



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 October 7, 2024

From Our Book of Order - G-2.0301 Ruling Elder Defined

As there were in Old Testament times elders for the government of the people, so the New Testament church provided persons with particular gifts to share in discernment of God's Spirit and governance of God's people. Accordingly, congregations should elect persons of wisdom and maturity of faith, having demonstrated skills in leadership and being compassionate in spirit. Ruling elders are so named not because they "lord it over" the congregation (Matt. 20:25), but because they are chosen by the congregation to discern and measure its fidelity to the Word of God, and to strengthen and nurture its faith and life. Ruling elders, together with ministers of the Word and Sacrament, exercise leadership, government, spiritual discernment, and discipline and have responsibilities for the life of a congregation as well as the whole church, including ecumenical relationships. When elected by the congregation, they shall serve faithfully as members of the session. When elected as commissioners to higher councils, ruling elders participate and vote with the same authority as ministers of the Word and Sacrament, and they are eligible for any office.

Announcements

- [Post-Doom Panel Discussion](#) – Wednesday, October 16 at 3pm in the Sanctuary. See below for more details.
- [Women's Retreat & Bible Study](#) – Ladies, save the date for fun & fellowship in Seaside, October 17 through October 19. If you'd like to attend and if you'd like a ride, contact the church office. If you can only make it for the Bible study on Saturday, no worries. The Bible study is titled **Let Justice Roll Down**. See <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/justice/> 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, October 23rd at 5pm.
- [The Food Bank](#) – Is in need of reusable bags, 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.
- [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.

Our Church Family's Financials for September 2024

Income – \$7,035.06

Expenses – \$9,291.78

Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

Throughout scripture, we are told that, as believers, we need but lift up our prayers and they will be answered. For example, in John 15:7, we are told, "But if you make yourselves at home with me and my words are at home in you, you can be sure that whatever you ask will be listened to and acted upon." (MSG) I have a confession, having seen so many times when people have lifted up prayers from deep within their hearts, with all that they are, prayers seeking healing of a loved one whose life is being threatened by an affliction, or someone who is praying for employment with a life-supporting wage, or perhaps it's a prayer for a loved one who has lost their way, or even a prayer for those who lash out at others with ignorance and closed mindedness that they would have their hearts, minds and eyes opened by God and therefore be changed for the better, that so many of us lift up these and so many other prayers to God only to see them go unanswered. It leaves an empty place in my heart. There are times that I've witnessed God answering prayer as requested, but those times seem so few and far between that it takes times like writing this note that cause me to reflect on those times to remember them. And it is times like this that I realize, in my heart, that there are more times that my prayer has been answered in the way I had hoped.

One time that comes to heart and mind was when I was either in jr. high or high school. Oddly, I don't remember what the specific issues of the day were, I just remember feeling so depressed under the weight of gloom and doom that seemed to be going on everywhere. So, I lifted to God in prayer the question, "Why is there so much bad in the world?" This was one prayer that didn't really expect an answer to, but imagine my surprise when the following Sunday, that was the message my heart and mind gleaned from the sermon as the pastor said something to the effect that although there seems like there is more bad going on in the world than good, that's not really what is happening. It's just that the bad things stick out more than the good; much like how it has been proven that most people can receive hundreds of compliments in one day and one negative comment, and it will be the one negative comment that most will remember. And let's face it, out of 30 minutes of news, the first 25 minutes is normally spent on the bad stuff happening throughout the world, and if there's time, the last five minutes might be spent on a "warm-fuzzy" story. The bad stuff gets better press!

