

THE PRESTON PILGRIM



The newsletter of
The Preston City
Congregational Church
Gathered 1698
(*Serving God and Community for 320 years!*)

**DECEMBER 2019 &
JANUARY 2020**

CHURCH ADDRESS

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WORSHIP

9:00 & 10:30 A.M.

(September 8, 2019 – May 17, 2020)

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News and information for the February newsletter must be received by **January 19th**. You may leave information in the holder located on the wall in the kitchen.

CAN'T MAKE IT TO CHURCH?

You can watch the service online, Sundays at 9 A.M., or later in the day. All services are archived so you can watch them any day, any time, from anywhere. However, for optimum viewing, join us in person!



From the Minister

"CHRISTMAS IN THE CITY" (Preston City)

Christmas time truly is the most wonderful time of the year, IF you don't allow the season to overwhelm you. Don't allow the secular or commercialized side of Christmas to pull you away from what is most important – the birth of Jesus Christ. He is the greatest, most important gift this time of year. His gift is eternal life for those who will believe and follow Him. Don't miss out on the things that matter most this special time of the year. To help you stay focused on CHRISTmas, here are some events to consider:

December 8, Caroling. Join us as we travel through nearby cities and towns singing the carols of Christmas to people in our congregation. This is a great family event, and those we sing to love seeing and hearing the kids! We'll gather at the church at 1:45 P.M. and be on our way by 2. We'll split into groups, and plan to return by 4, where we will enjoy soup and sandwiches in Halls' Hall. Please sign the sheet on the Hallway bulletin board if you can join Rev. Stan on this afternoon.

December 15, The Annual Sunday School Christmas Pageant. This presentation of the Christmas story will take place in the Sanctuary at 4 P.M. followed by pizza and dessert in Dudek Hall. Who will play the roles of Mary and Joseph this year? You'll have to attend to see. Arrive early, it's a popular event!

December 22, Christmas Sunday; 9 & 10:30 AM. It's family Sunday; the Sunday School will NOT be in session (22nd or 29th). The altar will be adorned with beautiful memorial poinsettias again this year. You can sign up to place a plant on the altar beginning December 8 – 15.

(Cont.)

The choir will sing at both services and a children's message will be offered as well. Plan to be with us as we celebrate His coming!

December 24, Christmas Eve; 4 & 11 PM

Join for a service designed especially for children and their families at 4 PM led by Sandy Dudek, as well as children and youth from the Sunday School. This is a very popular service. Arrive early!

At 11 PM, Rev. White will lead a candlelight service of carols and readings and special music. This is a service which attracts many people from surrounding communities. It's a special feeling leaving church at midnight knowing it's Christmas! Join us for this joyful celebration.

There is no service on Christmas Day.

December 29, One service of worship; 9 AM

This will be a relaxed, informal day of family worship, complete with a message especially for the children. We'll sing the carols of Christmas once again and hear one last message for 2019. Plan to be with us.

January 5, It's a New Year! We'll return to two services of worship; 9 & 10:30, and the Sunday School will be back in session. It's also a communion Sunday, we'll observe this Sacrament at both services.

As you can see, there's something for everyone this Advent and Christmas season. We hope to see you on many of these special days.

May Christmas and the year ahead bless you and your family.

Rev. Stan



Merry Christmas

THE GREAT CHRISTMAS CHALLENGE

Did you hear? Days before Thanksgiving we received a call from "Anonymous" in our congregation. They generously offered to match any monetary gift made to the 2019 church budget for a *Christmas Challenge* during the month of December (up to \$5,000). All month long we ask you to consider giving a special gift to the church to ensure we reach the goal. Your gift, however large or small, must be given in an envelope marked Christmas Challenge. If you offer a check, write "*Christmas Challenge*" in the memo section. Give what you are able to give, knowing it will be matched. We'll let you know where we stand from week-to-week. We really appreciate the kindness of Anonymous!

