

# 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 15, 2025

## *A Big Thank You to Our Clerk!*

Our church family is governed by a body of members who are elected from the congregation. This body is called 'Session' and the members are actually ordained as Ruling Elders. Together, they review all the business of the church, doing the research and work to help keep our doors open and the roof over our heads as well as making sure fellowship, worship, outreach and mission work is happening. We are very blessed to have a truly wonderful session that is truly called to serve, using their God given gifts.

The pastor actually has no vote at session unless a tie needs to be broken and serves as the moderator of the session.

At the core of the session though is the person who makes sure the minutes are taken, that dockets are created and that all the paperwork required by our denomination and other entities is being completed. This person is the Clerk of Session. Our wonderful Clerk of Session is Rebecca Duffy.

Please, next time you see one of our session members or Rebecca, give them a big hug and tell them 'thank you' for all they do.

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## *Announcements*

- ⌘ **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
- ⌘ **First Friday Flicks Changed to Family Movie Night** – Saturday, January 10 at 4pm in Goodenberger Hall with **Togo**. Watch the movie trailer: <https://youtu.be/HMfyueM-ZBQ?si=vwLwW7EZyjGILwCW>
- ⌘ **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>

## Thoughts from Pastor Paul

Dear Siblings in Christ,

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

Jesus never promised that following him would be an easy journey. On the contrary, he continually reminded his disciples, as he reminds us, that it will be anything but an easy journey. In Matthew 16:24-28, Jesus is quoted, "Anyone who intends to come with me has to let me lead. You're not in the driver's seat; I am. Don't run from suffering; embrace it. Follow me and I'll show you how. Self-help is no help at all. Self-sacrifice is the way, my way, to finding yourself, your true self. What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?"

Someone who has never experienced what it means to truly follow Jesus, to be a Christian, that is a 'little Christ', may look at Jesus words and think to themselves, 'Why on earth would anyone sign up for that?' As Matthew pointed out in his quote from Jesus, "What kind of deal is it to get everything you want but lose yourself? What could you ever trade your soul for?" As C.S. Lewis penned, "Look for yourself, and you will find in the long run only hatred, loneliness, despair, rage, ruin, and decay. But look for Christ, and you will find Him, and with Him everything else thrown in."<sup>1</sup>

All this is to say, that when things are going bad, we shouldn't 'run for the hills' or 'take cover'. Instead, as the saying goes, "When life gets too hard to stand, kneel and pray." When times get tough, that is when we need God and our church family even more. We need to pray for peace, wisdom, strength, discernment, clarity and the energy to respond as God needs us to respond. Remember, one stick, by itself, is easy to break, but the more sticks you have together, the more difficult they become to break. We are so blessed to have such a wonderful church family. God is truly present in each heart and smile in and on every church sibling. And in the short time I've been here, I've witnessed many times how people step up for each other when another is in need.

With all that said, looking at our church family's budget, and as our session prepares the budget for next year, we are indeed in need. Not only has our income from pledges gone down as we've lost some big pledges, as you are well aware of, we've had some major unexpected expenses this past year which has caused us to pull from our investment account. We cannot keep doing this and keep our doors open. This is one of those times when stress is bringing our church family to its knees. It is now, more than ever, that we must come together to seek God's resolution to the financial crisis that we currently find ourselves in.

So, I invite you to please join in our efforts to continue doing God's work, in our community and throughout God's creation. Together, and with God's wisdom and guidance, we will persevere, not only gaining the needed resources, but also finding our relationships with God and each other becoming closer and stronger. As the Apostle Paul wrote in Romans 15:5-6, "May the God of endurance and encouragement give you the same attitude toward each other, similar to Christ Jesus' attitude. That way you can glorify the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ together with one voice." (CEB)

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*

<sup>1</sup> [https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/c\\_s\\_lewis\\_714959](https://www.brainyquote.com/quotes/c_s_lewis_714959)

## Our Church Family's Financials for November 2025

Income – \$ 11,171.25 – year to date = \$116,071.74

Expenses – \$ 9,133.14 – year to date = \$143,966.66

Year to date deficit = \$-27,894.92

## Update from the church's finance team regarding facilities' repairs

The following is a summary of where we are currently at financially in these projects:

Sewer - \$9,625.00

Boiler - \$22,422.63

Door - \$4,000

Toilet near parlor - \$1,100

**Total Known Building Expenses - \$37,147.63**

Funds Received:

Grant - \$8,000

Donations - \$13,893

**Total Received: \$ 21,893**

Total Known Building Expenses - \$37,147.63

Total Received: \$21,893

**Remaining to Fund - \$15,254.6**

Although we've still a long journey ahead to getting these repairs fully funded, thanks to God's help through your generous giving, we have been able to come a long way in a short period of time. We thank God and you for the help you have provided and continue to provide.