I've realized that what bugs me about prayer is that there are times when God is going to answer 'no' to a prayer that we've lifted up, no matter how important that prayer is to us. It's in times like this that I am reminded of a piece of scripture from one of my lesser favorite books, Job, where God is quoted as saying to the rightly lamenting Job,

"Why do you confuse the issue? Why do you talk without knowing what you're talking about? Pull yourself together, Job! Up on your feet! Stand tall! I have some questions for you, and I want some straight answers. Where were you when I created the earth? Tell me, since you know so much! Who decided on its size? Certainly you'll know that! Who came up with the blueprints and measurements? How was its foundation poured, and who set the cornerstone, While the morning stars sang in chorus and all the angels shouted praise? And who took charge of the ocean when it gushed forth like a baby from the womb? That was me! I wrapped it in soft clouds, and tucked it in safely at night. Then I made a playpen for it, a strong playpen so it couldn't run loose, and said, 'Stay here, this is your place. Your wild tantrums are confined to this place.'"

In other words, God has a better idea of all that is going on and how everything fits together. We need to trust that God will always answer our prayers, not as we want them answered, but always

as we, and the rest of creation need them answered. I'll be the first to admit that is a very difficult thing to remember and often even more difficult to accept.

In meeting with a group of pastors this week, one of the pastors shared how her sister's 13-year-old grandson had died in an accident. This is something no family should ever have to go through, but the fact is that this situation is repeated everyday hundreds of times throughout the world and has been happening for thousands of years. She also shared how the community was coming together to celebrate this young person's life that was cut so short. Classmates were coming to the family's home and tying red ribbons on the trees to show their support for the family during their time of mourning. This does not make it any easier. But if we are to trust God, we need to remember that God is there with us going through everything we are going through and feeling everything we are going through. That even in the worst of situations, God is there, and if God is there, we can find good. The good may not always come in big, loud and noisy ways, as a matter of fact, it is usually quite the opposite. It may come in a hug, or the sharing of tears, it may come in a smile from the heart, or it may come in any other way that is least expected. Regardless, if you keep your heart open to looking for the good, you will find the good and will recognize it as such when you do so.

So, please don't give up on prayer; don't give up on hope; don't give up on God, and whatever you do, please don't give up on each other. Remember the words from Romans 12, "Be good friends who love deeply; practice playing second fiddle. Don't burn out; keep yourselves fueled and aflame. Be alert servants of the Master, cheerfully expectant. Don't quit in hard times; pray all the harder. Help [the] needy...be inventive in hospitality. Bless your enemies; no cursing under your breath. Laugh with your happy friends when they're happy; share tears when they're down. Get along with each other; don't be stuck-up. Make friends with nobodies; don't be the great somebody." (MSG)

As I have closed the last couple of newsletters, if you are in need of anything, someone to talk to, someone to pray with, someone to just listen to you, 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 in this newsletter. "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



"I know God won't give me anything I can't handle. I just wish He didn't trust me so much."

- Mother Teresa -

FPC Astoria Calendar

October	11	Friday	Coffee, Tea & Friday Fellowship – 10am in the Church Parlor
	15	Tuesday	Session Meeting at 4pm in the Christian Resource Room
	16	Wednesday	Post-Doom Spirituality Discussion - 3pm – 5:30pm in the Sanctuary
			Bell Choir Practice at 4pm in the Marcotte Room
	17	Thursday	Worship Team Meeting – 11am in the Christian Resource Room
	17 - 19	Thursday - Saturday	Women's Retreat & Bible Study in Seaside – Contact the church office for more information.
	20	Sunday	We receive new members into our church family!
	20	Sunday	Fellowship & Worship at Astor Place at 2pm & Clatsop Retirement Village at 3pm
23	Wednesday	Bell Choir Practice at 4pm in the Marcotte Room	
		Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship at the Lower Columbia Bowl at 5pm	
November	1-2	Friday-Saturday	Presbytery Meeting in Ashland Oregon
	3	Sunday	Daylight Saving Time Ends (<i>Fall back one hour</i>)
	24	Sunday	Thanksgiving Potluck – 2pm in Goodenberger Hall

