

THE PRESTON PILGRIM

The newsletter of
**The Preston City
Congregational Church**
Gathered 1698

SEPTEMBER 2012

CHURCH ADDRESS

321 Route 164
Preston, CT 06365-8108

TELEPHONE

(860)887-4647, (860) 886-7200

FAX

(860)887-4647

WORSHIP

9:00 & 10:30 A.M.

SUNDAY SCHOOL

8:45 A.M.

High School class: 10:30 A.M.

EMAIL: PCCC@SNET.NET

WEBSITE: prestoncitycongregational.org

Follow us on **FACEBOOK**

News and information for the October newsletter is due in the church office by **September 16th**. You may leave information in the holder located on the wall in the kitchen.

+++

We Heard You...

So, starting this month, *The Preston Pilgrim* newsletter will, once again, be mailed to homes **AFTER** the first Sunday of the month. This will give church-goers an opportunity to pick up their copy following the worship services, thus saving the church postage costs. All remaining newsletters will be mailed the next day. If you'd like to help defray postage costs, consider giving \$10 to cover the numerous first-class mailings sent to you throughout the year. The newsletter will still be available online at www.prestoncitycongregational.org.

From the Minister...

"There's no place like home."

It's true; and it's true of churches. While walking my dog Millie past the town beach the other day, I met someone I had not seen in quite a while. She stopped me to say, "Hello." After some small talk, she told me that she's coming back to church (she's been away for a while, and got out of the "routine"). I encouraged her to attend; to get back into the habit of starting the week with God - in His *home*.

People have told me that starting their week in worship helps them *get through* their week. Often times, something from the service; a song, something that was mentioned, the sermon, etc.

comes to mind during the week, encouraging them to keep going, to hang in there, reminding them that there are others worse off than they. There's so much good you can take away from worship if your heart and mind is listening for God's voice to speak to your life and circumstance.

September is here; and many of us are re-establishing our routines that have been relaxed due to summer. As you get back into yours, be sure to include God and your church. You need what the church has to offer, and the church needs you. If you've been a way for the summer, or even longer, September 9th is the perfect day to come home; to re-connect with God and with many other wonderful people - just like you!

I hope to see you this Sunday!

Rev. Stan

+++

DURING THE SUMMER...

WE CONGRATULATED the following couples who were united in marriage:

6-15, *Marcello Fossati and Kristen Bard*

8-14, *Benjamin Selkis, Jr. and Phyllis Cornacchia*
(These weddings were conducted by The Rev. Robert Wright)

8-24, *Robert Warner and Elizabeth Andersen* who were united in marriage by Rev. White at Lake of Isles, N. Stonington, CT

30 Years of Music!

By now you've heard the news... Our beloved Organist & Choir Director, Joyce Costner, will retire from her 30-year "temporary position" following the worship service on September 2nd.

In 1983, Joyce, a relatively "newcomer" to our church, was asked to fill in as the organist until a permanent organist could be found and hired. She said, "Yes," and has been sitting at the organ bench and serving as choir director ever since.

I never knew Joyce was the temporary organist of the church until one day, about 20 years ago, when we were talking by the Sanctuary organ (where we've shared many a conversation through the years) and she told me the story. Not only was she asked to be the Organist, but the choir director as well. Needless to say, Joyce grew into the position she retires from this month.

During her tenure:

- Joyce went from directing a choir of 7-10 voices to an adult choir of 25-30 voices!
- Joyce established two more choirs; the Children's choir and Youth choir. Although these choirs are directed by others today, Joyce planted the musical seeds in the hearts of children years earlier. Both groups are going strong today!
- Joyce went from playing for one Sunday service to playing for two, and countless other services as well: Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, Christmas Eve, and other special services that happened come along. In addition, Joyce has played for countless weddings and funerals during her 30 years.
- Joyce freely offered her musical talents beyond the church; serving as an accompanist for the *Preston Community Chorus* for more than 10 years!

The list could go on; her commitment to church music is truly admirable. Many singers and instrumentalists have been blessed to have her accompany them. She's one of the areas "best."

Joyce deserves a break and a rest... Imagine all the hymns and anthems she has played through the years – how many times she's played the Doxology and Gloria Patri. More than any other church-goer, Joyce has heard me preach the most (twice EVERY Sunday - as I said, she *deserves* a break and a rest!).

A new and exciting chapter in Joyce's life begins on September 2nd. She and her husband David plan to spend a lot more time at their home in Florida during the winter months, but promises to be back in Preston, and back in church during the spring and summer.

On a personal note, I shall dearly miss my friend and colleague in ministry. So many Sundays I would change a hymn at the last minute, or mention a "change in the service" as she's walking into the Sanctuary. She handled these things like the "Pro" that she is. Joyce is the kind of Organist/Choir Director every Pastor hopes to work with – a great musician, a wonderful, caring, and compassionate person, and above all, one who sees her vocation NOT as a job but as a ministry.

