

# 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 December 1, 2025

## *Not Quite Christmas. But it is Advent!*

“Advent” means coming or arrival. This word has a double significance, as in Advent we celebrate Christ’s coming into the world and look with longing for his coming again. The season of Advent begins with an emphasis on final things (eschatology). We watch and pray with expectant hope for the establishment of God’s justice and the return of the Prince of Peace. As the weeks of Advent progress, the focus shifts to thanks and praise for the birth of the one who has already come—Jesus Christ our Savior.

The origin of the season of Advent is uncertain. It may have been patterned after the season of Lent as a period of penitence before Christmas, or as a time of preparation for baptism at Epiphany. The duration of Advent was, in some times and places, as long as six or seven weeks. The Revised Common Lectionary still anticipates the themes of Advent in the final three weeks of the Christian year, including Christ the King/Reign of Christ. (BOCW, p163)

## *Announcements*

- ♣ **[First Friday Flicks Changed to Saturday](#)** – Saturday, December 6 at 4pm in Goodenberger Hall with **Arthur Christmas**. Watch the movie trailer: [https://youtu.be/TEHWDA\\_6e3M?si=YVuHrDOHngQk-lbC](https://youtu.be/TEHWDA_6e3M?si=YVuHrDOHngQk-lbC)
- ♣ **[Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship](#)** – Wednesday, December 17 at 5pm at Lower Columbia Bowl.
- ♣ **[Friday Coffee, Tea & Fellowship](#)** – 10am, Friday, December 12 at Rebecca Duffy’s home. Contact Rebecca or the church office for more details.
- ♣ **[Christmas Celebration at the O’Neel’s](#)** - Friday December 19th 6-9pm drop in. Festive Holiday Attire encouraged! Contact the church office or Billie & Dave for more information.
- ♣ **[Pledge Cards](#)** – Our session is getting ready to put together next year’s church budget, and we are hoping and praying to do so with a balanced budget. So that we can do the best we can do with putting the budget together, we need to have the pledge cards turned in by December 15. Thank you for your continued support in helping us to do God’s work. If you need a pledge card, please contact the church office.
- ♣ **[Advent Devotionals](#)** – Advent devotionals are available from the church office upon request.
- ♣ **[Donate Online](#)** – We are accepting online donations. You can either look for the QR Code at church or go to the [church’s website](#) for more details.
- ♣ **[Rides are Available](#)** – If you would like a ride to any church activity, please contact the church office.
- ♣ **[Live Streaming YouTube](#)** – Sunday worship is available as recordings or livestreaming at on YouTube at <https://www.youtube.com/@FirstpresbyterianastoriaOrg>
- ♣ **[Seasonal Services](#)** – Join us for at the seasonal services:
  - **Service of the Longest Night** – Sunday, December 21 at 5pm in the Marcott Chapel
  - **Christmas Eve’s Service of Lessons and Carols** – Wednesday, December 24 at 7pm in the Sanctuary

## Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

Isn't it ironic how we get so focused on one thing that we sometimes forget that there are other things that are also important? For example, you may remember a few years back when the low carb diet was the big fad. People were doing everything they could to make sure carbs were not a part of their diet. Yes, this may have had some positive effects, but as the Mayo Clinic states on their website:

A sudden and large drop in carbs can cause short term side effects, such as:

- Constipation.
- Headache.
- Muscle cramps.

Severe carb limits can cause your body to break down fat into ketones for energy. This is called ketosis. Ketosis can cause side effects such as bad breath, headache, fatigue and weakness.<sup>1</sup>

Like so many things in our lives, we need to practice moderation. Yes, we probably need to reduce carbs, but at the same time, we need to make sure to maintain a healthy diet coupled together with exercise.

Our spiritual walk is no different. How often do we hear that we need to follow Jesus' example of escaping the crowds and finding a quiet place to be in conversation with God? And why not? Just in the gospel of Luke, Jesus sought solitude several times (Luke 4:42, 5:15-16, 6:12-13, and 9:18).

According to calm.com:

Spending time alone can bring balance to your life, giving your mind the space it needs to relax, think, and grow.