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THE TREE IS UP, THE LIGHTS ARE ON

The only things missing on the entry way Christmas tree are the ornaments. This is a "Memory Tree," where we ask you to place an ornament on the tree in memory of a loved one. Be sure to fill out a slip of paper beside the tree stating who the ornament is in memory of, and write your last name somewhere on the ornament. We'll list the memorials in the December 8 & 15 worship folder. You can remove your ornament from the tree beginning December 29th.

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DURING THE MONTH OF NOVEMBER

We welcomed into the Household of Christian Faith through the Sacrament of Baptism:

- 11.02 *Madelyn Irene Trotter*, daughter of Beth & Erik Trotter of Salem, CT
- 11.03 *Luke Nolan Owens*, son of Shannon & Brian Owens of Moodus, CT
- 11.17 *Rosalie Mae Birmingham*, daughter of Katie & Charles Birmingham of Voluntown, CT
- 11.17 *Nolan Alexander Serra*, son of Nicole & Joshua Serra of Preston, CT
- 11.24 *Sakura Lyn Hirt*, daughter of Reiko and Christopher Hirt of Preston, CT
- 11.24 *Cora Elise McArthur*, daughter of Gabrielle & Scott McArthur, of Griswold, CT

We ask God's blessing upon these little ones!

We congratulated *Linda DeLuca* and *Peter Ford* who were united in marriage on November 23rd, in the Sanctuary.

WE WELCOMED into the membership of the church the following people: *Beverlee Cholewa, Tammy Phillips, Mary Ryan, Paige & Ryan Tully*. Welcome to the church, we're glad you're here. These are wonderful people; get to know them!

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THANK YOU

to those who have already offered a pledge of support to the 2020 church budget. The coming year's budget is \$268,226. To date, we have received 53 pledges totaling \$83,714 for the budget. Have we heard from you? Pledge letters and forms may be found on the Information Center table. Your support is needed and appreciated. Please give as you are able. Thanks.

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Monday morning, 10 A.M. in Halls' Hall. We are currently viewing Andy Stanley's video series titled "*Who Needs Christmas?*" This series runs through December 16th. Rev. Stan leads the class. Consider joining us!

Tuesday evening, 6:30 p.m. in Halls' Hall. This group is studying the book of Romans with Scott Van Alst. All are welcome to attend.

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TO KEEP YOU BETTER INFORMED

All minutes (notes) and financial reports from the monthly Standing Committee meeting held on the 3rd Wednesday (every month) at 7 P.M. in Halls' Hall are now posted on the hallway bulletin board opposite the Information Center table. Check out the bulletin board. Please know that anyone is welcome to attend this meeting.

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP NEWS

The next meeting of the Women's Fellowship will be December 7th, from 9 – 10:30 A.M. in Room 18. We will meet to send out cards and notes to the young people of our church attending college. We will also be writing/sending Christmas cards to active duty military from our community. All women of the church are welcome to attend. Bridget Park is the group's coordinator. Please contact her with any questions you may have (860.710.1316).

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MEN'S GROUP

All men of the church are welcome to attend the next meeting scheduled for THIS Saturday, December 7th, from 8 – 9:30 AM in Halls' Hall.

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COAT DRIVE

Got a coat(s) you're no longer wearing? Why not bring it to the church and put it in the library at the back of the Sunday School? We will bring them to area agencies for distribution to those who could use them most. We will collect your donations through December 31st. Got questions? Contact Laurie Bowers (860.514.1098).



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DON'T MISS THIS

THIS SATURDAY, December 7th, at 4 p.m. we will be hosting the *Hockanum Valley Ringers*, an auditioned community handbell ensemble led by Lawrence Berdensey. The choir rings five octaves of Malmark handbells, along with five and one-half octaves of chimes. A reception will follow the performance. The concert is FREE, however a "Free Will Offering" will be received. Tell your friends and neighbors. Our church is the group's only southeastern Connecticut appearance. We are excited to have them with us!