Thanks for the music and the memories. Our church has been truly blessed by your music – even if it was only "temporary." You ARE loved!

+++

SEMI-ANNUAL MEETING

Sunday, September 16,
Noon time in the Sunday School Hall

Before the meeting (11:30), young people will be selling deli-style sandwiches in Fellowship Hall. You can place your order ahead of the 16th, or on the day of the meeting. Deli forms are available in the weekly worship folder, or on the Information Center table. Proceeds from the sale of sandwiches will benefit the young people going on next summer's youth mission trip.

Plan to attend this informative meeting and learn about the many things happening in our church. Everyone is invited to attend, however, only church members may vote on issues that may arise. Reports for the SAM are due in the church office by September 9th.

+++

THEY'RE BACK...

"The Jacobs' Brothers"

Friday night, September 28th, at 7 P.M.
In the Sanctuary

The concert is "Free"; however, an offering will be received to support the group's music ministry. Tell your friends and neighbors!

+++

IT'S COMING

5.1.9*

September 30th, (5th Sunday)

1 Service; 9 A.M.

9 A.M.

Theme: "Running the Race with Faith"
*The Sunday School WILL be in session.

+++

JUST A REMINDER...

Is your church pledge up-to-date? Like many churches, many of our people/families were away this summer. Our income has fallen behind considerably and we MUST catch up. We count on you, our members and friends, to keep us financially strong throughout the year. Your support is needed and appreciated! *Thanks!*

A SPAGHETTI FUNDRAISER

To benefit the Irvine Family
Sunday, September 30th
4 – 7 P.M.

Here at the church.

For tickets, call Linda Farinha at 860.608.6641, or via email LKFarinha@att.net. Tickets are \$10 each and are available for “to go” dinners. All proceeds will go to the family as Rob Irvine battles ALS. Your support is appreciated. A fund has been established to benefit the Irvine family. To make a contribution, checks should be mailed to “PCCC Irvine Fund.” They can be given to Pat Marino, or mailed to the church office. They can also be placed in an envelope and put in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. Please mark IRVINE FAMILY on your envelope.

+++

HANDBELL WORKSHOP

Robin Lyon, our interim Organist and Choir Director, will offer a handbell workshop for beginners starting Tuesday, October 2, at 7 P.M. The workshop will run through November. Interested ringers should contact Robin at 860.642.6662 or lyon.family@comcast.net.

+++

ADULT MISSIONS TRIP

This year we’re traveling to Binghamton, NY to help recovery efforts caused by tropical storm Lee in September 2011. We’ll be staying in a church that has a kitchen, shower, and laundry facilities. Housing costs at the church at the church are \$50 per person for the week. If we cook the majority of the meals, we estimate that cost to be \$75 for the week. Hopefully, we’ll have volunteer drivers, so there will also be some cost to reimburse those folks for gas.

We won’t know the exact nature of the work to be done for a while yet, but I expect it could be gutting and possibly some restoration work such as painting, sanding, staining, etc. No special skills are required. All you need to have is a loving heart and a willingness to help those in need. Please let us know in the next few weeks if you’re interested in going or learning more about the trip. Lori Hall can be reached at 860.887.9558 or at lorihall255@gmail.com.

If you have perennials you’d like to thin out, please think about donating them to us as we plan on selling them at the Scarecrow Festival this year. Proceeds from the sale will be used for future missions trips. If you’re able to mark each plant with the name and the sun requirements it would be very helpful. Any questions, please contact us.

-- Lori Hall & Laurie Bowers, Co-coordinators

PATH TO WELLNESS

Those in attendance at the April semi-annual meeting voted unanimously to proceed with the development of a walking course around the church property!

Marci Bartha, Laurie Waldron, and Rev. Stan are planning a course that will benefit people of all walking abilities. 4-5 “workout stations” will be placed along the route with specific workout instructions for the beginner as well as the advanced fitness enthusiast!

Marci has agreed to be available (1-2 times per month) to assist walkers in developing a plan that best suits their lifestyle.

In the future, we hope to offer other programs related to good health; Zumba, Yoga, Meditation, etc. These programs are an effort to keep our congregation strong and healthy, and we hope to see you on the course one day. It is hoped that the “Path to Wellness” will be ready later this fall.

+++

Trips & Travels...

NEW for 2013 and beyond...

Hawaii in April, 2013... Brochures are now available for this trip at the Information Center. Our Collette Vacations Rep will be here at the church on September 25th for a slide presentation on our Hawaii trip. Plan to attend and bring a friend.