Working together, with God's help, we will make it.

## 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	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
January	10	Saturday	4pm	Family Movie Night – Togo in Goodenberger Hall



## 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.

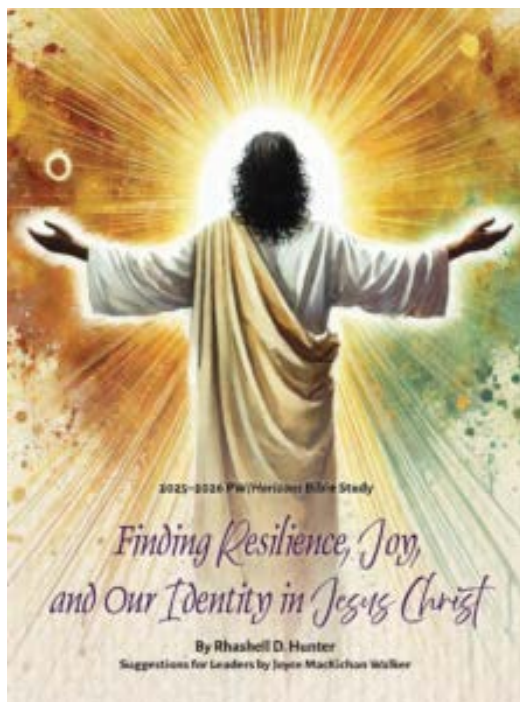
Those who are forced to flee their homes, risking life and limb for the hope of a better life.

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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**Women's Bible Study –  
Finding Resilience, Joy, and Our Identity in  
Jesus Christ**

Join us the third Saturday of each month  
each at 10am at Hazel's house. The next  
Bible Study is:

**Saturday, December 20th.**

See [https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/  
current-bible-study/](https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/current-bible-study/) for more information.

For more details about the Bible study,  
contact Hazel Davidson.



## 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.

## Pledge Cards Needed

The session needs to get next year's budget ready. So, please don't forget to turn in your pledge card!

Need one? They're in the back of the sanctuary or contact the church office.



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## *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, January 5, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
- Astoria School District
  - Wednesday, January 14, Regular Board Meeting at 7PM.
- Clatsop County
  - Wednesday, January 6, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
- Clatsop Community College
  - Thursday, January 14, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
- Port of Astoria
  - Tuesday, January 6, Commission Business Meeting at 4PM.

## *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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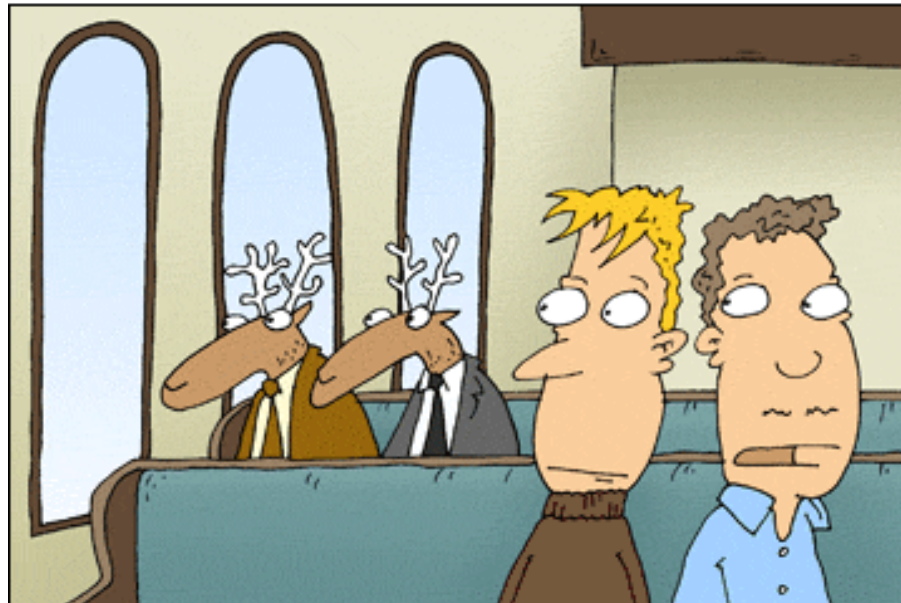
### *December 2025*

