

Preston City Congregational Church



April 30, 2023

Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday, 9AM – Noon

Have a question?

Need help?

Please call: The Office

860 887-4647 or 860 886-7200

WORSHIP AND WEB STREAM INFORMATION

Worship services at 9A & 10:30A
For those who are unable to attend
in-person, the 9:00A service is
streamed live. Go to
prestoncitycongregational.org. and
click the stream button. Previous
services may be viewed using the
archive system on the site.

Live viewings :

4/16– 56; 1 country; 22 states;
44 cities

4/23– 57; 3 countries; 23 states;
43 cities

WEEKLY EVENTS

AA Wed 7:30P Dudek Hall

Choir Th 7P

NEXT LITTLE PILGRIM week of
May 14.

COVID UPDATE 3/16/2022

The Standing Committee has
determined that wearing masks is
optional.



Coffee Fellowship

**Join us after
services for
coffee,
punch, and
fellowship.**

FROM THE DESK OF REV. MARK

Hello in writing, Church!

It's so exciting to be with the people of Preston City Congregational for a little while. I've never been an interim pastor before. Okay, co-interim with Stan, the tall guy who knows all your names, birthdates, and health updates. I'm in awe of his ministerial gifts, but in a good way. His pastoral offerings make me want to "raise my game" when I'm with each of you. Thank you, Stan.

But I also know that, for many of you, you will come to know me mainly from Sunday morning sermons. So let me tell you about my preaching journey, and how I came to where I am today.

I started out preaching as a youth minister, trying to save the world for Jesus. The difficulty with such preaching is every person, every sermon, becomes a zero-sum encounter, a win-lose scenario. Friends, God's people are beloved children of a loving Eternal Father. Preaching with only salvation in mind became too easy to lose sight of that loving God when all your effort was in bringing people to faith.

Next, I became an educative preacher, a post-seminary professor of the pulpit. I thought that I could teach the people in the pews about the Bible's relevance and accuracy (seminary calls that type of preaching "apologetics"). I believed that if I could convince people of the truthfulness of Christianity, people would be won over by the knowledge within my arguments. However, schooling without connection only makes people better educated agnostics, not actual disciples. Christianity has never been about what you know, but who you know. Education is an important aspect of the faith, but not as crucial as relationship.

Interestingly, one of my last preaching presentations was what I might call Christian Self-Improvement. I had gotten involved in an organization called Iron Sharpens Iron, a ministry that is still active in New England. The ministry sought to make men better sons, husbands, and fathers. While there is certainly nothing wrong with that goal, I do think it became the most judgmental period of my preaching career. Too many assumptions about people and their lives. We already struggle with enough shame and guilt without hearing about it regularly.

Now, while each of these preaching journeys has some merit, and can be a small part of any sermon, most of the above forgets that faith is primarily a bond with the Almighty. Scripture is a guide, but not the goal. Curiously, most of the time when Jesus used Scripture, then the Old Testament, it was to correct hypocrisy. Most of Jesus' Scripture quotations are spoken to Scribes and Pharisees. To us? To the people in the pews? He told stories.

And so, unless you want to be a Scribe or a Pharisee, I'm going to share my journey of faith with you from the pulpit; I want to invite you to take from my story what is meaningful for yours. My major themes are grace, forgiveness, and Immanuel (God with us). You won't have to look far to see a humble embodiment of those behaviors. My colleague, your long-serving pastor, is a marvelous demonstration of them.

See you soon. And, by the way. I love a good story. Especially yours!

Grace and Peace,

Mark

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

We were recently approached by Bay State Books to place a book bin on our grounds. I brought this idea to the Standing Committee at their April meeting. They voted we would give this a six-month trial and then review it. They pay 3 cents/lb. for the books which can add up a lot because books are heavy. The bin is provided for free and is emptied weekly or more if needed. I'll keep you posted on how things are going.

REMEMBERING OUR CHILDREN ... a special service where we remember children who are no longer with us, will be held **Sunday, May 21st** at the **9:00 service**.

If you wish to have a child's name included in the worship folder that morning, you must call the office by Monday, **May 15th**. Likewise, if you would like to donate \$5 toward the purchase of marigolds, please let the office know by the 15th. Those donating these summer flowers are invited to take a pack with them following the service.

