

THE PRESTON PILGRIM

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

FEBRUARY 2016



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.

(September - May)

SUNDAY SCHOOL

8:45 A.M.

(September - May)

EMAIL: PCCC@SNET.NET

WEBSITE: prestoncitycongregational.org

Visit us on **FACEBOOK**

News and information for the March newsletter is due in the church office by **February 21st**.

You may leave information in the holder located on the wall in the kitchen.

+++

FROM THE MINISTER...

One of the most important beliefs of Congregationalism is that *the VOICE of the congregation is not only important, but it is to be heard.*



It is the congregation (the membership) that determines, after careful thought and much prayer, how the church should proceed in matters of faith and conduct. We have no hierarchy; no Bishop, no Pope. Only Christ; Him alone! But we have an important responsibility as members of His Church:

- to **proclaim** the *Good News* - to tell everyone that God is *for them, not against them*.
- to **tell others** that *God loves and cares* about them. Like an earthly parent, He wants only what is best for His children.
- to **welcome** all people into the fellowship of believers - to join us in our worship, work, and witness to the faith!

I love being a Congregationalist! I've been one all my life, and at this time in my life I could be nothing but a Congregationalist. I like the *freedom* I have to express my faith in God in a way that is meaningful to me.

The Annual Meeting of the church will take place on Tuesday, February 9th, starting at 7 P.M. in the coffee hour room. Reports for this meeting will be available for your review on Sunday, February 7th. The membership is asked to look over the reports, attend the meeting, ask questions, offer comments and suggestions, and to vote on matters that may arise.

One issue that will come forward for discussion and hopefully a vote is to employ a part-time Minister. We are fortunate... our church continues to grow! I believe the time has come to add another Minister to the staff. Hopefully, if you agree, the search for a Minister can begin immediately, and they can be in place soon. You can read more about the part-time minister proposal in my annual report.

It's important to come the meeting, and express your thoughts, concerns, support, and then to vote.

As we continue to grow in numbers, it's important that we have enough staff to meet the spiritual challenges facing families and individuals today.

If you're unable to attend the meeting, I'd be interested to hear your thoughts. Speak to me during the coffee hour, or call me, email me, etc. Your *voice* is not only important in church matters, *your voice is important to me!*

See you in church!

Rev. Stan

CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

February 28th, 10:30 A.M.

Plan to be with us as we welcome 10 young people into the membership of the church through the "Rite of Confirmation." These ninth grade students have been meeting since September to prepare for this very special day. Join them and their parents/guardians as they become our newest church members.

+++

THE AMERICAN FLAG flying proudly on the annex lawn is given in honor of *Jack Smiley*, by Shirley & Don Walsh.

THE CHRISTIAN FLAG flying proudly on the annex lawn is given in honor of *Winthrop "Winnie" Benjamin* by Shirley & Don Walsh.

We thank the Walsh's for always insuring that these flags look their best, and for remembering departed church members in this meaningful way.

+++

BAZAAR NEWS

We're happy to tell you that the bazaar committee gave \$4,300 to the church budget in January. We thank the committee and everyone else who made this fundraising event such a success.

+++

CHURCH SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Our church scholarship fund was established in 1992, following the passing of church member, Helen Benjamin. Over these last 24 years, many scholarships have been presented to deserving young people in our congregation *thanks to your generosity!* The fund has been re-named the *Helen & Winthrop Benjamin Scholarship Fund* to honor and remember these two wonderful church members who cared a lot for the children and young people in our church family.

Throughout the month of February, the congregation will be hearing from past scholarship recipients about their hopes and goals for life. You will hear how your giving to the fund has helped them reach their goal.

We ask the members and friends of the church to consider giving a financial gift to the fund this year. Give your gift in memory of someone, or in honor of someone or some special event. A listing of all donors (no amounts) will be listed in the worship folder on Scholarship Sunday (June 12). You can place your contribution in an envelope marked "Scholarship Fund" and place it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church.

We have great young people in our church. They bring life and joy to the church. Let's show them how much we care for them and their future aspirations. Please give if you are able.



BIBLE STUDY

Join us Monday mornings at 10 in Hall's Hall as we learn from the teaching of Andy Stanley's book, *ASK IT!* It's a great book with great insight!

+++

NEWCOMERS DINNER

We remind those who signed-up to attend this dinner that it is this Friday, February 5th, beginning at 6 P.M. in Hall's hall (the coffee hour room). We look forward to meeting you and getting to know you. We're so glad you're here at the church. Welcome! We plan to hold more of these welcome dinners in the future. If you missed signing up for this one, stay tuned...

+++

COMING UP...

