

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF ASTORIA

Our Mission Statement:

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

Week of September 21, 2026

Care Center Worship Services Reminder

Hey, kids look! Do you enjoy singing old hymns? Feel like bringing some cheer to the folks that can't make it to church? First Presbyterian Church is on a rotating schedule with 5 other participating churches that provide worship services to shut-ins on Sunday afternoons. Please join us in worship service at Astor Place and Clatsop Retirement Village. A piano or CD player accompaniment will be provided, along with song books. Your voice or presence will be very much appreciated!

What: Ecumenical Care Center Services

Who: Anyone who likes to sing and bring cheer to residents

Where: Astor Place, 999 Klaskanine Ave, Assembly Room
Clatsop Retirement Village, 947 Olney Ave., 2nd floor Activity Center

When: 2:00 at Astor Place; 3:00 at Clatsop Retirement Village;
Sunday, November 1 and Sunday, December 2

The feedback from the residents/staff has been very positive and they look forward to more services! For many of these people these services are the only opportunity they have each Sunday to worship and hear God's Word.

Announcements

- ✠ **Autumn Harvest Ball – Spaghetti Dinner & Show** – Join us for good food, fellowship & entertainment on Saturday, October 17 at 5:30pm in Goodenberger Hall as we raise money to help maintain the beautiful and historic buildings with which we have been blessed. Tickets are \$20. [Visit the church website for more details.](#)
- ✠ **Family Movie Night** – Join us, Saturday, October 3 at 6pm for **Disney's The Hunchback of Notre Dame**. Free admission and popcorn in Goodenberger Hall. Bring your own beverage, a comfy chair and a friend.
- ✠ **World Communion Sunday** – World Communion Sunday is October 4. Help us celebrate by bringing bread from another culture that Sunday morning to share.
- ✠ **Being Presbyterian in a Dysvangelical America** – Continues each Sunday at 12:30pm in the Christian Resource Room. Contact the church office to order a copy of the book. There will be **no class** on Sunday, October 11.
- ✠ **Coffee, Tea, Treats & Fellowship** – Join us Friday, October 9 at 10am in the church parlor for coffee, tea, treats and fellowship.
- ✠ **Presbyterian Women's Bible Study** – The Presbyterian Women's Bible study, **United Through Christ, Bound to Each Other**, continues Saturday, October 17 at 10am at Hazel Davidson's home. Contact the church office for more information or to order a book or for directions to Hazel's home.
- ✠ **Commissioner Needed for Presbytery** – If you are an ordained Ruling Elder and a member of our church family, and are called to serve and represent our church family at the upcoming Presbytery meeting in North Bend on October 23-24, please contact the church office, Pastor Paul, or Rebecca.
- ✠ **Live Streaming YouTube** – Sunday worship is available as recordings or livestreaming 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.

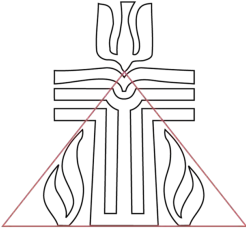
We are a part of wonderful denomination, the Presbyterian Church, USA (PCUSA). You may not realize this, but although our roots go back hundreds of years as a denomination, the PC(USA) is relatively young having been formed in 1983. According to the PCUSA web site, “The Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is the largest Presbyterian denomination in the United States, formed in 1983 through a reunion of branches that had separated around the time of the Civil War. As expressed in a 1958 church statement, since 1789 the General Assembly has affirmed “its responsibility to speak on social and moral issues for the encouragement and instruction of the [c]hurch and its members, seeking earnestly both to know the mind of Christ and to speak always in humility and love.”¹

Recently, I was asked about the PC(USA) symbol. The symbol of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) is a symbolic statement of the church's heritage, identity, and mission in contemporary form. Its power depends on both its simplicity and complexity, as well as its traditional and enduring qualities. So, thanks to the PC(USA) website, here's some information...

