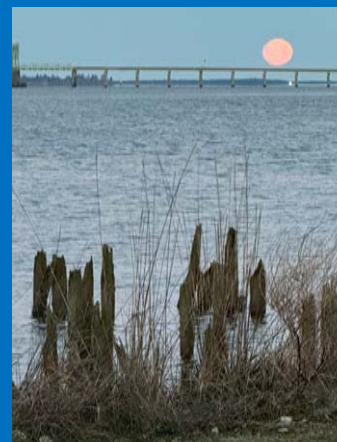


# FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASTORIA

## *Our Mission Statement:*

*"To help people within a kind, safe and compassionate community to know Christ and grow His Love."*



## Week of February 10, 2025

### *Who We Are...We're proud members of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians*

Our church family are proud to be a part of the Covenant Network of Presbyterians. From [CNP's website](#):

*The Covenant Network of Presbyterians has sought since 1997 to strengthen the church by working for the full inclusion of LGBTQIA+ people in its life and leadership. CNP is a network of more than 400 congregations and thousands of individuals, all committed to celebrating the gifts and extending authentic welcome to people of all gender identities and sexual orientations.*

*For over a quarter-century, our work has supported the Presbyterian Church (USA) through educational programs, resources for congregations and individuals, advocacy for church policy changes, and care and support for those facing exclusion and discrimination in the church.*

### **The Call to Covenant Community, 2020**

*Confident in God's hopeful future and grateful for the ever-widening welcome of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), the Covenant Network of Presbyterians seeks an equity still not fully realized for LGBTQIA+ people in church and society, by*

***Engaging** the church to invite all of God's children into safe and welcoming congregational spaces of affirmation, healing, dignity and purpose;*

***Educating** the church to expand our welcome of LGBTQIA+ people, to affirm their gifts for ordained office, and to uphold marriage equality for all; and*

***Equipping** the church to bear witness to justice through advocacy and activism at the international, national and local church levels; speaking a prophetic word in anxious and divided times; and standing with others in fighting hate and oppression against any of God's children.*

*The Covenant Network of Presbyterians calls the church to bear a unified witness to generous hospitality and faithful justice.*

## Announcements

☪ [Friday Coffee & Tea Fellowship](#) – Please join us Friday, February 14 at 10am for coffee, tea, treats & fellowship in the church parlor.

☪ [Now Live Streaming on Facebook \(YouTube coming soon\)](#) – Sunday worship is available as recordings or livestreaming at: <https://www.facebook.com/fpcastoria/>

☪ [The Food Bank](#) – Needs:

- ☪ breakfast cereal,
- ☪ canned soup,
- ☪ volunteers.

☪ [Women's Bible Study](#) – Ladies fellowship and Bible study every third Saturday of each month at 10am at the Davidson's home. Contact Hazel Davidson or the church office for more details. The Bible study is titled **Let Justice Roll Down**. See <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/bible-study/justice/> for more details. Next bible study is February 15 at 10am.

☪ [First Friday Flicks](#) – Join us Friday, March 7 at 7pm in the fellowship hall as we watch **The Prince of Egypt**, have some popcorn and enjoy some good fellowship. See the trailer:

[https://youtu.be/N0Vh65UrBK4?si=P\\_4VaqiOnnof3B1E](https://youtu.be/N0Vh65UrBK4?si=P_4VaqiOnnof3B1E)

☪ [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, February 19<sup>th</sup> at 5pm.

## Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

Not sure if you've noticed this or not, but whenever I give the charge at the conclusion of worship with the two great commandments, instead of saying, '...love all others as you love yourself...' I say, '...love all others as God calls you to love yourself...'. I've spoke to a few of you about this and have found that there are many, like me, who often have problems loving ourselves as God calls us to. We are often our own worst critic. Feeling like our actions and our choices are lacking wisdom and are in effect, counterproductive to all affected by said choices. You find yourself second-guessing any and all decisions made. And then we often convince ourselves that everyone else views us in the same light that we view ourselves.

As scripture tells us, God does want us to love ourselves. Not in a narcissistic way, but in a way that helps us so we can help others. "Selflessly loving yourself" means to care for and appreciate yourself without expecting anything in return, prioritizing your well-being and happiness while also being mindful of not harming others, essentially viewing self-love as a way to become a better, more giving person to yourself and others. While loving yourself is important, "selflessly" means not putting your needs above everyone else's, but rather finding a balance between caring for yourself and considering others. By accepting and nurturing your true self, you can radiate positive energy and be more capable of supporting others. Selfless love for oneself involves treating yourself with kindness and understanding, even when you make mistakes. This helps you to truly have a positive impact on others because when you genuinely love yourself, you are more likely to be empathetic and supportive towards others.