Senior Lunch... Did you sign-up to attend this month's lunch on February 9th, starting at noon? It's free! All we ask is that you sign the sheet posted on the Information Center bulletin board. It's a nice afternoon with church friends. We hope to see you there.

The Annual Meeting... February 9th, at 7 P.M. in Hall's hall. Copies of the report will be available on February 7th. If you're unable to get to the church to pick up a copy, please call the office and we will mail you one. Refreshments, coffee and punch will be served starting at 6:30 P.M.

Ash Wednesday... begins February 10th. We mark the start of the season called "Lent" with a Prayer Vigil in the Sanctuary from noon until 6 P.M. followed by a communion service at 7. For the Vigil, we ask individuals to sign-up to pray for 15 minutes in the Sanctuary; a prayer list will be provided. If you would like to submit a prayer request, please fill out a form by the upper level elevator and place it in the box nearby. You will also find a box with forms on the Information center table. Plan to take part in these quiet, reflective, and meaningful Ash Wednesday events.

Financial Peace University (FPU) will be offered again beginning February 16th, starting at 6:30. Many people have already registered with FPU coordinator, Bob Vescovi. The course is taught by Dave Ramsey via DVD. The course is \$93 per married couple or single adult. Some scholarships to attend are still available, please speak with the minister. Speak with Bob on Sunday morning if you have questions, or call him at 401.583.7840. This program has helped so many people, here at the church and around the country. Consider taking part in this worthwhile and life-changing nine-week course!

+++

LOOKING AHEAD

New members will be received into the church on Palm Sunday, March 20th, during both services. If you'd like to unite with the church on this day, please sign the sheet posted on the Information Center bulletin board. We'll mail you all the information regarding membership.

The Preston Junior Pilgrim



Preston City Congregational Church Sunday School Newsletter

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:



ARE you one of the many people that says, "Christmas is over, thank God" and doesn't want to think about it again until next year! Even if you are, I do hope you are filled with some pleasant memories. I know I am and want to share one of them with all of you.

Because of health issues this year I did a lot of praying about the Christmas Eve 4 P.M. service that I lead. Why do we ever doubt God?? On one of the busiest weeks of the year, adults and young people came to my rescue on very short notice - from Shari Purcell who was already to take over if any issues arose, Sarah Noiseux and her family offered to take care of costumes and did an outstanding job. Kimberly Lang, a new member of the church, in three weeks pulled together a children's bell choir who did an excellent job playing and were well received, and my precious college students were right there for their church and Mrs. Dudek as well. Just arriving home on Christmas break and learning songs and showing up for rehearsals... Lauren Hodkinson, Evelyn Courmoyer, Heidi Willard, Bryan Van Alst, Hunter Bustamante, Hayden Bustamante. They would do whatever I asked of them including giving the Christmas message. And on a long shot, I asked my daughter, Heather, who lives out of state and has a small baby and planned to stay home on Christmas Eve, if she would bring little Levi so we could have a live "Baby Jesus" for the nativity part of the program. They were both there! I could go on and on, but I think you have the picture by now. Our small angels and all the parents who sacrificed to bring their children to pageant rehearsals, and Gabriella & Delaney Farinha who offered a wonderful musical selection for the offertory, I am so grateful. As I was getting ready to leave church, the Christmas angel, Kate Dudek, and I went to my office and got the new Baby Jesus donated by the Migliaccio Family and placed it in the manger. So many of you, helped to make it a beautiful Christmas Eve and a beautiful memory. I am so grateful. I hope we all visit daily how good God is and how He looks out for us even when doubts arise!

A **HUGH THANK YOU** to Marcia Bartha who coordinated the food back at the church following the caroling, to Cathy Rider and Tammy Sabados who directed the younger children's pageant, to Naomi Bushnell who directed the older children's pageant, and to the Board of Religious Education for overseeing the food following the pageant.

YES, GOD IS GOOD! Let us never forget or doubt!



May the **SON**shine through me,

Vandy Dudek α **FEBRUARY BIBLE VERSES**

"...God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Grades Nursery 3- 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; they will serve them well the rest of their lives. To qualify for an award at the end of the year, verses must be correctly recited by the end of each month to Mrs. Dudek or their teacher. **PLEASE NOTE:** Bible cutouts are posted on the bulletin board in the back of the Sunday School Hall. When the child has recited the monthly verse, they will place a sticker on the proper month. Let's hope many students get all nine of them this year! Even if they miss one, there will be an opportunity to make up one missed verse.

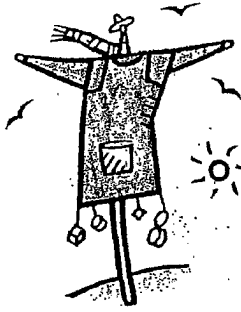
VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL... Be sure to mark the dates - July 11-15th. Shari Purcell and myself will be directing the school and are reviewing two different VBS programs at this time. We'll keep you posted.