<https://pcusa.org/resources/pcusa-seal-symbol>

The Cross 	The basic symbols in the seal are the cross, Scripture, the dove, and flames. The dominant structural and theological element in the design is the cross — the universal and most ecumenical symbol of the Christian church. The cross represents the incarnate love of God in Jesus Christ and his passion and resurrection. Because of its association with Presbyterian history, the Celtic cross was chosen as a model for this contemporary rendering of the ancient symbol.
The Open Book 	In experimenting with the basic lines and shapes of the cross, the contour of a book began to emerge in the horizontal section, and the two center lines of the cross became the representation of an open book. This integration of the horizontal dimensions of the cross with the book motif highlights the emphasis that the Reformed tradition has placed on the role of Scripture as a means of knowing God's word.
The Dove 	The slightly flared shape of the Celtic cross also makes possible the transforming of the uppermost section into the shape of a descending dove. As a symbol of the Holy Spirit, the dove is intimately tied to the representation of the Bible, affirming the role of the Spirit in both inspiring and interpreting Scripture in the life of the church. The dove also symbolizes Christ's baptism by John and the peace and wholeness which his death and resurrection bring to a broken world.

¹ <https://pcusa.org/about-pcusa/who-we-are/history>

The Lectern 	Beneath the image of the book is the suggestion of a lectern or pulpit, which captures the important role of preaching in the history of Presbyterian worship.
The Flames 	Integrated into the lower part of the design are flames that form an implied triangle, a traditional symbol of the Trinity. The flames themselves convey a double meaning: a symbol of revelation in the Old Testament when God spoke to Moses from the burning bush and a suggestion of the beginning of the Christian church when Christ manifested himself to his apostles at Pentecost and charged them to be messengers of the good news of God's love.
The Triangle 	The triangle also suggests the nature of Presbyterian government, with its concern for balance and order, dividing authority between ministers of the Word and laypeople and between different governing bodies. This understanding of the church was based in part on an important idea in Reformed theology, the covenant, which God establishes with people to affirm God's enduring love and to call us to faith and obedience to Jesus Christ.
Other Theological Symbols 	Looking more closely at some of the visual components of the design, viewers may discover elements that seem to fuse with some of the more obvious theological symbols. In the shape of the descending dove, for example, one might also discern in the body of the bird, the form of a fish, an early Christian sign for Christ, recalling his ministry to those who hunger. For some, the overall design evokes the calligraphy of Hebrew and Greek manuscripts. Others have seen a baptismal font or a communion chalice (cup).

Hope this helps you better understand who we are as a denomination. Let me know your thoughts.

Siblings in Christ, when we work together doing God's work, not only can we do more than we can do on our own, we can also do more and greater things than we could ever imagine or do on our own. And when we are working together to do God's work, that's when we find more hearts and lives changed for the better and when we just might find more hands joining in the work. So together, keep up the great work, that is God's work, and continue to share God's selfless love with each other, while remembering to show yourself some of that same love.

See you in church.

Blessings and shalom,

Pastor Paul

Our Church Family's Financials as of August 2026

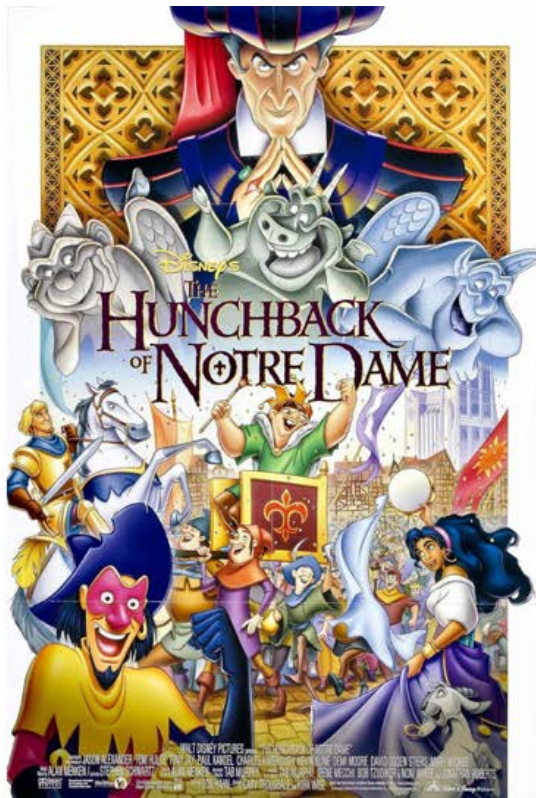
- Income – \$ 8,760
- Expenses – \$ 10,093