Remember the words from the author of Ephesians 2:10, "...we are God's accomplishment, created in Christ Jesus to do good things." (CEB) There's also the beloved words of A.A. Milne, "Promise me you'll always remember: You are braver than you believe, and stronger than you seem, and smarter than you think."

Siblings in Christ, please join me, not only in embracing each other, but in embracing ourselves as beloved children of God; complete, not only with flaws, but also with gifts. And when others make a bigger deal out of our flaws to the point they are blinded by their own, that is when we must lift to God a prayer for both them and us, asking that all feel God's gentle embrace, and that we all may see others the way God sees each of us. As we read in 1 John 3:1, "See what kind of love the Father has given to us in that we should be called God's children, and that is what we are! Because the world of man didn't recognize him, it doesn't recognize us." (CEB) Each of you, whether you know it or not, or whether you feel it or not, are a beloved child of God. May you find shalom, a peace that transcends all peace in that fact. May you find and accept God's grace, agape love and mercy that is meant for all. Yes, always endeavor to be a better person tomorrow than you were today but be ready to love yourself as God calls you to love yourself, not only today, but also every day while also loving all others in the same way.

Please, as you continue to show and share God's selfless love, grace and kindness to each other, remember to show that same love, grace and kindness to yourself. If you are in need of someone to talk to, someone to pray with, someone to just listen to you, please do not hesitate to let me know.

*Blessings and shalom,*

*Pastor Paul*



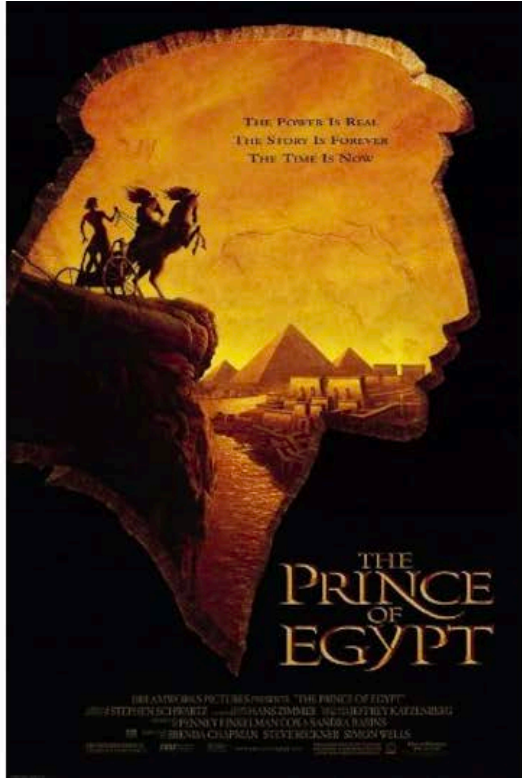
## Our Church Family's Financials for January 2025

Income – \$ 6,557  
Expenses – \$ 11,805

### FPC Astoria Calendar

Join us at 9:30am every Tuesday and Thursday in the Christian Resource Room for a time of prayer.

February	15	Saturday	Women's Bible Study at Hazel Davidson's home at 10am
	16	Sunday	What's So Amazing About Grace book study at 11:45am in the CRR
	19	Wednesday	Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship at 5pm at the Lower Columbia Bowl
	20	Thursday	Deacon's Meeting at 4:30pm in the Christian Resource Room



### First Friday Flicks Presents... PRINCE OF EGYPT

Friday, March 7 at 7pm in  
Goodenberger hall  
Free admission, popcorn and  
fellowship for all  
Scan to watch the trailer



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

- Jenny & Mike Curtis – Jenny’s healing
- Anna Langeberg – Healing, peace and discernment
- Sara Jackson – Healing, peace and discernment
- Deborah Towner – healing, peace and discernment
- Crystal Oliver – Healing, Strength & Peace
- George Willsie - Healing
- JoAnn Feary – For complete healing
- Fred & Norma Novak – Healing, peace and discernment
- Marcella Price – Peace & Discernment
- 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
- Katy Paz – Healing & Peace
- Butch & Vinie Elliot – Healing & Discernment
- Gerald Smith – Healing, Peace & Discernment

### **Continued Prayers for God’s Creation**

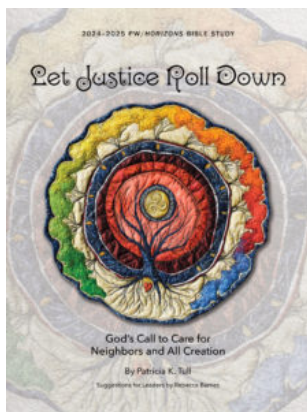
All those touched by mass shootings and other crimes of hate and violence.