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

### **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 Barry Ruitter

11-29-2006

I DON'T KNOW WHO THEY ARE, BUT THEY SEEM TO SHOW UP AND HANG OUT HERE ABOUT THIS TIME EACH YEAR

## ***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:

- ✝ [Interfaith vigil held for those detained by Immigration and Customs Enforcement](#)
- ✝ [Joy to the world!](#)
- ✝ [Preparing a way to navigate life's challenges](#)

## ***Portland faith leaders hold Blue Christmas vigil outside ICE facility***

Updated: Dec. 08, 2025, 8:33 a.m. | Published: Dec. 02, 2025, 9:30 a.m.

By [Chiara Profenna | The Oregonian/OregonLive](#)



Participants hold battery-powered candles while listening to prayers and readings at the Blue Christmas service organized by local Presbyterian pastors and interfaith partners. Chiara Profenna

Bundled in a warm jacket and gloves, a laminated paper sign hanging from his neck, Al Nodarse stood among a sea of faith leaders and congregants outside the U.S. Immigration and Customs Enforcement facility in the South Waterfront holding a small battery-powered candle. The sign bore the name of his close friend, Danny Quach, who is currently detained by ICE.

As the holiday season begins, Nodarse — like many gathered — said he has felt the weight of heightened immigration enforcement and the tension surrounding ICE’s presence in Portland. Monday’s vigil took the form of a Blue Christmas service, a tradition meant to offer space for grief and heaviness during a time typically associated with joy.

“Blue Christmas allows us to hold space in the holiday season for grief and lament and anxiety and fear,” said the Rev. Heather Hellman, pastor at Multnomah Presbyterian Church in Southwest Portland. “That tradition just seemed to fit well for the atmosphere of protest of what is happening with ICE right now and the trauma that Portland is experiencing.”

More than 75 faith leaders and congregation members gathered to participate in the service, meeting at Elizabeth Caruthers Park before walking to the ICE facility together. In the alleyway between the ICE facility and storage center next door, organizers held a short service consisting of prayers, carols and scripture readings.



Clergy members and community participants walked from Elizabeth Caruthers Park to the Portland ICE facility as part of the vigil. Chiara Profenna

I think a lot of the folks that are being detained — I can speak for the Latino community — most of them are people of faith,” Nodarse said. “We want them to know that they are being heard, that we are thinking about them, that we are praying for them.”

The service was organized by local Presbyterian pastors with the help of Together Lab, an interfaith organization focused on building community, and local Quakers, who acted as peacekeepers during the event.

“We’re really just trying to be a presence of peace and compassion and comfort,” Hellman said about



Attendees lift their candles overhead while singing “Silent Night.” Chiara Profenna

the interfaith group. “We’re not preaching ... it’s about recognizing how we’re all feeling in this moment.”

Organizers hoped the event would show congregants it's OK to be near the ICE facility, to stand alongside protestors and bear witness. For many of the vigil attendees, like Christy Thomas, the service was their first time at the facility during active protesting.

Thomas, a member of Village Grace Church in Southwest Portland, described the vigil as beautiful and peaceful, adding that it felt safe to stand witness among the congregants.

"There's a lot of heaviness in the world right now," Thomas said. "It feels like this is one small way to kind of have some hope and light in the midst of darkness, to remind people that they aren't alone — there are a lot of us in the faith community that stand with them."

For attendees and organizers, the Blue Christmas theme felt like a fitting way to acknowledge the many kinds of suffering present in the community.

"There are people that are hurting right now," said the Rev. Joshua Dunham, pastor at Covenant Presbyterian Church in Gresham. "Be they people who have lost loved ones, people who are houseless, people that have really tough family situations. Coming into this new era, we're talking about people who are being targeted because they're LGBTQ. We're talking about people who are being targeted because they're immigrants."



Messages of support for detained immigrants are displayed on signs carried by vigil attendees. Chiara Profenna

Being people of faith, Dunham said, includes standing up for others when they can't stand up for themselves.

"This is the craziest thing to me in the world: there are people who are scared to come to church because they're being targeted by other people that profess to be Christian," Dunham said. "That just doesn't make any sense to me."

## *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  
Family Movie Night*

## Togo

**Saturday, January 10 at 4pm in**

Goodenberger Hall

*Free admission, popcorn and  
fellowship for all*

*Scan to watch the trailer*



## 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