SENIOR LUNCH

The next lunch will be served on Tuesday, December 10th, at noon in Dudek Hall. The meal is “free,” but is limited to 60 people. Be sure to sign up on the mid-level bulletin board. The menu will include: Lasagna, salad, bread, and dessert. We hope to see you there.



COOKIES!!!

It's not too late to bake cookies for the upcoming “Christmas Cookie Sale” on Saturday, December 21st, from 9 – 3 PM in Dudek Hall. The only requirement is that you bake what you love! We simply ask that all cookies be home made and freshly baked, if possible. We suggest cookies be baked in double batches (about 6-8 dozen); but we welcome all cookies in any amount you would like to donate. Covered aluminum containers are available in the church kitchen, help yourself. The cookie drop-off date is December 20th between 3 - 6 PM. If you are not a baker, but would like to help, we also need 6-10 volunteers to help on the day of the sale. A sign-up sheet is posted on the hallway bulletin board. If interested, or for more information, please contact Jean Miller jmilleribia@aol.com, Cell: 860.608.1904 (best), Home: 860.889.3176.

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LOCK THE DOORS

All groups or meetings being held at the church are encouraged to lock the doors once their meeting or event begins.

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DOOR MONITORS

There always seems to be a shortage of monitors for the second service. Please, if you can, sign up to sit by the mid-level double doors during the second service, watching for any late arrivals. There is a speaker on the table allowing you to hear the service. Guidelines for door monitors, as well as a sign-up sheet is posted on the mid-level bulletin board. Please contact Lowell Calkins if you have any questions (860.887.5939).



MARK YOUR CALENDAR

The Annual Meeting of the church is scheduled for Sunday, February 9th, beginning at noon in Dudek Hall. Officer, board, and committee reports are due in the church by January 19th. They do not have to have to be typed. Please speak with Sandy Dudek if you have any questions about writing your report.

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JANUARY SENIOR LUNCH

Tuesday, January 14th

Noon

Be sure to sign up!

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CHURCH OUTREACH

We are looking to update the list for those who are willing, from time-to-time, to prepare a meal for a family in our church during time illness, the birth of a child, or the loss of a loved one. If you are willing to be part of this “act of kindness,” please sign up on the bulletin board (even if you were on the previous list). Please give current contact information. Any questions, please call Lois Woodmansee at 860.889.2128. *Thanks!*

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READING MATERIALS

Copies of *The Upper Room* and *Our Daily Bread* are available on the Information Center table. These are great daily devotional booklets, written to encourage you in your faith journey. Please pick up a copy, they're “FREE.”

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The Preston Junior Pilgrim

A word from the Director of Religious Education...



AT THE NOVEMBER SENIOR LUNCH, we had five recipients of the Quilts of Valor. Quilts of Valor are stitched with love, prayers, and healing thoughts. Our troops who have been touched by war are awarded this tangible token of appreciation that unequivocally says, "Thank you for your service, sacrifice and valor." Jan Roberta of the Quilts of Valor organization was on hand to present these wonderful quilts to the following people from our congregation:

Bob Testa - U.S. Army – August 1966-1969. In boot camp at Fort Jackson, South Carolina, Bob received the expert medal for the M14 rifle. He also trained as a machinist at Aberdeen Proving Grounds in Maryland. Bob transferred to Corpus Christi Naval Air Station to rebuild Hughie helicopters that were shot down or crashed in Vietnam. One of the many interesting things he did in his Army career was performing phone patches connecting Vietnam deployed soldiers with their loved ones at home.

Peter Knutson - Navy – April 1953, honorably discharged January 1957. He served on the U.S.S. Salem which was decommissioned and moved to the Philadelphia Boat Yard. In 1955 the "Salem" was re-commissioned as a member of the Historic Navy Ships Association. It is the only preserved U.S. Navy Heavy Cruiser. Today this ship is a museum at the Quincy Boat Yard in Quincy, Massachusetts where it was built. Peter is a very proud Navy Veteran that served his country in the 1950's and has continued to donate time and work to preserve the U.S.S. Salem.