FPC Astoria's Calendar

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

Month	Date	Day	Time	What & Where
October	3	Saturday	6pm	Family Movie Night in Goodenberger Hall – Disney's The Hunchback of Notre Dame
	4	Sunday	10am	World Communion Sunday – Bring bread from different cultures
	5-11	Monday – Sunday		Pastor Paul out of the office for Study Leave
	9	Friday	10am	Coffee, Tea & Fellowship in the church parlor
	17	Saturday	10am	Women's Bible Study at Hazel Davidson's home
			5:30pm	Autumn Harvest Ball Spaghetti Dinner & Show
	23-24	Friday - Saturday		Presbytery of the Cascades Presbytery Meeting in North Bend Oregon
	28	Wednesday	9am	<u>Presbyterian Advocacy Hour – Building Power and Sharing Victories</u>



*First Presbyterian Church of Astoria
Family Movie Night*

**DISNEY'S THE HUNCHBACK OF
NOTRE DAME**

Saturday, October 3 at 6pm

in Goodenberger Hall

*Free admission, popcorn and
fellowship for all*

Scan to watch the trailer



**Celebrate World
Communion Sunday
Sunday, October 4**

**Bring different
breads & treats
from different parts
of the world to
celebrate the
diversity of God's
creation.**

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 Minneapolis, Ukraine, the Gaza Strip, Sudan, 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.

We Share Our Joys & Concerns

- Brodie MacDonald for healing and shalom
- Pam Wev for healing and discernment
- Family and friends of Susie McIntire at her passing
- Jeff Van Nostran for healing, discernment and shalom
- Yvonne and Bill Van Nostran for peace and discernment
- Joe Fusckino for healing and peace
- Grady Atwater for healing and peace
- Jeremy Annett for healing and peace
- Lena Linehan - healing and peace after leukemia diagnosis
- Dorothy Hamill - for peace and healing
- 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
- Dave O'Neel for healing & shalom
- For all 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.
- Melanie Battle for peace, strength and discernment
- Jenny & Mike Curtis – Jenny's continued healing
- 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
- Jon Wright for healing, peace and discernment
- For all who are being displaced or disadvantaged by federal cutbacks

Autumn Harvest Ball
Spaghetti Dinner & Show
Saturday October 17th 5:30pm
Goodenberger Hall Harrison Street
Astoria, Oregon

HOSTED BY "MAMA!" \$20 Tickets at:
eventbrite & At the door

Raffle!
Prizes!
Bake Sale!
Family Fun!

MUSIC, SONG, DANCE, & COMEDY



Scan to Purchase Tickets

*Come Join us for Coffee,
Tea & Fellowship,
Friday, October 9
at 10am
In the Church Parlor*

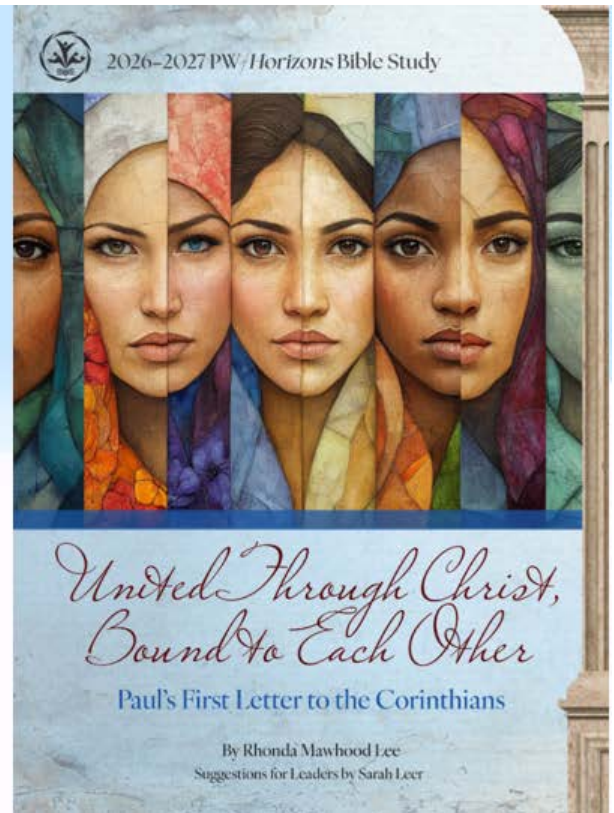


Presbyterian Women's Book Study

October 17 at 10am

Paul wrote at a time when Christians expected Jesus' imminent return; he challenged his friends to be ready when that day came. Two thousand years later, the church is still waiting, still affirming that Jesus will return, and still proclaiming that this world has already been transformed by God's life-giving love. Our challenge remains to live in ways that demonstrate our trust in the resurrection.