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

- Anna Langeberg – Recovering from spinal coard surgery
- Sara Jackson – Healing, peace and discernment
- Deborah Towner – healing, peace and discernment
- Crystal Oliver – Healing, Strength & Peace
- Jennifer & Timothy Kramer – Healing & discernment
- George Willsie - Healing
- JoAnn Feary – For complete healing
- Fred & Norma Novak – Healing, peace and discernment
- Marcella Price – Healing & Peace
- Michael Smith – Healing & Discernment
- Linda from Chicago – Healing & Discernment
- Joanna from Seaside – 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

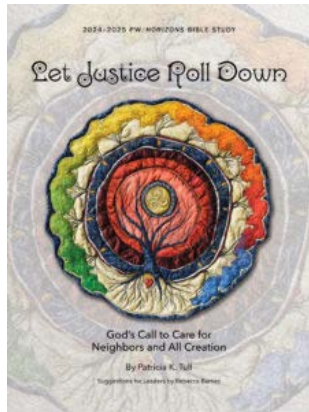
All those touched by mass shootings and other crimes of hate and violence.

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 each at 10am. The October gathering will be a Women's retreat in Seaside from Thursday, October 17 through Saturday, October 19.

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.

For more details about:

- The retreat - contact the church office or Arlene Landwehr
- The Bible study, contact Hazel Davidson.

Post-Doom Spirituality Discussion

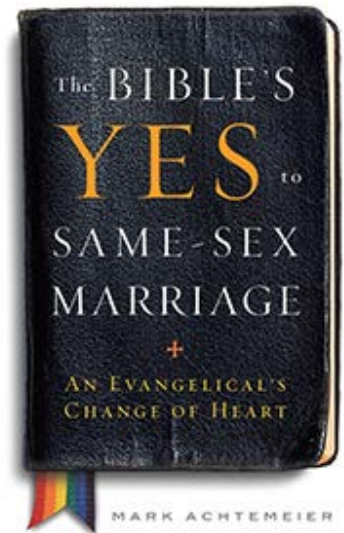
As we navigate an era marked by climate change, political unrest, global capitalism, and the looming threat of nuclear conflict, it is crucial to find a spiritual path that transcends despair and embraces wisdom and action. Post-doom spirituality is about discovering a deeper, more resilient, and interconnected 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 Sanctuary



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!**

October 13 – Chapter 7 | October 20 – No Class | October 27 – Chapter 8

Getting Involved in the Community

- ☰ Volunteers are needed for the church's food bank to stock shelves and to help serve customers. Contact the church office for more information.
- ☰ Attend a local public meeting:
 - City of Astoria
 - Monday, October 21, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
 - Tuesday, October 15, Historic Landmarks Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Tuesday, October 22, Planning Commission at 5:30PM.
 - Astoria School District
 - Wednesday, November 13, Regular Board Meeting at 7PM.
 - Clatsop County
 - Wednesday, October 23, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
 - Clatsop Community College
 - Thursday, November 14, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
 - Port of Astoria
 - Tuesday, November 5, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

Working for Justice and Peace in October

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Domestic Violence Awareness Month; ncadv.org/take-action; nomore.org; presbyterianwomen.org/justice or presbyterianmission.org/ministries/phewa Fair Trade Month; fairtradefederation.org/celebrate-fair-trade-month National Disability Employment Awareness Month; dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam
11	International Day of the Girl Child; unwomen.org/en/news/in-focus/girl-child National Coming Out Day; hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day
13	Children's Sabbath: Educate a Child, Transform the World; pcusa.org/news/2015/8/14/educate-child-transform-world
16	World Food Day; fao.org/world-food-day/home/en
24	United Nations Day; un.org/en/observances/un-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:

- ✝ [Like Samson did with the donkey's jawbone, we can put down tools that are no longer needed](#)
- ✝ [Not by offerings alone: new strategies for sustainable ministry and good stewardship](#)
- ✝ [Hurricanes highlight importance of spiritually based trauma care](#)

A month ahead of an important election, Union Presbyterian Seminary webinar explores the danger Christian nationalism poses

Advocacy & Social Justice October 8, 2024

Panelists encourage both clergy and laity to show up and speak out

by Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service

LOUISVILLE — On Monday, less than a month before a pivotal presidential election, a panel convened by Union Presbyterian Seminary's [Center for Social Justice and Reconciliation](#) took on the issue of Christian nationalism at home.