YOUTH MISSION TRIP... Eligible are our present 8th graders through those who graduate high school this year. They must be registered in and actively attend the Sunday School (in attendance two Sundays per month of the current Sunday School year). The trip is to Washington D.C July 24-29th, 2016. Please contact the Van Alsts (860.230.9947 or the Giulianos (860.376.8901) if you might have an interest in going.

BRING IT...

is our Contemporary Young Adult Worship Service. If you or someone you know is between the ages of 14 to age 22, we're inviting you to this exciting way to worship. "Bring It" uses multiple forms of media, interactive demonstrations, and music to bring God's message to life. The worship service starts at 10:30 a.m. on the 2nd and 4th Sundays of the month. The February dates are the 14th and the 28th. Please come and join us, invite someone to come with you, or tell someone about it.

AN EXCITING ANNOUNCEMENT...



Joy Chalifoux and Bob Vescovi have come forward to Co-Chair the 11th annual Scarecrow Festival! We thank them for offering their time and talents to ensure that this important fund raiser continues. Not only does this provide income to the church, but is a great community event that is affordable that people look forward to attending. The date of this year's festival is Saturday, September 24th.


The Scarecrow Festival Steering Committee will be meeting this week with the new chairpeople. A Scarecrow meeting will be called soon. If you haven't been involved before, we hope you will consider lending a hand this year. A lot of volunteers are needed to make the festival run smoothly!

PLEASE MARK YOUR CALENDAR to attend the Lasagna Dinner planned for February 27th from 5-7 P.M. It will be co-sponsored by the Sr. Pilgrim Fellowship and the Youth Mission trip participants. Watch the bulletin for further details.



FEBRUARY 2016



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
To place flowers in church during February, call Joyce Brewster (860.376.4167)	1 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	2 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30a Board of Rel. Ed. 6p Handbell rehearsal 6p Scarecrow Festival Steering Comm. mtg. 6:45p	3 AA 7:30p	4 Adult choir 7p	5 Newcomers Dinner 6p	6
7 Communion Worship 9, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a SS communion 9:05a Adult choir sings 9a "Two-Can Sunday"	8 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	9 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30a Senior lunch noon Handbell rehearsal 6p Annual meeting refreshments 6:30p Annual meeting 7p	10 Ash Wednesday St. Jude worship 11a Prayer vigil noon-5:45p Communion worship 7p AA 7:30p	11 Adult choir 7p	12 Lincoln's Birthday	13
14 Worship 9, 10:30a Youth Sunday 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a Confirmation Class bake sale following worship "Bring It" 10:30a SS pageant 4p	15 Presidents Day Office closed NO Bible study NO Confirmation Yoga 6:30p	16 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30p Handbell rehearsal 6p Financial Peace University 6:30-8:30p	17 NO Trustees meeting NO Standing Committee meeting AA 7:30p	18 Adult choir 7p	19	20
21 Worship 9, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a Adult choir sings 9a Food distribution Sun-	22 Bible study 10a Confirmation final exam 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	23 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30a Handbell rehearsal 6p Financial Peace University 6:30-8:30p	24 Creamery Brook Worship 3p AA 7:30p	25 Adult choir 7p	26	27 Lasagna dinner 5-7p put on by Sr. P.F./ Youth mission trip Participants
28 Worship 9, 10:30a Confirmation Sunday 10:30a Bring It 10:30a Food distribution Sunday	29 Bible study 10a Yoga 6:30p		Did you know...the newsletter is posted on our website: prestoncitycongregational.org	Please check with Rev. Stan or Sandy Before using our names as references. This courtesy would be very much appreciated	LOST OR FOUND Something at church? There is a basket in the information Center next to the table.	PLEASE NOTE: Active church members who wish to borrow church property, (tables, chairs, etc.) call the church office at 860.867.4647.

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

SUNDAYS:

Morning worship, 9a.m., 10:30 a.m.

Sunday School 8:45 a.m.

Coffee hour, 9:50 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

Children's Choir: 10:00-10:25 a.m.

Youth Choir: 10:00-10:25 a.m.

Junior & Senior Pilgrim Fellowship

Check church bulletin

The newsletter is posted on our website:
prestoncitycongregational.org



INCLEMENT WEATHER

CANCELLATIONS: Tune in to Television Channel 3 or you may check Facebook or our website: prestoncitycongregational.org, or call the office. A message will be announced on the answering machine. When Sunday School is cancelled, church is **NOT CANCELLED** unless specifically announced.