- Reduces stress
- Enhances creativity
- Improves self-awareness
- Enhances focus and productivity
- Regulates emotions<sup>2</sup>

So yes, alone time with yourself and God (*remember, God is always with you*) is always super important. We need those times to recharge our spiritual batteries. However, remember that if you have some batteries in a charger too long, they might not hold their charge when taken out of the charger. It's the same for us. As important that it is that we have alone time with God, it is also important that we get back to the crowds as did Jesus. We are not meant to work alone. We are meant to work together. This is supported throughout scripture. In Hebrews 10:24-25, we read, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds, not giving up meeting together, as some are in the habit of doing, but encouraging one another—and all the more as you see the Day approaching." (NIV) Ecclesiastes 4:9-12 tells us, "Two are better than one, because they have a good return for their labor: If either of them falls down, one can help the other up. But pity anyone who falls and has no one to help them up. Also, if two lie down together, they will keep warm. But how can one keep warm alone? Though one may be overpowered, two can defend themselves. A cord of three strands is not quickly broken." (NIV) We read in 1 Peter 4:8-10, "Above all, love each other deeply, because love covers over a multitude of sins. Offer hospitality to one another without

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.mayoclinic.org/healthy-lifestyle/weight-loss/in-depth/low-carb-diet/art-200459914>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.calm.com/blog/alone-time>

grumbling. Each of you should use whatever gift you have received to serve others, as faithful stewards of God's grace in its various forms" (NIV) and perhaps Galatians 6:2 says it the best, "Carry each other's burdens, and in this way, you will fulfill the law of Christ" (NIV).

Anyone who has worked in a church has, at times, been approached by someone in financial need. It is our calling to do what we can with what we have for anyone and everyone in need. Many times, with the exception of a few dollars for a short-term remedy, the only other assistance that can truly be offered is the gift of an open and sympathetic ear, and a heartfelt prayer. Whenever I asked those asking for assistance if they would like us to pray with them, the answer has not always been yes, but when has been, through tears, the person would usually lament that they felt so alone and that they had no one to turn to. It was then that I would ask them if they had a church family. The response was, with maybe one or two exceptions, no. It was then that I would invite them to church where I assured them that they would find a family that would stand firm with them through the highest highs and lowest lows of life. Each time, I would see a glimmer of hope in their eyes as they said they would be in church the next Sunday. Sadly, none of these people, each in desperate need of God's family, would ever show up Sunday morning. My prayers remain that they would find the family they so desperately need. They, just as the rest of us, need each other. For better or worse, that's how God made us. And although we would love our church family to always reach out to us, there are times we need to, with the help of the Holy Trinity, find the courage and strength to reach out to them.

I'd like to share with you a message by the Reverend Sarah Speed, from Sanctified Art, titled, **When Will You Be Back**,

Yesterday I visited an old man in the hospital.  
I was not the only one. We talked on the elevator ride down—  
Has he gained any weight? Will he stay in that room?  
Does he like the food? Has he called?  
All the man wanted to know was, When will you be back?  
We ask that question in a thousand different ways  
every single day,  
our hearts leaning over themselves,  
bending to get closer to love.  
We say, Text me when you're home.  
Call me when you're free.  
One more kiss!  
I love you all the time.  
When will you be back?  
What we really mean is—  
I can't go through life alone.  
Please don't let me go through life alone.

Siblings in Christ, we have been blessed with such a wonderful church family. And that church family isn't confined to our church directory. For it goes beyond our walls, beyond our community and stretches, not only through our now, but also into the generations past, as well as into the generations yet to come. As we are nothing without the Holy Trinity, we are also nothing without each other. Praise God!

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 October 2025

Income – \$ 3,113.00 – year to date = \$108,103.49

Expenses – \$ 6,838.88 – year to date = \$141,440.67

Month's Deficit - \$ **-3,725.88** – year to date = **-33,337.18**

## FPC Astoria Calendar for December

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

Month	Date	Day	Time	What & Where
December	5	Friday	5pm	Dinner with Pioneer at Astoria Country Club
	6	Saturday	4pm	First Saturday Flicks in Goodenberger Hall featuring <b>Arthur Christmas</b>
	12	Friday	10am	Friday Coffee, Tea & Fellowship at Rebecca Duffy's
	16	Tuesday	12noon	Session Meeting in the Christian Resource Room
	17	Wednesday	5pm	Bowling, Pizza & Fellowship at 5pm at the Lower Columbia Bowl
	19	Friday	6pm-9pm	Christmas Open House at Billie & Dave's. Festive Holiday Attire encouraged! Contact the church office or Billie & Dave for more information.
	20	Saturday	10am	Women's Bible Study at Hazel Davidson's Home
	21	Sunday	5pm	Service of the Longest Night at 5pm in the Marcott Chapel
	24	Wednesday	7pm	Christmas Eve Service of Lessons & Carols
	28	Sunday	10am	First Sunday of Christmas Service of Lessons & Laughter



