

# THE PRESTON PILGRIM



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

*(Serving God and Community for 320 years!)*

**FEBRUARY 2020**

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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 March newsletter must be received by **February 16th**. 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*

## **WHAT'S WRONG WITH SOME PEOPLE?**

Shortly after getting home from church services last Sunday afternoon, television programming was interrupted with breaking news that Kobe Bryant, superstar basketball player for the Los Angeles Lakers, was killed (along with 8 others) in a helicopter accident in Calabasas, California. The details continued, and what I heard disappointed and angered me.

The reporter said Kobe played his entire career (20 years) for the Lakers. He entered the NBA directly from high school and won 5 NBA championships. Impressive I thought, good for him. And then, without a pause, I was reminded of what happened in June 2003. I had completely forgotten about this chapter in Kobe's life. Back then, what happened was all over the evening news. It had to be the darkest time in Kobe's life; how could it not? He would live the rest of his life wishing what happened never did. I know this unfortunate event is part of his life story. But why remind me and others about it on the day of his tragic death? Did I need to be reminded of what happened in 2003 so soon? Couldn't the reporter, out of respect for his family, have waited? I had heard enough. I'm sorry I listened as long as I did.

What I was hearing got me thinking about *redemption*. Can people redeem themselves? I believe so, and I believe Kobe did. Since 2003, Kobe's life had changed for the better. His marriage had become stronger, healthier, after being forgiven by his wife, Vanessa. The couple started going to church, getting involved in church-sponsored groups. Kobe became a more involved dad to his daughters, spending time with them, doing things with them. He prayed a lot, hoping to be a better role model for his family and those who looked up to him. When we allow God to mold and

shape our lives according to His plan, we will enjoy every day to the fullest. This is what God desires for each of us; "To have life, and to have it more abundantly" (John 10:10).

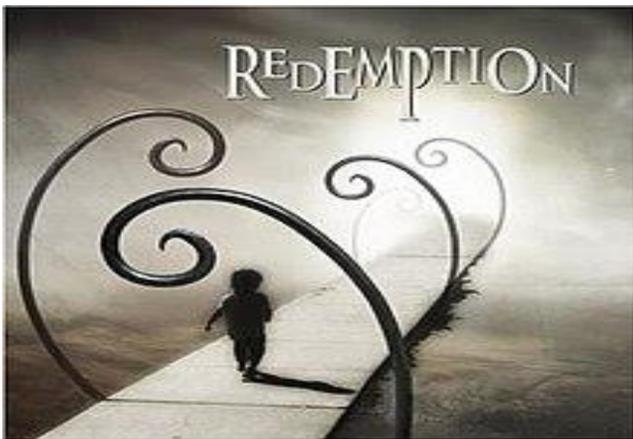
I found it interesting... it was reported that earlier that deadly morning that Kobe and his 13-year-old daughter attended Mass and received the Sacrament of Holy Communion. She died alongside him. I'd like to believe that he held her hand as they walked into eternity and met their *Redeemer* and *Friend, Jesus Christ*.

Christ's death on the cross made redemption possible for us; for Kobe, for you, and me! Jesus our Redeemer delivers us from our past, however unfortunate our circumstances may have been. He shows us a better way to live. This is why we call him "Savior." He saves us, because we can't save ourselves. And when he does, he says to us, try again, this time, with me.

Why do so many people focus on the painful chapters of a person's life when they are gone? When our life is over, **what will matter most** is where we stood with God while we were alive -- with Him, or without Him?

Don't you love a good redemption story?

See you in church!  
*Rev. Stan*



## DURING THE MONTHS OF DECEMBER AND JANUARY

**WE WELCOMED** into the Household of Christian Faith through the Sacrament of Baptism:

- 12/8, *Julie Carolyn Shea*, Daughter of Melissa & Brian Shea of Lebanon, CT
- 12/8, *Maverick John Coit*, son of Shelby Sabrowski and Jonathan Coit of Bozrah, CT
- 1/5, *Connor Matthew LePage*, son of Danielle & Matthew LePage of Preston, CT
- 1/5, *Mark Anthony Day* of Preston, CT (Adult Baptism)

*We ask God's blessing upon all His children!*

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### SCHOLARSHIP MONTH

It's February, and that means it's scholarship month. It was established in 1992, in memory of church member Helen Benjamin. Now, all these years later, scholarships have been awarded to many well-deserving young people in our congregation. Today, the scholarship fund is named for Helen & Winthrop Benjamin.

During the month of February, you will hear from past scholarship recipients about their hopes and goals for life. You will hear how your giving to the scholarship fund is helping them reach their goals.

We're asking members and friends of the church to consider giving a monetary gift to the scholarship fund this year. You can give your gift in memory or in honor of someone. A listing of donors (no amounts) will be printed in the worship folder on Scholarship Sunday (June 14<sup>th</sup>). You can place your donation in an envelope marked *Scholarship Fund* and place it in the offering plate, or mail it to the church.