Contact the church
office or scan the code
to order the book



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, October 5th, City Council Meeting at 6PM.
 - Astoria School District
 - Wednesday, October 14th, Regular Board Meeting at 7PM.
 - Clatsop County
 - Wednesday, October 14th, Board of Commissioners Agenda Work Session & Regular Meeting at 5PM.
 - Clatsop Community College
 - Tuesday, October 13th, Board of Education Meeting at 5:30PM.
 - Port of Astoria
 - Tuesday, October 6th, Commission Meeting at 4PM.

Working for Justice and Peace - <https://www.presbyterianwomen.org/wp-content/uploads/2025/12/2026-JP-Calendar-NEW-FA.pdf>

OCTOBER

- Domestic Violence Awareness Month; ncadv.org/; nomore.org; presbyterianwomen.org/justice or pcusa.org/resource/domestic-violence-worship-resources
 - Fair Trade Month; fairtradefederation.org/celebrate-fair-trade-month
 - National Disability Employment Awareness Month; dol.gov/agencies/odep/initiatives/ndeam
- 04 World Communion Sunday; pcusa.org/resource/resources-world-communion-Sunday
- 11 International Day of the Girl Child; un.org/en/observances/girl-child-day
- 12 National Coming Out Day; hrc.org/resources/national-coming-out-day
- 12 Indigenous Peoples' Day; americanindian.si.edu/nk360/informational/columbus-day-myths
- 16 World Food Day; fao.org/world-food-day/home/en
- 18 Children's Sabbath: Educate a Child; pcusa.org/resource/sabbath-practices-ministry-kit-children or childrensdefense.org
- 24 United Nations Day; un.org/en/observances/un-day

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

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.

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:

- ✝ [The healthcare pinch](#)
- ✝ [Trinity Presbyterian Church in Fairhope, Alabama, breathes new life into Baytreat property](#)
- ✝ [From demolition to welcome](#)
- ✝ [Faithful leadership in an age of artificial intelligence](#)

Syrian-Armenian PC(USA) pastor faces ministry disruption after TPS termination

September 21, 2026 | Layton Williams Berkes | Presbyterian News Service



The Rev. Dr. Tamar Wasoian presides at communion in the Boston Common. (Photo courtesy of common cathedral)

Thousands lose legal residency in the US as the Department of Homeland Security terminates Syria's protected status

When Syria's Temporary Protected Status was terminated by the Trump administration this summer, it affected approximately 6,000 Syrians living and working in the United States. Thousands of families. Hundreds of communities across the United States. Countless people who know and love their Syrian neighbors, coworkers, and friends. Six thousand Syrian lives. One of them is a Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) pastor, the Rev. Dr. Tamar Wasoian.

"We were one of the most vetted immigrant categories, and suddenly, we were given two months to adjust our status or self-deport," Wasoian said.

That news came in September 2025. A Supreme Court case delayed the termination, but it went into effect this past July.

For nearly 20 years, the United States has not only been the place Wasoian lived, but where she has studied, discerned her calling, and pursued her vocation as both teacher and pastor. She was born in Aleppo, Syria — the descendant of Armenian genocide survivors — and first came to the United States under a student visa, pursuing graduate and doctoral degrees in religion.

In 2012, Syria was designated with Temporary Protected Status due to an ongoing violent civil war that put anyone returning to Syria in danger. TPS gave Wasoian both legal residence and authorization to work in the United States.

Wasoian has spent the years since teaching and doing ministry, helping seminarians and others pursue their own calls to ministry. She was



The Rev. Dr. Tamar Wasoian. (Photo courtesy of common cathedral)

ordained by the [Presbytery of New Covenant](#) in Houston, and currently serves as an associate pastor at Boston's *common cathedral*, a church for the unhoused that gathers in the Boston Common.

Meanwhile, Wasoian has dutifully kept up with the legal process necessary for someone in the U.S. under TPS. That includes reapplying every time the TPS designation is extended, generally every 18 months — a laborious process that includes mountains of paperwork, months of uncertainty and significant financial cost.

An American life, upended

When Syria's TPS was terminated, Wasoian, like thousands of others, suddenly faced the terrifying possibility of being forced to give up the communities she serves in the U.S. and return to a country where she would be at significant risk.

"None of the Syria I knew is left to return to," Wasoian said. "The overall situation is not safe for anyone to return."