Panelists joining the webinar's host, [Dr. Rodney S. Sadler Jr.](#), Associate Professor of Bible at the seminary and the director of CSJR, were:

- [The Rev. Jimmie Hawkins](#), advocacy director for the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) who leads both the [Office of Public Witness](#) and the [Presbyterian Ministry at the United Nations](#)



The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty

- [The Rev. Dr. Elizabeth Hinson-Hasty](#), Professor of Theology and Ethics at Union Presbyterian Seminary
- [Dr. Obery Hendricks](#), Professor of New Testament at Columbia University.

Christian nationalism “is not about faith — it’s about ideology,” Hendricks said. “It’s about political power and substantiating interests of a group of people over others.” It’s “about forcing everyone to bow at the altar of their interest and their distorted, twisted view of Christianity.”



The Rev. Jimmie Hawkins

“These are two terms that don’t go together,” said Hawkins, author of the 2022 book “[Unbroken and Unbowed: A History of Black Protest in America](#).” “It’s less about Christianity and more about empire and individuals seeking to gain political influence and power.”

Hinson-Hasty noted the difference between patriotism and nationalism. “You can support your nation and have a strong interest in the common good,” she said. “Nationalism is quite different.” White Christian nationalists are “working to take the nation back for God on the basis of race and nativity. That is different from patriotism.”

She called Christian nationalism “a distinct political agenda intended to maintain power and privilege.”

Asked by Sadler why Christians need to know more about Jesus and his culture and context, Hendricks said Jesus wasn’t a conservative. “He wasn’t looking to conserve the distribution of wealth and power. He came to challenge it,” Hendricks said. [The good news to the poor recorded in Luke’s gospel](#) is “structural change” to “laws, policies and attitudes that made people poor and kept them poor,” Hendricks said.



Dr. Obery Hendricks

Jesus’ greatest social commandment was to love your neighbor as yourself, “which is much more profound than it’s given credit for,” Hendricks said. “It’s about wanting the same rights and freedoms for your neighbor as for yourself.”

Sadler then asked Hawkins what Christian nationalism looks like in the public square.

“It is everywhere,” Hawkins said. “It’s become a fad for politicians to say they are Christian nationalists.” He said Christian nationalism is being used “as a tool to affirm American ways that are unchristian,” including the notion that God “has anointed the nation to control the world.”

“We’re at a dangerous point, because Christian nationalism is rising to the forefront in ways that are dangerous not only for the lifeblood of this nation, but for the world,” Hawkins said. A member of the U.S. House made the claim that the church is called to lead the government. “There has never been a more ludicrous statement from a person of faith in the government,” Hawkins said. “We

have to push back against those politicians who proclaim they are Christian nationalists and want to lead America into a new day.” What they really want, Hawkins said, is “to exploit everything they can to increase their power and status.”

“It’s all about power,” Hendricks said. “Whatever doesn’t serve their purpose, they reject. Whatever can be weaponized to serve their purpose will be embraced.” It’s to the point where some Christians “reject the Beatitudes for being namby-pamby,” he said.

Hinson-Hasty said some Christian nationalists complain that Jesus has been feminized because he blessed people in poverty and embraced the outcast. “It’s a misinterpretation of power,” she said. “It has to do with how power is perceived and used.”

“The power of the gospel is it transforms us beyond ourselves,” Hawkins said. “We have lost our connection with the biblical Jesus, and that’s why it’s easy for us to denigrate people. People see enemies everywhere,” and so we must work harder to “overcome these ‘isms,’” Hawkins said. “The only way to do that is with a sincere faith that reconnects with the origin of our faith.”

