

**Preston City
Congregational Church**
"Gathering in Faith Since 1698"



The Little Pilgrim

**week of
December 3, 2023**

Church Office Hours:

Monday – Friday, 9AM – Noon

**Have a question?
Need help?**

Please call: The Office

860 887-4647 or 860 886-7200

Rev. Mark will be available
Wednesday evenings. Please call
to make an appointment.

To reach our interim co-ministers
directly at any time:

Rev. Mark Porizky – 860 705-1262

porizky@gmail.com

Rev. Stan White - 860 303-9622

sewhite3022@gmail.com

**WORSHIP AND WEB STREAM
INFORMATION**

Worship service is at 9:30A

For those who are unable to attend
in-person, the 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:

11/19 – 2 countries; 19 states;

38 cities; 60 viewings

11/26 – 3 countries; 20 states;

41 cities; 56 viewings

WEEKLY EVENTS

AA - Wed 7:30P Dudek Hall

Sunday Service – 9:30A

Sunday School – 9:15A

NEXT LITTLE PILGRIM week of
December 17th.

COVID UPDATE 3/16/2022

The Standing Committee has
determined that wearing masks is
optional.



Coffee Fellowship

**Join us for coffee,
punch, and fellowship
following our Sunday
service.**

The Breath of Christmas

I'm raking the leaves on a Wednesday evening, a week before Thanksgiving. A windstorm has left a mess in the backyard, and my wife, Lucretia, and I have begun to pick up the clutter. The leaves are wet and heavy. I've put them in piles and in trash cans to be taken to the dump.

Suddenly, I am feeling...strange.

"Are you OK?" Lucretia asks. "No," I say, after taking a moment to think about it. "I just don't feel quite right." I remember a night I awakened from a dream about having trouble breathing. I had stayed awake for about an hour, a gripping feeling in my chest. Now the tightness is back.

And then I remember even further back. Why does it take so long sometimes to remember? I often have breathing difficulties in the fall. In fact, about once every five years, a wet fall causes me trouble. A decade ago, I ended up in the emergency room with shortness of breath. That problem was solved with an inhaler, and a quick search of my bathroom reveals my now two-year-old inhaler. Two puffs eased the tightness ... and the creeping anxiety that I was starting to feel. I say a silent "hallelujah" with each deep, cleansing breath. I call my doctor to renew the prescription.

In the morning, I think about all the people I see in the hospital with nasal cannulas. The people with COPD, or lung cancer. I think of all the people I know who struggle daily for breath. I can't imagine how horrible it must be. In the hospital, we have a phrase for significant breathing difficulties: Air Hunger. Just writing it makes me shudder.

I take a few more moments out of my day and reflect on breathing. My Eastern spiritual friends are constantly talking about breath. "Pay attention to your breath." Their spiritual lives and their breathing go hand-in-hand. I am not as good at "concentrating on my breath" as my Eastern counterparts, but there are Biblical reasons for me to start paying more attention. Rob Bell, a contemporary theologian whom I have greatly enjoyed, says, "In the Bible, the word for 'breath' is the same word as the word for 'spirit'. In Hebrew, God's name is essentially four letters ... YHWH. The ancient rabbis believed that those letters were essentially the sound of breathing. Is the name of God the sound of breathing?"

One of my favorite old hymns is **Breathe on Me Breathe of God** by Edwin Hatch. The first verse says, "*Breathe on me, Breath of God, Fill me with life anew, That I may love what Thou dost love, And do what Thou wouldst do.*" A deep breath is a blessing. The breath of God? Life-giving.

I don't say, "Thank you, Jesus," every time I am blessed with a deep breath. But couldn't I be just a bit more grateful, occasionally? With Christmas weeks away, the Spirit of the Living God, the Baby Jesus, the Breath of Life, is coming into the world. How about taking a deep breath and saying this Christmas, "**Behold, I bring you good news of a great joy which is for all the people.**"

The Breath of Christmas: Who knows who needs to breathe Christmas anew? Maybe you!

Grace and Peace,
Mark

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

A funeral service for Mary Lou Jensen is scheduled for Wednesday, December 13 at 11A. Visitation is 9A – 11A at the church.

*

The December Senior Luncheon is scheduled for **Thursday December 14th** at noon. A roast pork dinner is planned.

*

THE SECRET SANTA PROGRAM will be available this year. Please call the church office if you could use a helping hand at Christmas. All requests will be kept confidential. If you would like to be a Secret Santa, please call the office and I'll take your name and be in touch with you if help is needed. It is often adults that could use a gift. Requests for children's gifts have been minimal in the past years.

*

RECENTLY WE RECEIVED A LETTER FROM ST. VINCENT DE PAUL PLACE thanking us for a donation of 20 coats, boots, mittens and scarves valued at \$600. There was a note on the letter from Executive Director Jillian Corbin that said "your support means a lot to us." Thank you to all who donated to this effort and to Laurie Bowers who makes sure the items get to them.

*

DO YOU PLAY CHESS? We have a request from a young male adult who likes to play chess but needs someone to challenge!!! If you would consider doing this, we could make arrangements to meet at the church at a time convenient to both of you. Call the office and let us know and we'll call you back.

