in him! Make it as clear as you can to all you meet that you're on their side, working with them and not against them. Help them see that the Master is about to arrive. He could show up any minute!

Don't fret or worry. Instead of worrying, pray. Let petitions and praises shape your worries into prayers, letting God know your concerns. Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down.

It's wonderful what happens when Christ displaces worry at the center of your life.

Summing it all up, friends, I'd say you'll do best by filling your minds and meditating on things true, noble, reputable, authentic, compelling, gracious—the best, not the worst; the beautiful, not the ugly; things to praise, not things to curse. Put into practice what you learned from me, what you heard and saw and realized. Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies.

(MSG)

Siblings in Christ, no matter how down you are, how alone you feel, no matter how depleted you may feel, find the strength to lift your heart and prayers to God and then listen for God's still speaking voice to fill you with what you need. As Paul wrote, "Before you know it, a sense of God's wholeness, everything coming together for good, will come and settle you down." (MSG)

Remember that God is there with you, as are your siblings in Christ. Keep praying, keep turning to God, and allow God to change you in the ways you need changed. And to again borrow from Paul, "Do that, and God, who makes everything work together, will work you into his most excellent harmonies." (MSG)

If you are in need of anything, someone to talk to, someone to pray with, someone to listen, please do not hesitate to let me know. Again, Paul's words say what I feel for all of you, and it is those words I will close with this week. "My dear, dear friends! I love you so much. I do want the very best for you. You make me feel such joy, fill me with such pride. Don't waver. Stay on track, steady in God." (MSG) Amen.

*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	
September	10	Tuesday	Facilities Liaison Team – 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 Davidsons' 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

- Anna Langeberg – Recovering from spinal cord surgery
- 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

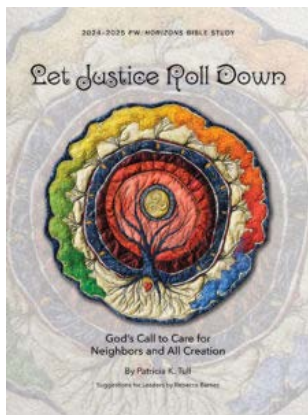
All those touched by mass shootings and other crimes of hate and violence.

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 would be changed to make serving and saving God's creation their number one priority.

All of God's creation as it seeks to survive mankind's exploitation and the results 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 Davidsons' 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 ever flowing 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.

Post-Doom Spirituality Discussion

As we navigate an era marked by climate change, political unrest, global capitalism, and the looming threat of nuclear conflict, it is crucial to find a spiritual path that transcends despair and embraces wisdom and action. Post-doom spirituality is about discovering a deeper, more resilient, and interconnected way of living and being in the world. Join us on this timely topic, especially as we head into a contentious election that could reshape the very fabric of democracy.

Wednesday, October 16 from 3pm – 5:30pm in the Marcotte Chapel

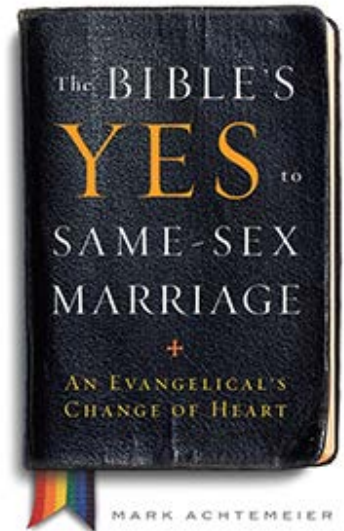


Book Study – The Bible’s Yes to Same-Sex Marriage by Mark Achtemeier

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!**

September 15 – Chapter 3 | September 22 – Chapter 4



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 23, 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, October 1, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

Working for Justice and Peace in September

National Hispanic Heritage Month [Sep 15–Oct 15]; hispanicheritagemonth.gov	
9	J&P Book Discussion Group online, 6:30–8:30 PM (Eastern) on <i>Poverty, By America</i> by Matthew Desmond. Register at presbyterianwomen.org/justice
21	International Day of Peace; presbyterian.typepad.com/peacemaking/2010/08/celebrate-the-international-day-of-peace.html
27	Native American Day; pcusa.org/site_media/media/uploads/nativeamerican/pdf/celebratingnativeamericanday.pdf and en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Native_American_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:

- ✚ [Peacemaking work is both needed and nuanced](#)
- ✚ [Grants help the PC\(USA\)'s vital congregations maintain their momentum](#)
- ✚ [Online gathering voices the hope and concern Guatemalans feel about their future](#)

Learning about and from the people who led the Jan. 6 Capitol riot

Communication September 4, 2024

Dr. Matthew D. Taylor, author of 'The Violent Take It by Force,' is a recent guest on 'A Matter of Faith: A Presby Podcast'

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — Dr. Matthew D. Taylor, a senior scholar at the [Institute for Islamic, Christian, and Jewish Studies](#) in Baltimore and the author of "[The Violent Take It by Force: The Christian Movement That is Threatening Our Democracy](#)," was the guest last week on "A Matter of Faith: A Presby Podcast," the weekly broadcast hosted by the Rev. Lee Catoe and Simon Doong. Listen to their 50-minute conversation [here](#).



Photo by Alejandro Barba via Unsplash

"We have seen an increase in conservative, evangelical movements in the U.S. over the last 10 years. Most recently, we saw the movement's presence in the January 6th riots," the hosts asked Taylor. "What is the reason for this rise? And what is the relationship between evangelicalism, the 'far right,' and Christian supremacy in American culture and politics?"