Keith Harrison - US Air Force – October 1977 – October 1981. One of his assignments was to the Andrews AFB in Maryland, also known as the Presidential AFB. Andrews was a large, full-service military airport, where Keith drove and operated all crash trucks for the airfield, and fire apparatus for base and mutual-aid emergencies. In addition, he tended to Medivac flights that came to the base. He manned the emergency vehicles for each departure and arrival of Air Force One and the Marine One Helicopter when Presidents Jimmy Carter and Ronald Reagan were in office.

Andy Kuvent - US Navy – spring of 1985 – October 2005 – yes that number is right!...he served for a little over 20 years. During Andy's time in the Navy, he earned a BS in Nuclear Engineering, traveled under the North Pole, through the Bermuda Triangle, transited the Panama Canal and visited numerous countries including England, Scotland, Norway, France, Gibraltar and Italy. He served during multiple wars, earning Expeditionary and Campaign medals. At the end of his career, he was advanced to E-8 (Senior Chief Petty Officer).

Christopher Burden - Four years active duty in the US Navy and then six years in the Air National Guard. His job was communications and he learned a lot about himself, made friends with people all over the country and around the world. It was an amazing experience that he will never forget. He was able to use the GI Bill he got from the Navy for college. When he joined the Air National Guard, it was as a cook. He loves cooking and it was a lot of fun and a great experience serving his country in that capacity. He is grateful for the VA loan he received to help him buy his first home. He feels really blessed and thankful for what he received from his country and the experience of those 10 years helped him become the man that he is today.

IT WAS A WONDERFUL AND PROUD DAY for all those in attendance that day. We are so grateful for all these men did to preserve our freedom.

May the **SON**shine through me, *Sandy Dudek*

DECEMBER BIBLE VERSES



“The Lord is my shepherd, I shall not be in want.” (Psalm 23:1) Grades
Toddler 3-Grade 2

“And we know that in all things God works for the good of those who love him, according to his purpose.” Romans 8:28 (Grades 3-12)

New this year – Challenge Bible Verses – for ALL ages:

December: Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is Christ the Lord. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Luke 2:11-12

JANUARY BIBLE VERSES

“...Do to others what you would have them do to you.” (Matthew 7:12) **Golden Rule Grades** Toddler
3-Grade 2

“Do not judge, and you will not be judged. Do not condemn, and you will not be condemned. Forgive, and you will be forgiven.” Luke 6:37

THE STUDENT who recites each verse during the month to their teacher or Mrs. Dudek will qualify for an award on Children’s Day. The greatest reward will be in carrying these verses in their hearts which will serve them well as they go through life.

THE CHILDREN’S COOKIE BAKE takes place **Friday, December 6th** from 3-6:00 p.m. Please email me if your child(ren) grades 3 – 6 can come and help or you may sign them up on the bulletin board. Teens and adults are most welcome to give me a hand with the children. There are gingerbread people to roll out and decorate and dropped cookies to be baked. If anyone is willing to make batter for this event, you may sign up on the bulletin board or speak to me. Also, if you would like to help us by baking cookies ahead, that, too, would be very much appreciated; you may sign up on the bulletin board. The cookies will be delivered during the all church caroling event on Sunday to the elderly and shut-ins.

YOUTH MISSION TRIP: Ten spots have been reserved for the 2020 mission trip to Harrisburg, PA July 12th-17th. So far three students have registered to go. Registration forms are available from Lisa Van Alst, Trip leader. This year’s 8th graders through High School are eligible to go. Why not sign up today?

THE BOARD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION basket drawings realized a profit of \$1464 that will support Sunday School programs! Thanks to everyone who donated a basket or bought tickets; the baskets were exceptional!

