

THE PRESTON JUNIOR PILGRIM

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:

BENEFIT...According to my dictionary it's anything that promotes or enhances well-being; advantage. Who checks out a job today without finding out what the "benefits" are. I have sometimes heard others say that the benefits were worth more to them than the compensation.

What if you could go somewhere where there was no compensation, only benefits. I want to shout from the steeple, come in, come in, those who are weary of the world. Come in and find some rest for your soul right here at Preston City Congregational Church. When someone calls the office and wants to know about what we have at the church, it is so much my pleasure to tell them about the benefits:

- We have two services, 9:00 & 10:30 a.m.
- We have Bible study and discussion groups.
- You will be surrounded by people (not perfect ones) who will be united with you in trying to follow Christ and his teachings.
- You like to sing...we have a choir that praises God in the most musical way, has fun doing it, and always has room for more.
- We have a Community Center each week overseen by faithful people who have come early in the morning to be sure that coffee is on, pastries and cereals are available, the newspaper Wii, and listening ears if you've got something you want to share, good or bad...
- We have a food pantry with coordinators who, with a smile on their faces, and pure goodness in their hearts will help you and encourage you to help others.
- Oh, you have trouble getting around. We have handicap parking and a wheelchair available by the lower parking lot entrance.
- Oh, you have kids, we have the place for them... a full staff who are eager to teach your children, no one who has been begged to do it, but people who genuinely care about kids
- Are there any teens there...oh, yes, I say, we're loaded with them and they're kids you'd want your kids to mix with because they're Christians who are standing tall in a tough world (I am thinking of the teen who told his workplace he couldn't work Sunday mornings because of Sunday School, I'm thinking about the teen who steered his family back to church after some life changes...and am I proud of them...you bet I am...and I tell them so).
- Jr. & Sr. Pilgrim Fellowship groups that not only socialize together, but serve their church and community
- Children & Youth Choirs with dedicated leaders.
- Adult and youth mission trips. The list could go on and on...

Sometimes I have been asked what it *costs to belong*. When I say only your time...come and check us out. You make the decision.

He said to them, "*Go into all the world and preach the good news to all creation.*" Luke 16:15
We have "*good news*" to share. Those of us that know how life-giving this place is should not keep it to ourselves but be eager to share it with others in word and deed. **Today** is the day to begin!

May the **SON**shine through me,

Sandy Dudek

FEBRUARY BIBLE VERSES

"...God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) (N3-Grade 2)

"I have hidden your word in my heart that I might not sin against you." Psalm 119:11 (Grades 3-12)

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.

“NO ROOM IN THE INN” was our second interactive storytelling session on December 16th and it was very well received by the children. Our storyteller, Judy Ladegard, had many of the teens involved helping her with the presentation complete with a very effective Mary (**Amanda Migliaccio**) labor pains and all!

“NOAH’S ARK”, our third interactive storytelling session on January 27th was terrific. I got to slip in while the preschool, kindergarten, 1st and 2nd grade groups were in there. The room is generally speaking on the dark side with twinkling stars and our storyteller sitting on the floor in front of her tent. The whole setting has kids at attention and learning Bible stories that I hope will be written in their hearts for years to come.

Two more storytelling sessions are scheduled this Sunday School year involving other adults as well as Judy. One of these we are hoping to repeat on Children’s Day so parents will get a view of what and how their children are learning. As time goes on, I am hoping others will “catch the vision” and want to get involved. Teaching our children the faith is no small thing and a certain way to influence our future adults for the good.

THE SEVENTH GRADERS who would like to complete their class goal should speak to Mrs. Dudek. **Emma Price** already has done hers. The class goal is to learn the parts of the worship service and lead 3 worship services on a Sunday morning; the K-6, preschool, and the 7th/8th graders and high school. I meet with them during the week to prepare them so they will feel confident on the Sunday morning they are leading.

THE CONFIRMATION PANCAKE SUPPER will be held **Sunday, February 10th, 4:30-6:00 p.m.** There will be “all you can eat pancakes”; sausage, juice, coffee, and assorted pastries will also be served. Tickets are available after church or you may call the church office to reserve them.

THE YOUTH MISSION TRIP to Harrisburg, PA, (this is the correct place!) July 28-August 3, 2013 is filled. Letters went out this week to youth participants requesting the secondary deposit of **\$60.00** be paid to Cheryl Giuliano by Sunday, February 10th. The check should be made out to PCCC Youth Missions. Participants **must** be registered and active in the Sunday School for at least one year.

THE SCRIP PROGRAM is an ongoing fundraiser that greatly benefits the youth missions trips program. Scrip (debit) cards are available to purchase for hundreds of stores, gas stations, donut shops, bookstores, grocery stores, etc. where you do business. You do not pay any extra amount to purchase these cards; however, the youth missions will receive a percentage back that varies according to the business. For example...if you purchase a Macy’s card for \$100.00, youth missions will be rewarded 10% for the sale...no charge to you, but profit to the program; WalMart is 2%, Stop & Shop 4%, etc. Cards can be purchased for varying amounts. Sheets with participating businesses listed are always available in the Information Center. Checks to purchase these cards should be made out to **“PCCC Youth Missions”**. If you have questions, call coordinators Jerry & Cheryl Giuliano (860-376-8901).

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL dates have been set for **July 15-19th**. Sandy Dudek and Judy Ladegard will be directing it again this year. At the present time we are reviewing curriculums and a decision will be made soon. Regardless of the curriculum, we always have a great week with lots of learning and fun. So...mark your calendars and invite your friends to join us.

THE SENIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (grades 9-12) were busy during December as they did a Christmas scavenger hunt at the Westbrook Mall, participated in our Christmas caroling event, and served pizza and dessert after the Sunday School pageant. This Sunday (February 3rd) they will be participating in playing games and sharing snacks here at the church.

THE JUNIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP (Grades 6-8) were busy, as well, during December with movies, Christmas caroling and a Christmas party and gift exchange. In January they had an excellent time bowling. Their popular lasagna dinner is scheduled for **March 23rd** from **5-7:00 p.m.** Tickets will be on sale soon. If you like lasagna, this is a dinner you won’t want to miss. This group led by Diane Schrage (860.376.6360) and Rev. Stan (860.887.4647) always welcomes new participants.

ENVELOPES similar to those the adults use for worship are available to the children. Please ask me if you’d like a box for your child. The Sunday School is self-supporting so even if your child attends church in the summertime, when the offering is placed in a Sunday School envelope, it is given to the Board of Religious Education treasurer.

KALID, the High School class’s mission child, is sent \$35.00 monthly. There is a large jar in front of the altar in the Sunday School for the children to put offerings and anyone else who would like to contribute to the cause. This young man from Ethiopia has high hopes of becoming a doctor one

day. Offerings this year are barely keeping up our pledge to World Vision for this young man. Please encourage your children to remember him.