We have many deserving young people who will graduate this June. Let's show them how much we care about them and their future aspirations. Please give if you are able. Thanks!

## **ANNUAL REPORTS & MEETING**

Copies of the 2019 Annual Report will be available on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. They can be found on the Information Center table. Pick up a copy and look it over before the Annual Meeting set for February 9<sup>th</sup>, at noon in Dudek Hall. At 11:30, a soup & sandwich luncheon (\$5) will be offered in Halls' Hall. If you live out-of-town or state and would like to receive a report, contact the office, we'll be happy to send you one.

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## **SENIOR LUNCH**

The next lunch begins at noon on February 11<sup>th</sup>. The Menu includes: ham, baked beans, coleslaw, baked potatoes, and dessert. If you would like to attend, a sign-up sheet is posted on the Information Center bulletin board. Space is limited to 60 people. Join us, it's a fun afternoon with friends!

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## **BIBLE STUDY**

Join us on Monday mornings in Halls' Hall for Bible study. The class is led by Rev. Stan, and runs for one hour. We are presently studying the book of Esther, and everyone is welcome to attend. Please bring your Bible. If you don't have one, the Deacons purchased Bibles a while ago. Speak with Rev. Stan if you'd like one, they are "free."

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## **WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP**

Their next meeting is scheduled for March 7<sup>th</sup>, beginning at 9 A.M. in Halls' Hall. Bridget Park is the group's leader. All women of the church are welcome to attend.

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## **THANK YOU**

To those who offered a monetary gift to the *Christmas Challenge*. We were hoping to reach \$5,000 by the end of December. You gave \$6,875. We are so grateful for your generosity, and thankful for the couple in our congregation who offered to match your giving up to \$5,000.

And thank you to everyone who made the cookie sale such a success in December. Your overwhelming response to bake cookies realized a profit of \$2,102.21. Thank you, Jean Miller!

## **LENT**

The holy season of Lent begins February 26<sup>th</sup>, **ASH WEDNESDAY**. This solemn day is observed with a prayer vigil in the Sanctuary from noon to 6 P.M. During this time, volunteers are asked to pray for others, for 15 minutes. We will supply the prayer list. If you would like to participate in the Vigil, please select a time to pray from the sign-up sheet posted on the mid-level bulletin board.

At 7 P.M. that evening, an Ash Wednesday communion service will be held in the Sanctuary. This quiet service recalls the start of Jesus' 40 days in the wilderness before the beginning of his public ministry. Please make time to join us on this important evening.

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## **FROM THE TRUSTEES**

### **We are seeking a volunteer**

to respond to church emergencies on an *as needed basis*.

to be in contact with the Senior Trustee when issues arise needing more attention than the volunteer can manage.

to work with the Administrative Assistant and Minister to ensure emergency issues are handled in a timely manner.

This person will work closely with the Trustees to ensure that issues have been addressed and resolved. From time-to-time, this person may be asked to attend a Trustees meeting (the third Wednesday of the month at 6 P.M.) to inform the board of any concerns or clarifications. This person would review church contracts (i.e. snow removal, lawn care, elevator inspections, pest control, water tests, etc.) as needed, and would report to the board any noteworthy changes.

Please contact the office if you are interested in volunteering, or have questions about this position. Please apply by February 28<sup>th</sup>.

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## **DON'T MISS IT**

*Confirmation Sunday*

March 8, at 10:30

Six young people will confirm their faith through the Rite of Confirmation. Join us for worship!

# *The Preston Junior Pilgrim*

*A word from the Director of Religious Education...*



**THE ORGANIZED CHURCH...**How often have you heard it said, “I don’t need the organized church, I find my faith out in the woods or when I’m out fishing or when I’m alone in my home.” While this may be true for some people, I believe the case for the organized church far outweighs the value of “going it alone.” I believe most of us need the discipline of worshipping together with other Christians. **I THINK MOST OF US** would

agree for those bringing up children, it is of greatest importance. Wouldn’t kids rather stay home playing on tech “toys” by the hour than go to church? Is this question easy to answer?

**EACH CHILD** who walks in on Sunday morning, I rejoice that it is an opportunity to teach them what God can do. It is an opportunity for them to learn that they are not alone going through this life. They not only have a family that cares about them, but they also have a church family. Others are there with you to share a celebration or a trial! No matter what we’re going through, would you agree that it feels more bearable to have people surrounding us to share our difficulties, or we can feel enthused when others share our joys?

**LIFE IS FILLED WITH** so many challenges; the world can be a frightening place not only for children, but adults as well. I believe the organized church can be present in the same ways for you as for our children, to know that you are not alone, but have a support system. Am I just being idealistic? I certainly hope not.

**AND LASTLY**, I would like to say that what we do as an organized church speaks volumes to the world around us...our community and beyond. Everyone wants to feel valued and know that they matter because they do. Let’s hope that we can make an impact to make this world a better place. Naysayers say “never happen.” Just give God a chance through committed followers and there’s no telling how this old world might change!