PLEASE ENCOURAGE your children to bring their Bibles to Sunday School.

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.

POCKETS is the name of the publication that the Deacons provide for our children. They are available on the Information Center table and contain lots of puzzles and excellent reading.

Be With Me Today, O Lord

Today is new
unlike any other day
for God makes each day different.

Today, God's everyday grace
falls on my soul like abundant
seed, though
I may hardly see it.

Today is one of those days
Jesus promised to be with me,
a companion on my journey,
and my life today, if I trust him,
has consequences unseen.
My life has a purpose.

December 2019

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 First Sunday of Advent Communion worship 9, 10:30a Choir sings 9a	2 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p SS pageant Rehearsal 5:30p Yoga 6:30p	3 Handbells 6p Board of Rel. Ed 6p Bible study 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	4 AA 7:30p	5 Music Comm. 6:30p Adult choir 7p	6 Children's Cookie Bake 3-6p	7 Men's Group 8-9:30a Women's Fellowship 9a Handbell Concert 4p
8 Worship 9, 10:30a Baptisms 9, 10:30a Christmas caroling 2p	9 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p SS pageant Rehearsal 5:30p Yoga 6:30p	10 Senior Lunch Noon Deacons' mtg. 6:30p Bible study 6:30p	11 St. Jude 11a AA 7:30p	12 Adult Choir 7p	13	14
15 Worship 9, 10:30a Choir sings 9a Food distribution Sunday School Pageant 4p	16 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p SS pageant Rehearsal 5:30p Yoga 6:30p	17 Bible study 6:30p	18 Creamery Brook 3p Trustees 6p Standing Committee 7p AA &:30p	19 Adult Choir 7p	20 Baked cookie Drop-off	21 Cookie sale 9a-3p or until sold out!
22 Christmas Sunday 9, 10:30a	23	24 Christmas Eve worship 4p, 11p	25 Christmas Christ our Savior is born! Have a blessed Christmas.	26 Pot luck and choir rehearsal 6:30 p.m.	27	28
29 One service of Worship 9a NO Sunday School	30 Office Closed	31 Office closed	Kidz Praise Choir meets Sunday Mornings in Room 13 from 10-10:20 a.m	Two services of worship resume January 5th!	TO PLACE flowers in church during December, sign the Flower Chart, fill out the Reservation form and call Doreen Mainville (860.639.4500).	

INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS: Tune into 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.

January 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>"I know the plans I have for you," plans to prosper you and not harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11</p>			<p>1 New Year's Day AA 7:30p</p>	<p>2 Adult choir 7p</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>
<p>5 Communion worship 9, 10:30a Choir sings 9a SS communion 9:05a</p>	<p>6 No Bible study Confirmation 6:30 p Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>7 Bible study 6:30p Board of Rel. Ed. 6p</p>	<p>8 Finance Comm. Mtg. 7p AA 7:30p</p>	<p>9</p>	<p>10</p>	<p>11</p>
<p>12 Worship 9, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a</p>	<p>13 No Bible study Confirmation 6:30 p Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>14 Senior Lunch Noon Bible study 6:30p</p>	<p>15 Trustees' 6p Standing Comm. 7p AA 7:30p</p>	<p>16</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 Worship 9, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a Choir sings 9a Annual reports due from all Boards and Committees today</p>	<p>20 M L King Day Office closed No Bible study NO Confirmation Pastoral Search Comm. 6p</p>	<p>21 Bible study 6:30p</p>	<p>22 Creamery Brook 3p AA 7:30p</p>	<p>23</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25</p>
<p>26 Worship 9, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a Food Distribution Sunday</p>	<p>27 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>28 Bible study 6:30p</p>	<p>29 AA 7:30p</p>	<p>30</p>	<p>31</p>	<p>TO PLACE flowers in church during January, sign the Flower Chart, fill out the Reservation form and call Carolyn Shea (860.887.8592)</p>

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