

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



The Little Pilgrim

**week of
January 14, 2024**

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.
1/14 - Live viewings: 1 country; 19
states; 55 cities; 67 viewings

WEEKLY EVENTS

AA - Wed 7:30P Dudek Hall
Sunday Service – 9:30A
Sunday School – 9:15A

NEXT LITTLE PILGRIM week of
January 28th.

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.**

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE

St. Paulie Textile, Inc. has sent a year-end report for 2023. Our clothing
shed generated 48,522 pounds of clothing! That is enough to clothe 8,938
people! Thank you for your generosity and to those who keep the shed in
order and available to use.

The February Senior Luncheon is scheduled for **Tuesday February
13th** at noon. A pasta dinner will be prepared by the Migliaccio family.

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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.

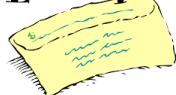
Please remember, if you turn on lights, or adjust the heat or air
conditioning, to turn them off or reset them when you are finished. If you
remove the Sanctuary railing for an event, please be sure to make
provisions for it to be put back afterwards. Others count on it being there.
Please remember to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

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

**Offering
Envelopes**



If you asked to receive offering envelopes when you
filled out your pledge card in November, they are now
available for pick-up in the mid-level hallway. If you did
not request envelopes, but would now like a box, contact the office, and we
will see that you get them.

**We remind you to discard any unused 2023 envelopes after
December 31st.**

Receipts for 2023 are available if you requested one.

THE ANNUAL MEETING is scheduled for February 11, 2024.

We will review the 2023 Annual Report and vote on the Nominating
Committee proposed slate for 2024 and the proposed 2024 church budget.

"RETURN TO SENDER... EXPIRED"

These were the words written across the envelope that contained a Christmas greeting from the Women's Fellowship to one of our long-time church members, Brenda Vars. For nearly four years, Brenda was a resident at this New London nursing facility.

I called the home to express my upset and frustration with these words and how the church was notified of Brenda's passing. Couldn't someone from the home inform the church of her death in a better way? Via a phone call, or a note expressing their condolences? I wondered, is this how they treat other residents in their care who have no one when they die? A couple years earlier I made it very clear to the staff that Brenda had no living relatives. I left my name, the church's address and phone number, and asked that the church be contacted upon her passing. They never called! If it were not for the Christmas card being returned to the church, we would not have known that she died in May of 2023. Before our conversation ended, the Supervisor of Nurses, as well as Brenda's Social Worker, knew how I felt about the way they handled my friend's death. I wanted to know, "Where is she now? Do you just dispose of a body when they have no family?" I could hear it in the Social Worker's voice, she knew Brenda's passing should have been handled differently. In my opinion, the nursing home FAILED! Someone didn't read the note in Brenda's chart. Her life mattered, and so do others who die as she died. Alone.

Brenda was born with Cerebral Palsy. Unable to speak except for guttural sounds. She was very limited in her ability to walk. However, Brenda managed her way through life with the help of her parents, brother, and caregiver up until the last few years. Brenda outlived her family. Her mother, Margaret, kept Brenda at home until her passing. She taught Brenda to count and recite the A-B-C's although both were very limited. She even taught Brenda to knit! During a home visit, I found Brenda sitting on the couch while her mom sat nearby. I asked, "What are you making?" She answered me but I couldn't understand her words. She pointed at me. Her mom spoke for her, "She's making a scarf for you." "For me?" I asked. "Can I see how it's coming along?" With pride she held it up for me to look at. It was her own special creation. The scarf had many holes (missed stitches) in it. While other knitters would have corrected the mistakes, not Brenda! She just kept on knitting -- proud of her work. I encouraged her to keep on knitting. She knitted for many years, until her bent fingers could no longer hold the knitting needles. Brenda loved to color, sing Karaoke (especially Katy Perry's, "Roar") which I saw her perform at her Easter Seals school one morning. She sang her heart out that day, and was thrilled that I attended her performance. I didn't understand a word she sang, but she did, and that's all that mattered. I told her how proud I was of her. She loved to hug me and hold my hand when she saw me at church. She was a sweet, sweet soul. I shall not forget her and the many laughs we shared through the years.

Brenda's passing hit me hard on many levels. With no next-of-kin still alive, and unable to express herself as her life came to a close, I needed to know what happened. When did she die? How did she die? Was anyone with her when she passed? A nurse? Did anyone hold her hand? Where is she now?

After some investigation, I found Brenda! Her ashes are sitting in a "cremation holding room" in Rocky Hill. Her remains cannot be released until the Probate Court releases funds to pay for her cremation. It's now eight months later and Probate still has not paid the cremation bill. Really? Seriously?