“For just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, so it is with Christ. For in one Spirit we were all baptized into one body—Jews or Greeks, slaves or free—and all were made to drink of the one Spirit. For the body does not consist of one member but of many.” 1 Corinthians 12:12-14

May the **Son**shine through me,

*Sandy Dudek* Please encourage your children to bring their Bibles to Sunday School.



**ARE YOU** in 8<sup>th</sup> Grade or a teen in High School? An opportunity to go on the Youth Mission Trip awaits you. We have reserved 10 spots to Harrisburg, PA July 12<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>. So far, we have two leaders going and 3 students. Please call the office or speak to Lisa Van Alst if you might have an interest in going. Repeatedly we’ve heard great stories from those who have gone.

**BREAKING NEWS...Sarah Noiseux** (1-860.304.7077) (salsarn75@yahoo.com) and daughter, **Emily Bartoshevich** will be directing the Vacation Bible School happening July 13<sup>th</sup>-17<sup>th</sup>. We will take 10 preschoolers and 40 kindergarteners through 6<sup>th</sup> grade. The program will be Groups' Rocky Railway...Jesus' Power Pulls Us Through. Group has put out amazing VBS programs year after year. Why not call and reserve your spot today?

### **FEBRUARY BIBLE VERSES**

"...God loves a cheerful giver." (2 Corinthians 9:7) Grades Toddler 3-Grade 2

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

Challenge Bible verse: "Don't let anyone look down on you because you are young, but set an example for the believers in speech, in life, in love, in faith and in purity." 1 Timothy: 4-12

**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.

**LOVE YOU TO THE MOON, SOMEONE SPECIAL PAINT NIGHT!**...Saturday, February 15<sup>th</sup>, 6:30-8:30 P.M. Come spend the evening painting memories with your someone special. \$45 for two 11" x 14" paintings to hang side by side. Hurry, space is limited to the first 15 "couples"; ages 10 and up are welcome. All monies raised will go to the Teen Mission trip to Harrisburg, PA. Contact Lisa Van Alst (860) 710.1262 if you have questions.

**A YOUTH VOLUNTEERS APPRECIATION DINNER** is being held **Friday, March 6<sup>th</sup>**, at 6:00 P.M. for our teachers, Board of Religious Education, Youth Group leaders, and Kidz Praise directors. A full course turkey dinner will be served. I will need help that evening. A sign up sheet will soon be posted for donations and help needed.

**ANY INTEREST...**in attending a **FAST TRAINING CERTIFICATION CLASS** which lasts 3 hours? Some of us from the church took it in October and are now certified. It is Food Awareness and Safety Training; the cost is \$25. We are now under the Uncas Health District and need more people to be certified. Especially if you work on any food event here, please consider taking this class. There is a sign-up sheet on the bulletin board if you have an interest in taking it.

**Kidz Praise** Choir meets Sunday mornings in Room 13 from 10-10:20 a.m.

**TO PLACE FLOWERS** in church during February, sign the Flower Chart, fill out the Reservation form and call Merrie Hedler (860.886.0466).

# FEBRUARY 2020

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
						<b>1</b>  Men's Group 8-9:30a
<b>2</b>  Communion worship 9,10:30a SS 8:45a SS comm. 9:05a	<b>3</b>  Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	<b>4</b>  Board of Rel. Ed. 6p	<b>5</b>  AA 7:30p	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>  Peter Knutson Funeral at Robinson- Wright Funeral Home 12-1p calling hours 1p funeral
<b>9</b>  Worship 9, 10:30a SS 8:45a <b>Annual mtg.</b> <b>Noon</b> Lunch 11:30a	<b>10</b>  Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	<b>11</b>  Senior Lunch Noon Inclement weather date for annual mtg. 7p Dinner 6:30p	<b>12</b>  St. Jude worship 11a AA 7:30p	<b>13</b>  Adult choir 7p	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>  Couples Painting Class 7-9p
<b>16</b>  Worship 9, 10:30a SS 8:45a Halls' Hall in use 1-5p	<b>17</b>  Presidents' Day Office closed No Bible study No Conf. Class Yoga 6:30p	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b>  <b>NO</b> Standing Committee AA 7:30p	<b>20</b>  Adult choir 7p	<b>21</b>  Halls' Hall in use 4-9:30p	<b>22</b>
<b>23</b>  Worship 9, 10:30a Youth Sun. 10:30 Bake Sale Food Distribution Sun.	<b>24</b>  Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	<b>25</b>	<b>26</b>  Creamery Brook 3p Ash Wed. Worship 7p Prayer vigil Noon-6p	<b>27</b>	<b>28</b>	<b>29</b>

**INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS:** Tune into Television Channel 3 or you may check Facebook or our website: [prestoncitycongregational.org](http://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.