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 next Bible study will be Saturday, February 15 at Hazel’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 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 Bible study, contact Hazel Davidson.

# New Book Study

What's So Amazing About Grace?

By Philip Yancey

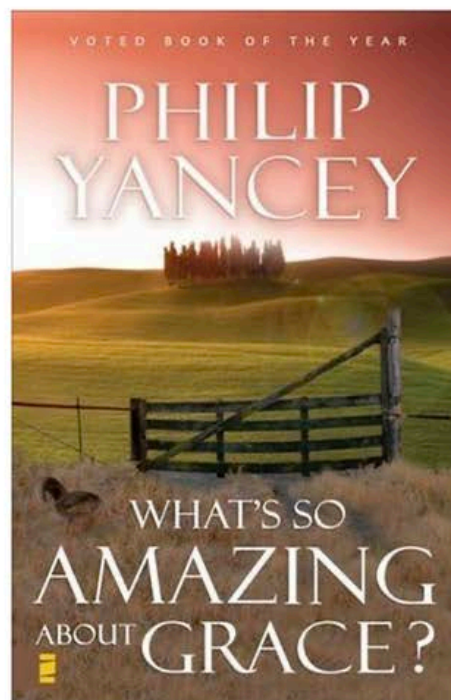
Begins Sunday, February 9 at

11:45am in the Christian

Resource Room

Contact the church office or scan

the code to order the book



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*In case you missed last time...Again, Thank you! Also, Can You Help?*

We serve an awesome God, and God has blessed us with a wonderful church family. There are many who keep things going. We are blessed with many who make sure the doors, lights, heat, windows, and everything else in our buildings keep working the way they need to work. There are those who help communicate with our renters (*another blessing*), making sure both their needs as well as our needs are met. There are those who make sure there are plenty of fellowship activities that are not only fun but help us to reach out into the community to enlighten others about what a wonderful church family we have and to know that any and all are welcome to join in anything and everything we do. There are those who help to make sure nothing is missed throughout the year in our worship services and that worship is meaningful and that God is always glorified. There are those who help bring the gift of music and those who help keep our finances in check (*no pun intended*). There are those who help make sure doors are locked, lights turned off, supplies stocked, and everything is clean and there are those who help with the church office, answering the phone and emails that come into the church every day. There are those too who help with stocking the food pantry, donating to it and who help serve its many clients. I'm pretty sure I missed someone in all that, and if so, apologies. To all of you who serve this church family in any way, we are all so grateful and thankful for all that all of you do.

In the next few pages is a list of the various committees or teams that make sure everything is getting done that needs to be done. If you feel called in any way to help, please contact the Session member associated with the committee you'd like to help with. You do not have to be a Ruling Elder, serving on session or even a member to serve on any or all committees. You just have to be called in your heart.

Again, a big thank you to all from your very grateful church family.

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## *Our Session Has a New Look!*

*"We have different gifts, according to the grace given to each of us. If your gift is prophesying, then prophesy in accordance with your faith; if it is serving, then serve; if it is teaching, then teach; if it is to encourage, then give encouragement; if it is giving, then give generously; if it is to lead, do it diligently; if it is to show mercy, do it cheerfully." (Romans 12:6-8, NIV)*

If you feel called to be a part of any of these teams, please let one of your Session members or Pastor Paul know. All are welcome to join any or all of the teams. The teams are:

- Buildings & Grounds – Mike Curtis, chair
  - Repairs and maintenance of church buildings.
  - Correspondence and coordination with organizations leasing space from FPC Astoria including the annual review and signing of corresponding leases through the Building Liaison Team (BLT).
  - Manage and coordinate rentals of church space for special events through the Facilities Management Team (FMT).
- Christian Education – Rebecca Duffy, chair
  - Determine needs for Christian education for all ages of the church family and seek ways to meet those needs.
  - Coordinate with recruiting teachers and facilitators for different studies.
- Fellowship & Outreach – Arlene Landwehr, chair
  - Coordinate activities that promote fellowship and outreach that help to strengthen the relationships between church family members and members of the surrounding community.
- Mission & Stewardship – Corinne Garrison, chair
  - Identify mission needs both locally and globally that the church family can contribute to either financially or physically.
  - Coordinate efforts to gather support for mission activities with
    - "Moments for Mission"
    - Gathering or creating announcements and inserts seeking assistance from the church family in answering the needs of the given mission.
- Finance & Stewardship – Arlene Landwehr, chair
  - Attend to and maintain all FPC Astoria's financial bookkeeping requirements in accordance with generally accepted accounting principles and related laws.
  - Send out letters with giving amounts to those who have contributed to the church family's finances.
  - Create and implement annual stewardship campaigns.
- Worship – Nancy Cole, chair
  - Continually review weekly worship and recommend changes based on comments from the congregation or from personal experiences.
  - Identify and help plan special worship opportunities throughout the liturgical year.
  - When needed, assist in filling the pulpit through obtaining pulpit supply.
- Personnel – Bob Magie
  - Meet with the employees of FPC Astoria on a regular basis.
  - Ascertain the needs of the employees.
  - Give employee reviews at least annually.
- Nominating -
  - Seek candidates for open Ruling Elder and Deacon seats.

## 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, February 18, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
    - Wednesday, February 26, Park's Board at 6:45PM.
  - Astoria School District
    - Wednesday, March 12, Regular Board Meeting at 7PM.
  - Clatsop County
    - Wednesday, February 26, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
  - Clatsop Community College
    - Thursday, March 13, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
  - Port of Astoria
    - Tuesday, March 4, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

## Working for Justice and Peace in February

Remember, every Thursday throughout the year is an opportunity to participate in **Thursdays in Black**. See [www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black](http://www.oikoumene.org/what-we-do/thursdays-in-black)

In every country, gender-based violence is a tragic reality. This violence is frequently hidden, and victims are often silent, fearing stigma and further violence.

We all have a responsibility to speak out against violence, to ensure that women and men, boys and girls, are safe from rape and violence in homes, schools, work, streets – in all places in our societies.

The campaign is simple but profound. **Wear black on Thursdays**. Wear a pin to declare you are part of the global movement resisting attitudes and practices that permit rape and violence. Show your respect for women who are resilient in the face of injustice and violence. Encourage others to join you.

Often black has been used with negative racial connotations. In this campaign Black is used as a color of resistance and resilience.

<i>February 2025</i>	
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Black History Month; <a href="http://blackhistorymonth.gov">blackhistorymonth.gov</a></li><li>• One Billion Rising for Justice, <a href="http://onebillionrising.org">onebillionrising.org</a></li><li>• National Teen Dating Violence Awareness and Prevention Month, <a href="http://teendvmonth.org">teendvmonth.org</a></li></ul>
1	National Freedom Day, <a href="http://state.gov/national-freedom-day-deepening-our-resolve-to-fight-human-trafficking">state.gov/national-freedom-day-deepening-our-resolve-to-fight-human-trafficking</a>
1-7	World Interfaith Harmony Week, <a href="http://worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com">worldinterfaithharmonyweek.com</a>
09	Souper Bowl of Caring, <a href="http://tacklehunger.org">tacklehunger.org</a>
12	International Day against the Use of Child Soldiers, <a href="http://redhandday.org">redhandday.org</a>
<b>From the Presbyterian Women in the PCUSA   <a href="https://www.presbyterianwomen.org">https://www.presbyterianwomen.org</a></b> <a href="https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2025-JP-Calendar-FA.pdf">https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2024/10/2025-JP-Calendar-FA.pdf</a>	

## *T'was a fun time for all at our first Valentine's Day Fellowship...*



Scan for  
Directions

At the Lower  
Columbia Bowl  
826 Marine Dr  
in Astoria  
February 19  
At 5PM

# First Presbyterian Church of Astoria Invites one and all to an evening of Bowling, Pizza Fun & Fellowship



## 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:

- ✝ [Won't you be my neighbor?](#)
- ✝ [Presbyterian Church of Okemos, Michigan reaffirms baptism vows for a boy named Zach, a beloved member and transgender youth](#)
- ✝ [The Rev. Paul Timothy Roberts Sr. is the inaugural guest on a 'Leading Theologically' series on reconciliation](#)

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## PC(USA) joins religious freedom lawsuit challenging ICE enforcement actions in churches

*Plaintiffs hold a press conference to explain their interfaith effort to help protect all God's children*

**February 12, 2025 | Rick Jones and Mike Ferguson | Presbyterian News Service**

LOUISVILLE — The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is among more than two dozen plaintiffs in a lawsuit filed Tuesday in response to a rescission of the Department of Homeland Security's "sensitive locations" policy.