A motorcoach tour through New England is in the works for the Fall... and a Safari in South Africa in 2014!

All of these trips are open to the community.

+++

AGAPE

This new support/advocacy group for LGBTQ youth meets in Fellowship Hall on the first and third Sunday afternoons from 4-6 P.M. Supportive friends, parents and guardians are welcome to attend. For information about AGAPE (Greek for God’s unconditional love for ALL) please contact Deb Miller at agapeadvocate@gmail.com

THE PRESTON JUNIOR PILGRIM

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

WE'RE OFF AND RUNNING... School is back in session and Sunday School will be opening September 9th. Please be sure to invite any kids to come that might not have a SS to go to. Tell them about what an awesome place this is and invite them to be part of it.

BEFORE I totally leave the summer behind, I must say **THANK YOU** to everyone who helped this summer while Rev. Stan was on sabbatical. I fear to list names as I may forget someone, but I am extremely grateful to Sr. Deacon Mary Lou Jensen, Scott Van Alst, and Lynwood Crary for the extraordinary help they rendered. With the end of summer, Joyce retires and I personally will miss her. She and I have worked together all the years I have been here (21) and it has been a pleasure. Best wishes always, Joyce, co-worker and friend.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL teaching staff is almost complete. A few more aides are needed. I am so grateful to those who teach. I know it can be challenging, but these kids are "angels in training!" In my 21 years here I have seen some great challengers turn into fine, respectful young women and men.

THE BABY NURSERY will need adult or teen volunteers this year who are church members. Two people must be with the children at all times. We are fortunate to have Susan Conn and Denise Luft who have been trained in first aid and CPR and are paid a stipend. They alternate weeks.

BRINGING CHILDREN and adults to an understanding of God and Jesus Christ...what an awesome mission. My hope is they will say "I have decided to follow Jesus...no turning back, no turning back" because I know that their lives will be changed forever for the good when they accept Jesus Christ as their Lord and Savior.

I AM EXCITED to start anew. Thank you, God.

May the **SON**shine through me,

Sandy Dudek

Congratulations to our *Helen Benjamin Scholarship* winners **Colleen Cournoyer, Alexis Luft, Megan Maynard,** and **Jordyn Schrage!** We wish them the best as they begin their college years.

THANK YOU to Marcia Bartha and children for coordinating the Choir Appreciation coffee hour in June. Please know how much your efforts were appreciated.

THE JR. PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (6th, 7th, & 8th graders) and **SR. PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP** (9-12th grades) groups will be meeting this fall. Watch the bulletin and announcements will be made in Sunday School when they begin. More adult leadership is needed for the Jr. P.F. especially males. Interested church members should speak to the minister or the D.R.E.

THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP has been booked to receive an early discount. The dates are **July 28-August 3, 2013** and the location is West Virginia. Please let the Giulianos know of your interest in going. The first deposit will be due in October.

SEPTEMBER BIBLE VERSES

Students Nursery 3-Grade 2

"In the beginning God created the heavens and the earth." (Genesis 1:1)

Students Grades 3-12:

"For I know the plans I have for you" declares the Lord, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

PLEASE ENCOURAGE students to learn these verses. To qualify for an award at the end of the year, verses must be correctly recited by the end of each month to a Bible Memory Verse Coordinator assigned by Mrs. Dudek. **The May verse needs to be recited by May 5th to allow time for those receiving a Bible Memory Verses award.** Nursery 3 & 4 students say their verse to the teacher and she will mark them off

SUMMER IN REVIEW:

Vacation Bible School...What an awesome week it was as we explored some of the many promises God has made to us through "Adventures on Promise Island." 63 children were enrolled with 33 adults and teens as teachers, leaders, and aides. The "Storytelling Room" led by Judy Ladegard (who also served as a co-director) was high in popularity with the children. I am planning to have a variety of "storytellers" in addition to Judy some of the weeks of Sunday School. This interactive way of teaching is definitely needed...just need others to "catch" the vision! Several large baskets of items were brought in for the Food Pantry through our mission project. The school ran at a profit due to the generous donations of the congregation of craft and snack items. **THANK YOU SO MUCH!**

SINGING HILLS CAMP...Many of our youth attended this camp in July in New Hampshire and had a great time. The camp was exclusively for our Northeast Congregational Christian Churches (formerly CT Fellowship).

YOUTH MISSION TRIP...15 youth and 3 leaders served in the Adirondack Mountains, New York, for a week this summer. Upon their return, most of them were in church on Sunday and a few told us about the meaningful week they had. Thank you so much to leaders Jerry Giuliano, and Scott & Lisa Van Alst who accompanied them.

HAM & BEAN SUPPER...Thank you to the Supper Committee and anyone who helped in any way. This delicious supper had a net profit of \$899.60.