"Those are some huge questions," Taylor told the hosts, launching into a discussion of Christian nationalism, a phrase used more and more in the past four years, he said. But it's a phrase that tries to describe something that goes back to the founding of the nation, or even before that, according to Taylor.

That's how long the debate has gone on over "how the government of the United States should interface or not interface with churches and with religion," he said. "There have been strong voices throughout American history that have pressed for a closer relationship between the government and religion."

As children of the [Enlightenment](#), many of the nation's founders weren't particularly religious, he said. But a few years after the Constitution was ratified, the [Second Great Awakening](#) swept across the nation, and "a surge of piety" fed into the Civil War, Taylor said, "which in many ways was a battle between two different forms of Christian nationalism — a Southern version which was very much expansionist and pro-slavery using the Bible, and a Northern version of Christian nationalism."

"Listen to the lyrics of the '[Battle Hymn of the Republic](#),'" Taylor suggested. "It's envisioning the Union Army as the conquering army of God that is building the kingdom of God by defeating the South."

That level of fervor ebbed until the Cold War, "and then surged again when people were saying, 'We're the godly nation against the godless communists,'" he said. "What we're

experiencing today is another of those waves of Christian nationalism sentiment. This time it's fueled by demographic and cultural changes the U.S. has undergone."

For the last 30 years or so, the percentage of Americans who identify as Christian has plummeted, Taylor noted. "I think that's created a profound anxiety for a lot of Christians, particularly conservative and evangelical Christians who feel like they are losing cultural sway and losing power," he said. Donald Trump [declared as a presidential candidate](#) in June 2015, just a few days before [the U.S. Supreme Court declared bans on same-sex marriage are unconstitutional](#). "There was a feeling of vulnerability and loss of power," Taylor said.

Armed with the "cultural confidence" that came from being the vast majority, mainline Protestants were at the forefront of the wave of Christian nationalism that emerged during the Cold War. "Today, the fact that we are a Christian nation is a much more contestable question," Taylor said. "There is anxiety fueling the current rise that wasn't so present then."

In his book, Taylor tells the story of [New Apostolic Reformation](#), whom he calls "the principal



Dr. Matthew D. Taylor

architects" of the Jan. 6 riots. The NAR got its start in the 1990s "around aggressive ideas of spiritual warfare," he said. "That's the idea there are angels and demons battling all around us in this invisible spiritual realm. Those battles affect us, and we as Christians can participate."

NAR leaders "believe that they are a new, renewed form of leadership. They are reorganizing and reconstituting the offices of apostle and prophet that were present in the life of the early church," Taylor said. "Many of them are celebrities today in the independent charismatic world. They've also become increasingly political."

The rhetoric of violence "feeds directly into the action we see on Jan. 6," he said. They're "forms of spiritual warfare, especially charismatic spiritual warfare — people blowing into shofars, people singing worship songs just outside a riot, people speaking in tongues — all these things are participating in these ideas of spiritual warfare. For many Christians there on Jan. 6, this rhetoric of spiritual violence tips over into literal violence before our eyes. You see Christian symbols and Christian ideas implicated directly in driving that violence."

For Christians who have not grown up in these charismatic spaces, "it feels foreign," Taylor said. "It's easy to disdain that or say, 'That's not Christianity' or 'Those people don't have a grounding in theology.'"

But "the people I am talking about are real Christians. They say the Apostles Creed and the Nicene Creed," while adding "some things on top of that about modern prophets and new apostles and different prophecies and spiritual warfare ideas," he told Doong and Catoe. But "we all add stuff on top of that. Every Christian tradition is taking a certain foundation and grounding in Christian creeds and then adding different layers of tradition and concepts on top of that."

“I want us to always treat these people as Christians and not just say, ‘Oh, this is heresy, this is a false form of Christianity. They’re identifying as Christians and speaking in Christian terminology. They’re speaking in the name of Christianity. I think those of us who are Christians have a certain responsibility to take this seriously, to learn about it and maybe confront it, to say, ‘This is where I think this is not bearing a faithful witness to the character of Jesus.’”

Today, “you have different forms and different coalitions of Christianity in the United States that can’t even speak to each other and often view each other as heretical,” Taylor said. “I don’t know that American Christianity has been this politically and culturally divided at any point in our history other than right on the eve of the Civil War, when you had these really diverging visions of what Christianity means in the American context. That’s akin to what we’re experiencing now.”

The best way to close the divide is “to be able to speak to our fellow Christians,” he said. “I work at an interreligious dialogue institute. I know how hard it is to speak and have dialogues and debates across these theological lines. Part of what’s causing this mass polarization in our culture right now is polarization within Christianity. I think it’s the responsibility of Christians to try to heal that rift, or at least try to find ways to bridge it.”

Taylor makes a distinction between Christian nationalists and Christian supremacists, “people who are antithetical to the separation of church and state,” that it’s “a demand of God that Christians and Christianity should be privileged in American culture.” Many of the people who were there and organizing the Jan. 6 insurrection came from that perspective, he said.

“More and more people are embracing these more Christian supremacist ideas,” he said, “and nothing comes of that in our democratic future.”

New editions of “A Matter of Faith: A Presby Podcast” drop every Thursday. Listen to previous episodes [here](#).

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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07-06-2006

YUP ... LOOKS LIKE THE OL' "PEACEFUL SPIRIT" SERMON



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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