Photo by Chris Linnett via Unsplash

That policy had restricted Immigration and Customs Enforcement (ICE) from conducting immigration raids, arrests and other enforcement actions at houses of worship.

The case, Mennonite Church USA et al. v. United States Department of Homeland Security et al., was filed in federal district court in Washington, D.C., by the Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection (ICAP) at Georgetown Law. View the lawsuit [here](#).

A description of the PC(USA)'s ministry and mission is on page 15 of the lawsuit: "Guided by their call to welcome the stranger and belief in the inherent dignity of all people, PC(USA) actively advocates for and works toward more just immigration laws and processes."

Speaking on behalf of the General Assembly, the Stated Clerk and Executive Director of the Interim Unified Agency of the PC(USA), the Rev. Jihyun Oh, said, "The policy statement 'God Alone is the Lord of the Conscience' adopted by the 200th General Assembly (1988) of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) sought to 'articulate the conditions of the civil society necessary to the free and effective conduct of the church's mission and ministry...' because these are a 'vital dimension of Presbyterian witness and responsibility' both for the free exercise of religion in our country and for the common good."

“The policy statement affirmed that ‘the free exercise of religion’ must be understood to include and protect the right to practice faith in public and private as well as the right to believe....’ This is what the current legal action aims to do, to proclaim that the practice of faith is lived out not just in a worship service but in ministry, including public witness and acts of justice, that are expressions of the worship with the whole of our lives.”

“Plaintiffs represent millions of Americans across dozens of denominations rooted in the Jewish and Christian faiths,” said Kelsi Corkran, lead counsel for the plaintiffs and ICAP Supreme Court Director. “They have come together to file this suit because their scripture, teaching and traditions offer irrefutable unanimity on their religious obligation to embrace and serve the refugees, asylum seekers and immigrants in their midst without regard to documentation or legal status.”



“The Department of Homeland Security’s abrupt decision to rescind the sensitive locations policy and subject places of worship to immigration enforcement action is a clear violation of Plaintiffs’ rights under the First Amendment and the [Religious Freedom Restoration Act](#),” Corkran said. “We look forward to presenting our case in court.”

During an online press conference hosted Tuesday by the [Institute for Constitutional Advocacy and Protection](#) at Georgetown Law, four faith leaders joined Corkran to discuss the impact of the rescission of the [sensitive locations policy](#). Jim Simpson, the executive director of the [Center on Faith and Justice](#) at Georgetown University, emceed the 50-minute Zoom call, which was attended by reporters from around the country.

“We don’t join this lightly,” said the Rev. Iris de León-Hartshorn, associate executive director of Operations and as director of Human Resources at the [Mennonite Church USA](#). “We recognize our practice of loving our neighbor outweighs our traditional stance of nonresistance.”

“The Bible is clear and unambiguous on the obligation of Christians to welcome, serve and protect the undocumented immigrant in our midst,” said the Rev. Carlos Malave, President of the [Latino Christian National Network](#). “We affirm God’s mandate to safeguard and nurture all children of God — no exception. We declare our unequivocal opposition to any attempt by the government to interfere with the free exercise of religion by members of our congregations.”

Rabbi Rick Jacobs, president of [Union for Reform Judaism](#), noted the command to love the stranger is repeated 36 times in the Hebrew Bible “to make sure we internalize that core commitment.” Many congregations host meal programs and ESL classes and provide shelter to people who need it, Jacobs said. “We don’t ask, ‘Are you an immigrant or native born?’ We will not be silent amidst policies that jeopardize our congregations’ holy work.”

“In the kingdom of God as we understand it, immigrants and refugees are not at the edges, fearful and alone. Their struggles reveal the heart of God,” said Presiding Bishop Sean Rowe of [The Episcopal Church](#). “We cannot worship freely if some of us live in fear.”

“Even [Jesus himself identifies as a stranger](#),” Rowe noted. “We must proclaim, particularly in this time, that all are welcome in our places of worship. This seems a basic human right, one we are called to by the God we serve.”