CHOIR APPRECIATION SUNDAY will be celebrated on **June 11th**. A reception will follow the 9:30A service. A sign-up sheet is posted for refreshment donations. Call the office with any questions.

BUS TRIP TO LANCASTER PA ~ AUG 21-23

We are traveling again! We have started a wait list as we are full! Call the office to add your name.

Active members who wish to borrow items from the church (chairs, tables, etc.), please check with the office. They may have been requested by another member.

Please remember, if you turn on lights, or adjust the heat or air conditioning, to turn them off or reset them when you are finished. If you remove the Sanctuary railing for an event, please be sure to make provisions for it to be put back afterwards. Others count on it being there. **Please remember to lock all doors.** Thank you.

LOOKING AHEAD

Yard Sale ~ May 6 (Rain date May 13) 8 A – 2 P

Men's Group ~ May 13 10A

Remembering our Children Service ~ May 21 9A

Children's Day ~ May 21 ~ 10:30A

Summer Service ~ May 28 ~ 9:30A

Choir Appreciation Sunday ~ June 11

Senior Picnic ~ June 28 ~ Rain date June 29

A CONFIRMATION CLASS has been scheduled to begin in August with a Confirmation date of October 29, 2023.

The class will be taught by Rev. Stan on Monday evenings from 6:30-7:30 p.m. in the Annex. It is open to 9th graders and older students who may not have taken the class. Please call the office for more information or to sign up.



THANK YOU to those who offered to purchase an outdoor American flag! The new flag flying is in memory of Debra Niedzwicki by Chuck and Barbara Lowden.

DID YOU SEE the beautiful bouquets of tulips which were in the sanctuary on April 23rd? Thank you to Wicked Tulips Flower Farm! They used our hall to interview potential employees earlier in the year and shared some of their blooms with us!

Our **SPRING YARD SALE** is planned for **May 6th** (rain date is May 13th), **from 8A – 2P**. Donations will be accepted by contacting Stella Dawley. Donations will also be accepted the day of the sale.



Please do not leave anything outside at the church when no one from the committee is able to meet with you.

Just a reminder:

No clothing, paint, computers, outdated electronics, tires, air conditioners or other bulky items.

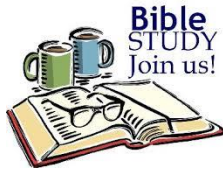


MEN'S GROUP **THE MEN'S GROUP** will meet Saturday May 13th at 10A.

Coffee, doughnuts, fellowship and a devotional will be provided. Call Scott VanAlst with any questions – 860-237-7964.

THOUGHTS FROM A FRIEND...

The secret of a good sermon is to have a good beginning and a good ending; and to have the two as close together as possible. -- *George Burns*



Monday Morning Bible Study meets at 10am.
Please contact Chris Burden for any questions.

Tuesday Evening Bible Study 'Let's Go!'
We continue our traveling bible study on Tuesday, May 9th at 7P. This week we will hold class at Amos Lake Beach & Campground. The address is 53 Hollowell Road in Preston, CT. The campground is 2 miles (4 minutes) south of Preston City Congregational Church. The study this week will focus on Jesus' appearance to the disciples by the Sea of Galilee. If anyone has any questions, please contact Pastor Scott @ 860-237-7964.



COMMUNION SUNDAY IS TWO-CAN SUNDAY:
Time to replenish the Toucan Food Pantry on May 7th.

Always needed: cereal, peanut butter, jelly, canned vegetables, canned fruit, canned soup, rice, macaroni and cheese, pasta, and spaghetti sauce. Donation boxes are located at both church entry doors. Monetary donations are always welcomed and we will do the shopping!

Thank you for your continuing support for this vital ministry which is more important than ever.



Choir Rehearsals

Rehearsals are Thursday nights at 7:00P.
We welcome you to join us when you are able.