## We Share Our Joys & Concerns

- Lena Linehan - healing and peace after leukemia diagnosis
- Dorothy Hamill - for peace and healing with the loss of her daughter Alexandra
- Dick and Joyce Etulain - Healing, Peace & Discernment
- Jean Cox for healing and discernment
- Joe Shaw for healing and recovery after having a stroke
- Patti Shaw for peace, discernment and strength
- Jill Ritch for healing, peace and discernment
- Lillyana Rose for healing
- Dave O'Neel for healing & discernment
- Pam Wev for healing and discernment
- Shane Chase for healing, peace and discernment
- Melanie Battle for peace, strength and discernment
- Jon Wright for healing, peace and discernment
- For those who are being persecuted because of their race, country of origin, religion, sexual orientation or willingness to stand against the injustices being perpetrated throughout God's creation.
- Jenny & Mike Curtis – Jenny's continued healing
- Anna Langeberg – Healing, peace and discernment
- Sara Jackson – Healing, peace and discernment
- Deborah Towner – healing, peace and discernment
- George Willsie - Healing
- Fred & Norma Novak – Healing, peace & discernment
- Marcella Price – Peace & Discernment
- Alice Burgess – Healing & Discernment
- Katy Paz – Healing & Peace
- Butch & Vinie Elliot – Healing & Discernment
- Gerald Smith – Healing, Peace & Discernment
- Michael Smith – Healing & Discernment
- Patti Brockhoff – Healing & Discernment
- Will Sheridan – Healing & Discernment
- Crystal Oliver – Healing, Strength & Peace
- For all who are being displaced or disadvantaged by federal cutbacks

*Continued Prayers for God's Creation*

The people of our nation and the world as it is affected by the adverse changes to our national government & economy.

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.

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Ever wonder how 2 Billion presents get delivered all in 1 night?



*First Friday (on Saturday)  
Flicks Presents...*  
**ARTHUR CHRISTMAS**

**Saturday, December 6 at 4pm**

in Goodenberger Hall

*Free admission, popcorn and  
fellowship for all*

*Scan to watch the trailer*



*Pioneer Presbyterian Church Invites  
All to their Christmas Dinner*

*Friday December 5 at 5pm*

*At the Astoria Country Club*

*Dinner is \$42 per person*

*Please let Pastor Paul know today,  
if you'd like to attend.*



*First Presbyterian Church of Astoria*



**The Food Bank Needs:**

- Breakfast cereal,
- Peanut butter,
- Boxes
- Volunteers

Contact the church office at  
503.325.1702 for more  
information.

## *Other Ways to Make a Difference*

☪ 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, December 15, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
- Astoria School District
  - Wednesday, December 10, Regular Board Meeting at 7PM.
- Clatsop County
  - Wednesday, December 9, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
- Clatsop Community College
  - Thursday, December 11, Board of Education Meeting at 4:30PM.
- Port of Astoria
  - Tuesday, December 16, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

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## *Working for Justice and Peace*