Hendricks said it’s “evil to see people as less than,” calling Christian nationalism “a movement to destroy people’s distinctiveness.”

“If we don’t stand against it, shame on us. I am so disgusted with the church because we’re not doing a darn thing to stop this evil onslaught,” Hendricks said. “We aren’t standing up to say what we ought to say.”

A webinar participant asked if panelists had any wisdom for preachers in the coming weeks leading up to the Nov. 5 election.

Hinson-Hasty said her father, a church historian, used to say the best way to radicalize people’s thoughts is to teach them history. “In spite of all the critique of white Christian nationalism, all of us are formed in the same cultural ethos,” she said. “If we can get in a space of understanding how that affects us all, it can enable us to see an authentic vision of communities of belonging.”

Hendricks reminded viewers that Jesus’ test for his followers as recorded in [Matthew 25:31-46](#) is that “we will be judged by how we do right by other people.”

“Jesus talks mostly about effort, not what to believe,” Hendricks said, urging those in attendance to “proclaim the radicality of what the gospel is and what it is not. People are hungry to hear about struggling for the common good.” Even during this hyper-partisan season, “anyone not standing up for justice is guilty of gospel malpractice,” Hendricks said. “Pastors, get off your rusty dusties and go fight evil!”

As pastors, “our ultimate and primary purpose is to teach hope and faith in God, that God’s justice will win out and that God will have the last word,” Hawkins said. “As part of teaching hope in God, justice has to be a fundamental element in our discipleship. Justice is not something outside the faith — it’s integral to the faith.”

[Even after murdering his brother got Cain banished](#), God put a mark on Cain to protect him, despite this grievous sin, Hawkins noted. “Grace and justice go hand in hand,” he said. “Teach your people to have faith in God, and along the way we have to understand we have to follow Jesus wherever he leads us.”

“My catch phrase,” Hawkins said, “is, ‘advocacy is a spiritual discipline.’”



Dr. Rodney S. Sadler Jr.

“Imagine if we taught that in Sunday school class,” Sadler said.

To close the webinar, Sadler asked panelists how best to educate people on the differences between Christian nationalism “and a Christianity consonant with the Jesus movement.”

“The main thing we can do is engage in authentic dialogue in a deep way,” Hinson-Hasty said, which helps people understand “how God is active in you and in the community and the world.” She said religious leaders can “engage with that in a way that others don’t have the opportunity at the present moment.”

“I would take a lesson from where young people are today,” Hawkins said. “We assume they are not invested in spirituality, but they want to know more about their connection with the Divine.”

“We have to relax a little and breathe a little and understand God’s gifts to us,” Hawkins said, “which we are called to share with others.”

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.

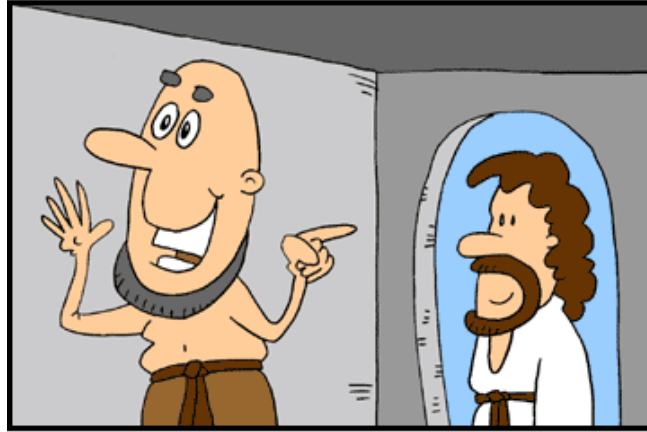
Email: pastorpaul@fpcastoria.org **Phone:** 971.606.5606

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 Paul

04-28-2000

HEY HONEY, MY BEST FRIEND IS HERE AND
HE SAYS I HAVE TO DROP EVERYTHING AND
GO FISHING



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