The Department of Homeland Security claims that the conditions that originally led to Syria's TPS designation no longer apply. However, the United Nations and other organizations report that the country is still in a major state of crisis with more than 70% of the population in need of humanitarian aid. Seven million Syrians are internally displaced, with another 4 million currently residing as refugees in neighboring countries.

For Wasoian, there are additional layers.

"As an ordained woman minister, I will not be able to live my calling to ministry if I return. I built a life here and found a home at PC(USA). I have a ministry here that I am called to. How can I leave everything behind and just leave? How can I leave my church?"

Wasoian has not faced the uncertainty alone. She's had ongoing support from various PC(USA) denominational ministries, and the congregation she serves has also stepped up to help with the legal process and cover the significant financial cost. The board and executive director of *common cathedral* applied for an R1 Religious Worker visa on her behalf, and it was ultimately granted, but not without complications. Initially, the change in status was not approved.



The Rev. Dr. Tamar Wasoian raises a communion chalice during a worship service in the Boston Common for common cathedral. (Photo courtesy of common cathedral)

“A lesser-known truth about TPS status is that it locks the holder in a non-immigrant status and the only way to change status is to leave the U.S., travel to their birth country, have an interview at the U.S. embassy there, and re-enter U.S. with approved status,” Wasoian explained. “In my case, this meant traveling to Syria, but there is no U.S. embassy in Syria, and the designated embassy is in Jordan. Jordan didn’t grant me the visa.”

In the midst of all of this, a travel ban was enacted for Syria, among other countries, and Wasoian was unable to leave the U.S.

“Thanks to the insightful knowledge of my legal team, and the mercy of a judge, I was able to obtain an active R1 visa and change of status with no requirement of traveling to Syria or Jordan,” Wasoian said.

She’s relieved to have an R1 visa now, but the process came at a staggering cost. Her legal fees have amounted to tens of thousands of dollars, so far. She emphasized that an R1 visa also has significant limitations: It is only valid for five years and confines her employment to the organization that petitioned for her visa. That has forced Wasoian to give up the teaching portfolio she has spent years building.

A historic connection made personal

Wasoian sees her place in the PC(USA) and the denomination’s support for her as an echo of a relationship between the denomination and Christians in Syria that stretches back more than a century.

The PC(USA)’s partner church in Lebanon and Syria, the [National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon](#), was founded in the mid-1800s by Presbyterian missionaries from the United States. After the Armenian genocide, which led to the displacement of Armenians throughout the Middle East and beyond, the PC(USA) helped establish the Jinishian Memorial Program in the 1960s. Its efforts initially focused on Armenians in Aleppo, Syria, and Beirut, Lebanon, but it has expanded to support Armenians throughout the Middle East and Europe. Meanwhile, the PC(USA) maintains a close relationship with the the National Evangelical Synod of Syria and Lebanon and several seminaries in the region, including the [Near East School of Theology](#) (NEST) and [Lebanese American University](#) (LAU).

In the past year, the [National Middle Eastern Presbyterian Caucus](#) has published multiple letters urging the denomination to continue its support of Christians in Syria and Lebanon, and at the 227th General Assembly this past June, [the General Assembly approved an overture from the Racial Equity Advocacy Committee](#) calling for continued denominational support for religious minorities in Syria.

Wasoian said she’s grateful for the invaluable support she’s received from her congregation and from the denomination to which she is ordained. However, she lamented the “lost time, resources, and energy that would have been better invested in ministry to those who needed hope.”

Facing a fraught future

Even with support, and especially for the many Syrians in the U.S. without it, the path ahead without TPS is fraught. Those affected are being asked to “self-deport” and return to their country of citizenship on their own terms. In the meantime, they’re fitted with ankle monitors to track their movements. They are not provided with instructions or guidance on how to move forward, which Wasoian says has been a major issue from the beginning.

“There is no plan and DHS is figuring out things as it comes, and meanwhile, lives are uprooted in such a haphazard manner, with no consideration to human dignity,” Wasoian said.

A particular challenge they face is that TPS was not designed to lead to permanent residence or citizenship. When a country’s TPS is terminated, its citizens who are living in the U.S. revert to whatever status they would have had without the TPS designation. Wasoian said the irony is that lawyers she consulted in the past always told her that TPS is “one of the most reliable categories” to stay and work “without concern.”

The termination of TPS for Syria [as well as Haiti](#) is part of the Trump administration’s ongoing “immigration crackdown,” which has also included imposing major limitations on asylum claims and [the rescission of sensitive locations policy](#) that protected people from deportation efforts while at churches, schools, hospitals and other essential social services.