*

INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS Tune in to Television Channel 3 (WFSB), local radio stations or you may check Facebook, 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.

If your address has changed or you have a new phone number, please let the office or church clerk know so records may be updated. We understand many people no longer have 'land lines' and use cell phones as their main contact. Please help us keep our information up-to-date

Active members who wish to borrow items from the church (chairs, tables, etc. that are reserved for this purpose), please check with the office. They may have been requested by someone else!

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 AND CHECK all doors.** Thank you.

Please remember to check with the office for space availability when scheduling meetings.

NEWS FROM THE SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Season of Advent has begun! The next four weeks will help us prepare for the arrival of the newborn King as well as his coming again! We lit the purple candle of **Hope** last week, we will light the purple candle of **Peace** this week and the pink candle of **Love** the week after.

We are trying to start up a Childrens' Bell Choir for a Christmas Eve performance! If your child(ren) are interested we will be practicing **THIS** Sunday @ 9:00 a.m. in Dudek Hall.

We also have a few openings for some Christmas Eve speaking parts. They are only 2-3 lines and DO NOT need to be memorized. This will be for the 4pm. Christmas Eve Family Service. Let me know if your child(ren) is interested.

Here is a schedule of Family activities @ PCCC to help with all the dashing around

Dec. 10th Sunday School (Bell practice @ 9) Organ Concert @ 4p.m.

Dec. 16th Cookie Sale 9 - 2 (get there early!!)

Dec. 17th Sunday School & Christmas Pageant @ 2pm followed with free desserts

Dec. 24th NO SUNDAY SCHOOL Services @ 9:30a.m. (Sunday), 4:00p.m, (Children)

or 8:00 p.m. (Candlelight)

Hope, Peace & Love this Holiday Season,
Lisa Van Alst



THE MEMORY TREE is up and waiting for ornaments! Is there someone you would like to remember this Christmas? Ornaments may be hung on the tree (remember to add your last name on the back!) and then fill out the memorial form for names to be added to the list in the church bulletin.

Ornaments may be taken after December 25th.

BRICK ORDERS are being taken for the area located in the lower parking lot beside the walkway. You can purchase a brick in honor of, in celebration of, or in memory of someone. Perhaps a holiday gift? A 4"x 8" brick costs \$75, and can have up to 3 lines of engraving and up to 18 characters per line. An 8"x 8" brick costs \$125, can have up to six lines of engraving and up to 18 characters per line. There is a signup sheet on the mid-level bulletin board for those who are interested. Speak with Joy Chalifoux if you have any questions. **We need at least ten brick purchases to process an order.**



A COAT DRIVE is being held through January 1st. All sizes are welcome for men, women and children. Boots, hats, gloves, mittens, and scarves are also needed.

The coats may be left in or on the Elizabeth Allyn box located to the right of the table in the mid-level hallway. Let's help keep everyone warm this winter! Thank you for supporting this mission.

Our Church's Anniversary



325TH ANNIVERSARY
On Sunday, November 12th a dedication for the 325th Anniversary Memorial was held. The slogan for our yearlong celebration was announced: "Gathering in Faith Since 1698".



A CHRISTMAS ORGAN CONCERT has been arranged for **Sunday, December 10th at 4P**. This is a family-oriented event, and will include a carol sing-along and songs in Christmas movies. Refreshments will follow.

Join us for this 325th Anniversary Event!



The Women's Fellowship will be meeting on Sat. Dec. 9th at 9am in the Meeting Room. We will be filling out Christmas cards to be sent to the shut-ins of our church and to local military members. Cards will be supplied. All women are welcome. Should you have any questions, Bridget Park can be reached at 860-710-1316 or bkpark1@gmail.com.



The Tuesday Night Bible Study meets @ 7pm in the Meeting Room. Our last study will be December 19. We will start up again on January 9, 2024. If you have any questions, please call Pastor Scott VanAlst @ 860-237-7964.



Rehearsals Mondays at 6P.

Hear them ring on December 17th during our Sunday service.



TRIVIA NIGHT WILL BE BACK ON APRIL 6, 2024.

THE SUNDAY SCHOOL CHRISTMAS PAGEANT is scheduled for December 17th at 2P, same time, new date!

Rehearsals for "The Night Before" are Wednesdays from 5:30-6:30P.



THE JEAN MILLER MEMORIAL COOKIE SALE will be held on December 16, 2023 from 9A – 2P (or until sold out!).

2023 COOKIE TEAM

The Team is in need of at least 40 individuals willing to bake/make a double batch of cookies, brownie bites, or fudge for the Annual Jean Miller Cookie Sale! **Please consider joining the PCCC Cookie Team!!!!**

THE DECORATING COMMITTEE will be



placing memorial Poinsettias on the altar on Christmas Sunday, December 24th.

Is there someone you would like to remember this holiday season?

Orders will be taken on Sunday December 10th and the cost is \$13.00.

THOUGHTS FROM A FRIEND ...

The main function of your little toe is to make sure all of the furniture in the house is in the right place.