WOW! Sunday school 2022 -2023 is drawing to a close! We will be celebrating the children on SUNDAY MAY 21st @ the 10:30 service. Please bring your child to Dudek Hall no later than 10:15 that morning. We have a special service planned to honor all of their, and let's be honest, YOUR hard work! Following the service we will be grilling hamburgers & hotdogs for EVERYONE! There will be lemonade, chips, and dessert! If you would like to join us you are welcome too, just sign up on the main bulletin board. Just find the sheet that says Pic i nic so I can plan enough food! Don't eat meat, please let us know, we have veggie burgers! If you would like to help please let me (Lisa Van Alst) or your child's teacher know. Everyone can help, even if you can't be there we can use your prayers. You can pray for great weather, for all 45 children, the Sunday School teachers, ME, and ALL of Preston City Congregational church!
Mrs. Lisa Van Alst D.R.E.



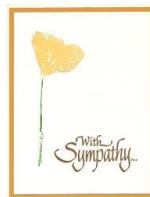
We are so excited to be planning for a **2023 Scarecrow Festival**. The date is set for **Saturday September 23, 2023. 10 AM till 4 PM**. This will be our 15th festival.

We need many volunteers and coordinators to make it successful. A list of areas that need coordinators is posted on

the bulletin board outside Dudek Hall. **PLEASE** add your name, phone, and e-mail to the list if you would like to help. Meetings will be via Zoom on the second Tuesday of each month at 6:30 PM.

Questions call Shari Purcell 860-917-9011 or e-mail shariLpurcell@gmail.com or call the church office at 860-887-4647.

Will another resurrection take place here in the church with a return of the **Christmas Bazaar**? Do you have an interest in seeing it come back? There is a sign-up sheet on the hallway bulletin board if you are interested in coming to an informational meeting with Rev. Stan. Please sign up if you would like to take part. (You can also call the office!)



We expressed our condolences to the families of Jean Barrett and Paul Vachon.

THE PASTORAL SEARCH COMMITTEE was appointed by the Standing Committee on March 15, 2023, as was determined at the Annual Meeting in February. This group of nine volunteers has started meeting and would like to introduce the committee members:

Marisa Stankiewicz - Chair
Liz Stammel - Secretary
Wendy Abrahamson
Sandy Dudek
LeeAnn Fessenden
Steve Orlomoski
Bridget Park
Felix Prokop
Bob Vescovi

BINGO at Strawberry Park

PCCC is one of the non-profit organizations that assist at the games selling cards. Funds received are used to offset our budget.

We need three workers to sell cards at each session. Do you have a Personal Identification Number (PIN) necessary to help? The office has the information and forms available to get you started if you don't! You must be a church member to receive a PIN.

Thank you to those who sign up to assist and continue to make this a successful mission for our church. **A list of available dates is now posted!**



THE CONNECTION DEPARTMENT OF TRANSPORTATION (CTDOT) is upgrading the pedestrian crossing on Rt. 164. There will be a push button system with warning lights and new sidewalks. CTDOT is committed to creating safer pedestrian crossings throughout the state, making the roads safer for everyone. We look forward to the enhanced safety for all entering our church grounds.

JUST A REMINDER that we will begin **our new service schedule on Sunday, May 28th** with one **service at 9:30A**, followed by 'Lemonade on the Lawn'. The service will be live-streamed for those unable to attend in person. We would also like to remind everyone that pledges and donations may be made online or mailed to the church office to keep your pledges, and our church finances, up-to-date.

A teacher was testing the children in her Sunday school class to see if they understood the concept of getting to heaven.

She asked them, "If I sold my house and my car, had a big garage sale and gave all my money to the church, would that get me into Heaven?"

"NO!" the children answered.

"If I cleaned the church every day, mowed the yard, and kept everything neat and tidy, would that get me into Heaven?"

Again, the answer was, "NO!"

Now she was smiling. Hey, they're getting it, she thought! "Well, then, if I was kind to animals and gave candy to all the children, would that get me into Heaven?" she asked.

Again, they all answered, "NO!"

She was just bursting with pride for them. "Well," she continued, "then how can I get into Heaven?"

A five-year-old boy shouted out,
"YOU GOTTA BE DEAD!"

Join us Sunday, May 21 at 10:30A for our Children's Service. You never know what you'll learn!

LITTLE PILGRIM COORDINATOR

The Little Pilgrim comes out twice a month, during the first and third weeks. Please send information to be included in the week of May 14 newsletter no later than Tuesday, May 16 at noon to:

susan.brosnan@gmail.com or left at the office.

Thank you



Thank you to all who contributed to our new two-person microphone system!