The church’s call to immigration justice

The PC(USA) has a decades-long history of supporting immigrants and refugees through its ministries and General Assembly policies. This year, the [Presbyterian Hunger Program](#) and other PC(USA) ministries have advocated for the extension of TPS. This past spring, the Rev. Jihyun Oh, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly and Executive Director of Presbyterian Life & Witness, [joined other faith leaders to sign an amicus brief](#) in support of asylum-seekers as the U.S. Supreme Court considered a case concerning “turnback policy” at the U.S. border.

“For me, the journey of permanent residency is still to unfold. I am thankful for the legal and relational support I have from PC(USA), the prayers and support of the [Presbytery of Boston](#) and my congregation,” Wasoian said.

She added that she worries for those who don’t have the same privileges and resources.

“U.S. immigration laws were never straightforward, and now it is even more complicated,” she said. “Every day there is a new regulation and new twist to the plot that requires legal guidance. Millions are left to navigate these demands by themselves.”

She urges the church to continue upholding its values and reflecting its own history by proactively providing support to those who need it, like Syrians reeling from TPS termination.

“We need to remember that we as denomination and churches are called to do God’s work in the world,” Wasoian said. “This is a time that calls for solidarity, and for us to work for justice for all.”



Presbyterians join hundreds of others in support of Syrians and Haitians with TPS outside the Supreme Court in April 2026. (Photo by Cindy Corell)

Book Study

Sundays after Fellowship Time In the Christian Resource Room

This book is a timely and accessible guide and conversation partner for those who want to articulate their faith as Presbyterians in a positive manner—not as who they are not but what they believe about God and the good news of Jesus Christ and how that translates into faith in action. The authors invite readers to a grace-filled Presbyterian discipleship and witness toward God's wholeness in God's beloved world."—Jihyun Oh, Stated Clerk of the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), Executive Director of the Interim Unified Agency

Contact the church
office or scan the code
to order the book



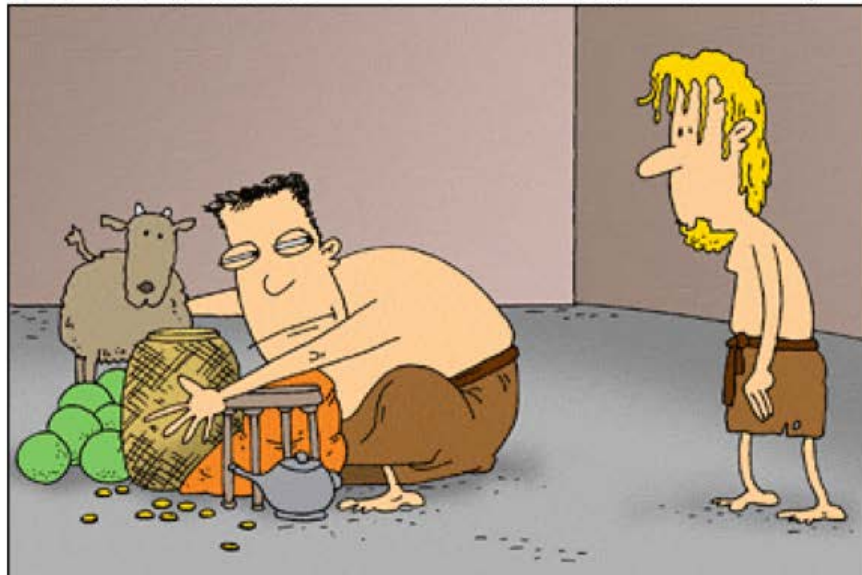
TED V. FOOTE JR. AND P. ALEX THORNBURG

BEING PRESBYTERIAN IN A DYSVANGELICAL AMERICA

A Guide to Reclaiming
the Good News of God's Grace



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(See Luke 15)

09-14-2009

CONFUSED BY THE SUDDEN RETURN, THE
PRODIGAL SON'S BROTHER ASSUMES A
DEFENSIVE HOARDING MANEUVER

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.



First Presbyterian Church of Astoria

1103 Grand Avenue, Astoria OR 97103

Join us every Sunday at 10AM for a family friendly,
Christ centered worship where all are welcome & accepted.

www.fpcastoria.org | email: office@fpcastoria.org | phone: 503.325.1702