During a question-and-answer session that followed the brief presentations offered by the four faith leaders, Jacobs said he’s heard from congregations offering food programs that “fewer people are

coming, because to come puts you at risk. People who feel particularly vulnerable feel it's not smart to enter places that might be targeted" for enforcement by officers with [U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#). "There's no doubt this is already having an impact."

"It can go to the heart of a family," said de León-Hartshorn. "They are afraid to go and get services that have been provided to them before."

If the court grants the plaintiffs the relief the lawsuit seeks and the administration ignores the court order, "We will certainly continue to advocate for the rights of all people in this country to worship freely," Rowe said. "We will not stop in our efforts to make sure people are safe and can worship freely in those places."

"A majority of our congregations are really engaged in their communities with immigrants and the most vulnerable, because that's what Jesus calls us to do," de León-Hartshorn said. "Service and ministry are at the center for the Mennonite Church. It's not just going to worship."

The original Hebrew in Moses' famous quote found repeatedly in Exodus — "let us go" — has at its root, "so we can worship freely," according to Jacobs. "Something so fundamental is at risk," Jacobs said. "We cannot be leaders of faith communities and not speak up and join together in this lawsuit."

"This is a beautiful moment of ecumenical strength," Jacobs said. "Let them go, so that they may worship freely."

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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

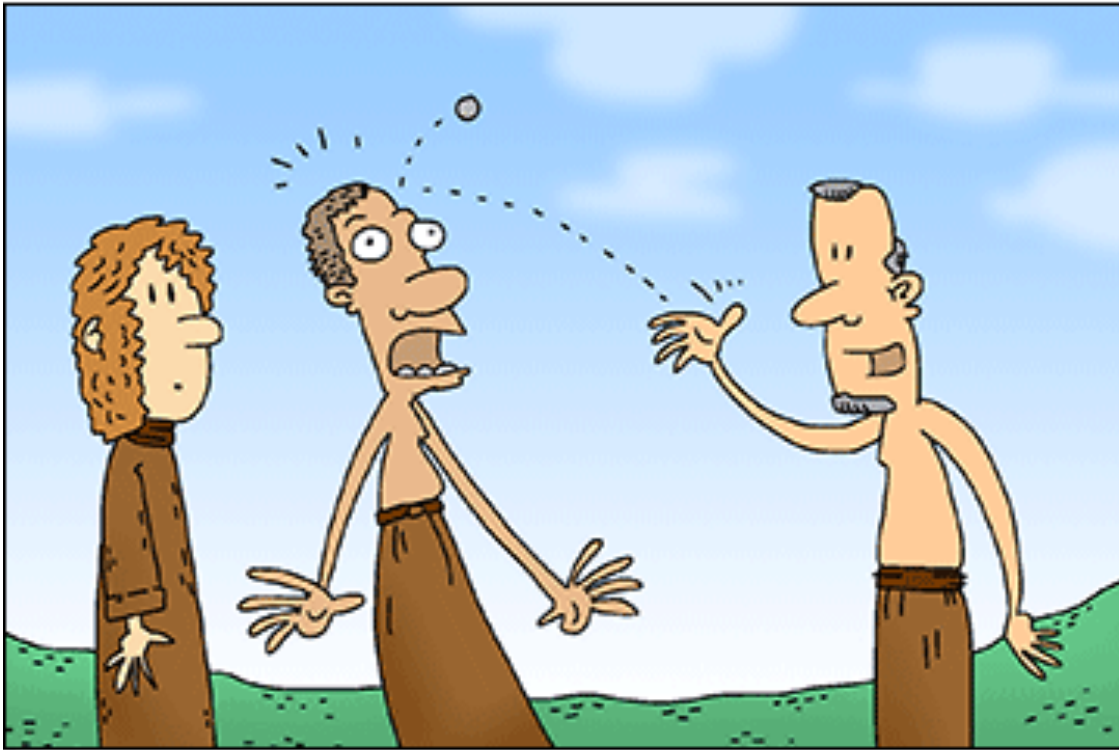
### **Prayer Requests & Newsletter Articles & Information –**

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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REVERENDFUN.COM COPYRIGHT BIBLE GATEWAY



(See John 8:1-11)

02-20-2015

I WAS SAVED EARLY TODAY AND GOD FORGAVE MY SINS, WHICH MAKES ME WITHOUT SIN, SO ... FIRST STONE



### 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