**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.

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**December 2025**

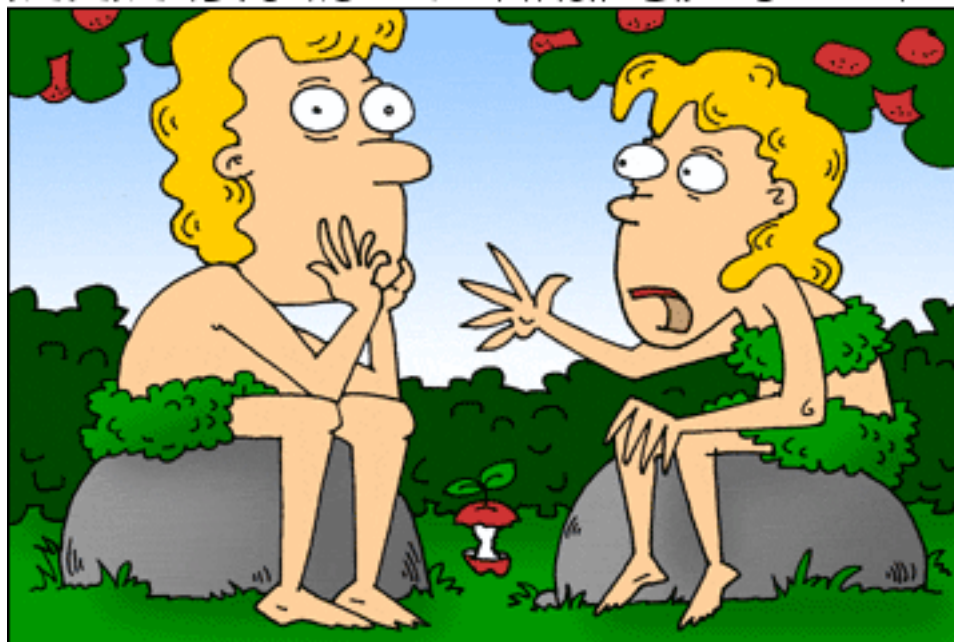
- 1 World AIDS Day; [pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/aids-awareness-day-observed-conjunction-with-national-hiv-testing-day-0](https://pcusa.org/news-storytelling/news/aids-awareness-day-observed-conjunction-with-national-hiv-testing-day-0)
- 5 International Volunteer Day; [un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day](https://un.org/en/observances/volunteer-day)
- 10 International Human Rights Day; [un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day](https://un.org/en/observances/human-rights-day)
- 18 International Migrants Day; [un.org/en/observances/migrants-day](https://un.org/en/observances/migrants-day)
- 25 Christmas; [pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/christmasnativity-lord](https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/agencies-entities/interim-unified-agency/ministry-areas/theology-worship/worship/christian-year/christmasnativity-lord)

**From the Presbyterian Women in the PCUSA |**

<https://www.presbyterianwomen.org> <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/02/2025-JP-Calendar-FA-updated-Feb2025.pdf>

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Thanks to Greg Ballos (See Genesis 3)

12-08-2003

**IT WAS A MISTAKE ... IT'S NOT LIKE  
THE WHOLE WORLD HAS TO KNOW**

## ***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:

- ✝ ['God is so endlessly creative, and the body of Christ is so endlessly diverse'](#)
- ✝ [Finding his voice to comfort the voiceless](#)
- ✝ [The Rev. David Black of First Presbyterian Church of Chicago recounts his pepper ball shooting at an ICE detention center](#)



The former Princeton Presbyterian Church has been given by the Presbytery of East Iowa to the City of Princeton (contributed photo).

### ***Historic Iowa sanctuary gifted to community care***

***Presbytery of East Iowa gives former Princeton Presbyterian Church property to the City of Princeton***

December 1, 2025 | Presbytery of East Iowa | Presbyterian News Service

In an act of true gratitude to the community, the [Presbytery of East Iowa](#) has announced the gifting of the former Princeton Presbyterian Church property to the City of Princeton, marking a new chapter in the life of a congregation that faithfully served the community for 170 years.

The congregation formally closed in November 2024 after careful discernment by its members and the presbytery.

Founded on April 14, 1854 by 18 charter members, Princeton Presbyterian Church stood as a spiritual and social anchor for generations.

After its closing, the presbytery appointed an administrative commission to responsibly steward the property and discern its future use.

The deed gifting the property was signed on Nov. 26. The city's mayor, Travis Volrath, [conveyed to the presbytery visions of using the property for a new city hall and/or community center](#). The administrative commission voted unanimously to gift the property to the City of Princeton for the benefit of the wider community.

The Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer, pastor and head of staff of [First Presbyterian Church of Davenport](#), the moderator of the Presbytery of East Iowa and a member of the administrative commission, expressed deep hope for the legacy of this historic space.



The Rev. Dr. Kristopher D. Schondelmeyer

“In every generation, the church is called to entrust its gifts to the flourishing of the communities we serve. Princeton Presbyterian Church has offered nearly two centuries of worship, compassion, and neighborly presence,” Schondelmeyer said. “Our prayer is that this gift to the City of Princeton will allow the property to remain a place where lives are nurtured, relationships are strengthened, and the common good of the community is advanced. Even as the congregation’s formal ministry has concluded, its faithful witness endures in the ongoing life of the city of Princeton.”

The Presbytery of East Iowa remains committed to fostering partnerships that strengthen local communities and honor the legacy of congregations whose ministries have shaped this region’s history.

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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.



## 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

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