DECEMBER EVENTS

SATURDAY December 9 ~ Women's Fellowship ~ 9A

SUNDAY December 10 ~ Church Vote ~
Disbursement of 2023 Mission Funds

SUNDAY December 10 ~ Christmas Organ Concert ~
4P

THURSDAY December 14 ~ Senior Lunch ~ Noon

SATURDAY December 16 ~ Jean Miller Memorial
Cookie Sale ~ 9A-2P

SUNDAY December 17 ~ Christmas Pageant ~ 2P

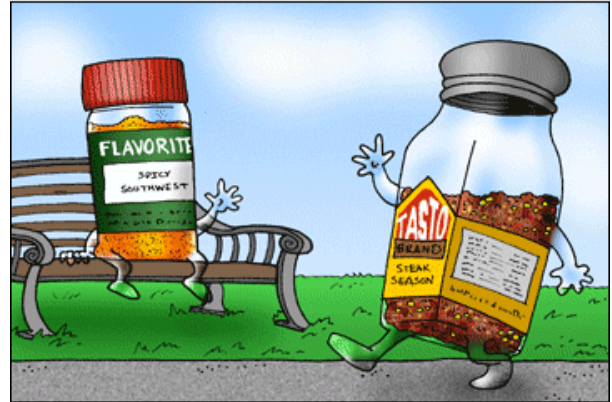
SUNDAY December 24 ~

Christmas Sunday Service ~ 9:30A

Children & Families Christmas Service ~ 4P

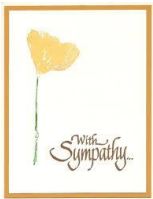
Christmas Eve Candlelight Service ~ 8P

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Thanks to Mark Highum
SEASON'S GREETINGS

12-19-2005



We express our sympathies to the families and friends of Edith Choti and Mary Lou Jensen.

NOTES FROM OUR FINANCIAL SECRETARY

SUNDAY DECEMBER 24 is the last Sunday for 2023 giving.

Please keep the date in mind, especially if you mail your offerings.

THANK YOU to those who have already submitted their pledge of financial support for the coming year. Although Stewardship Month has ended, pledges may be given to the Financial Secretary at any time. Please give as you are able. Help keep the ministry of the church going strong in the year ahead.

LITTLE PILGRIM COORDINATOR The Little Pilgrim comes out twice a month. Please send information to be included in the week of December 17th newsletter no later than Tuesday, December 19th at noon to: susan.brosnan@gmail.com or leave at the office.

ADVENT

DECEMBER 3RD – 24TH



Hope ~ Prophet

Peace ~ Bethlehem

Joy ~ Angel

Love ~ Shepherd

Christ Candle ~ The Light of the World

CHURCH MEMBERS 18 years and older will vote December 10, 2023 at the end of the 9:30AM service to disburse mission funds to the following local and overseas programs:

Missions Committee Recommendations For 2023 Giving		
National Association – Missions fund	\$750 (3 @\$250)	
<i>Word Alive Missions (Rev. Charles Nyane)</i>	\$250	<i>Western Ghana/ Ivory Coast based Mission</i>
<i>Piedmont College</i>	\$250	<i>Congregational College</i>
<i>Olivet College</i>	\$250	<i>Congregational College</i>
NACCC Hurting Churches Fund	\$250	Builds new Churches and helps Churches in need
Congregational Library	\$300	Congregational Library in Boston
Gideons International	\$250	Bible Distribution
Missionary Flights International	\$250	Missions Air Support
Heifer Project International	\$250	Income-Producing Animals
American Red Cross Disaster Relief	\$300	Relief to Disaster Victims / Connecticut Chapter
Salvation Army	\$350	Norwich Chapter / Charity
Madonna Place	\$400	Supports Local Families
St. Vincent de Paul	\$400	Soup Kitchen
Safe Futures	\$400	Transitional Housing and Assistance for Domestic Violence
Martin House	\$400	Housing for homeless with addiction or mental health problems
Bags of Hope NE	\$400	Provides personalized duffle bags to children in foster care
Pastor's Discretionary Outreach	\$800	One Time Financial Help
Total	\$5,500	
The Missions Committee would like to thank the Congregation for your generosity; your support made this possible.		

OUR COUNTRY WALKS

Michael Barrett, Author
Jean Barrett, Publisher

Many of you had known Jean Barrett, who passed away a couple months ago. Years ago, Michael had written and Jean had published this delightful book on the beauty and peace of nature. It speaks about the tranquil smells and sounds in the lovely woods all around us, in a poetic sort of way. The phrase, "one with nature" is crystal clear when you step onto nature's path while reading their book.

In loving memory of Jean, Michael is offering a copy of his book to the people in our congregation for free. He even signed the 60 books he has given to our church. If you wish to donate an offering to the church for the book, which is not necessary, please place it in a marked envelope and into the offering basket. Michael just wishes to share with others the lovely moments that he shared with Jean among the beauty God created. If you are not a reader, perhaps you have someone you know who would enjoy the short stories in his book. The books and envelopes are placed on the tables near the entrances to the sanctuary. If you don't see the book, please let Nancy Obreiter know and she will get you a copy. Thank you.