I will drive to Rocky Hill when I return to Connecticut this spring, to bring my friend home to Preston. I plan to hold a service for Brenda in the sanctuary; a service that honors and celebrates her life. Following the service, the grave will be opened and this dear woman's remains will be placed alongside her mom, dad, and brother where she belongs!

Back to the scarf...

I never did receive the scarf she knitted for me. I've thought a lot about it since her passing. I'd like to think that one day when we meet in heaven, we will find each other. She will speak to me words that I will clearly understand. "Here's that scarf I made just for you, Rev. Stan." Like her newly restored life, the scarf with all the holes will also be new. It will be perfect! -- even more beautiful than it was here on earth. No longer holey, but very much holy.

The church was important in Brenda's life. It's where she attended Sunday School, worshiped with others, attended funeral services when family members died. There were some who thought she couldn't handle the loss, but she did! She was a strong, strong-willed, determined woman. I believe it was her faith in God, and the love she received from family and friends that kept her going these many years.

Her life mattered, and so does yours! -- *Rev. Stan*



SCOUT SUNDAY will be celebrated on February 25th, 2024. Scout Sunday recognizes the contributions of young people and adults to Scouting. All Scouts are encouraged to wear their uniforms on that Sunday.



Dear Families

Good afternoon! So many happenings in Sunday School coming up YAY!

1. We will be collecting non-perishable food until the 29th (since we missed a week) .

Remember the class that contributes the most wins a Donut Party.

2. Watch FaceBook and email for SNOWDAY fun at the church. When it is safe and we have at least 2inches on the ground, Mrs. Van Alst might announce a SNOW DAY!

which means grab your sleds, friends, and neighbors and come sledding at the church.

Mrs. Van Alst will provide a hot chocolate bar to all!

3. Mark your calendars for February 18, 2024 !

We will be hosting a **Noah's Ark Escape Room**. We will be dividing into groups of 5-6 people at a time. There will be a sign up sheet on the main bulletin Board to walk through this free experience. If you like puzzles, trivia, and solving mysteries then this event is for you. All ages are welcome. Six and under need an adult or older Teen to go with them and help solve the puzzles. This is a great FAMILY experience!

If you would like to decorate, build, or help with this event, then meet us after service Sunday Jan. 21st @ 10:30 in Dudek Hall.

4. The " Teen Class " will be diligently working in the kitchen cooking a delicious meal for our shut-ins/ sick. Homemade chicken pot pie and chocolate chip cookies are on the menu for ***Meals that Heal!*** If you/your family would like to drop off a meal on your way home from church please let us know (860-710- 1262) This is a free bimonthly service project planned and prepared by 7th - 12th graders!

Please continue to follow the Little Pilgrim for more info and to keep current on family/children events!



The Tuesday Night Bible Study

meets @ 7pm in the Meeting Room. If you have any questions, please call Pastor Scott VanAlst @ 860-237-7964.



325TH ANNIVERSARY NEWS

The 325th anniversary of our church is now underway!

Did you know that a choral piece marking the 325th year is now "in the works?" Joseph Martin, who composed "House of Grace" for our church's 300th anniversary

(1998) was commissioned to write another piece exclusively for our church. It will premiere at the anniversary worship service scheduled for November 2024. A special choir will be formed from the congregation to sing it for the first time. After November, the anthem will be available for purchase by choirs across the United States. There will be an inscription on the music stating that it was commissioned by our church on the occasion of the 325th anniversary!

To offset the cost of this commissioned piece exclusively for our church, we are seeking 18 individuals or families, to donate \$100. All donors will be listed in the anniversary worship service folder next year. If you'd like to be part of this exciting project, please let Pat Marino (325 Committee Chair) know. You can mail your check, made payable to **Preston City Congregational Church** (or PCCC), to Pat at **61 McClimon Road, Preston, CT 06365**. Be sure to include the name as it should appear in the program. Feel free to call Pat if you have any questions: 860.887.3359.

Thoughts from a friend...

Grace is when God gives us good things
we don't deserve.
Mercy is when he spares us from bad things
we do deserve.
Blessings are when he is generous with both.



OUR COAT DRIVE continues through January. 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.



TRIVIA NIGHT WILL BE BACK ON APRIL 6, 2024. The Men's Group is working hard to update this event. Stay tuned for more information!

Choir Rehearsals

Rehearsals are Thursday nights at 7:00pm. Join us as you are able. More voices are always welcome.



JANUARY EVENTS

Sunday January 21 & 28
Service 9:30A
Sunday School 9:15A
Tuesday Night Bible Study ~ 7P
Wednesday AA ~ 7:30P
Thursday Choir Rehearsal ~ 7P

LITTLE PILGRIM COORDINATOR The Little Pilgrim comes out twice a month. Please send information to be included in the week of January 28th newsletter no later than Tuesday, January 23rd at noon to: susan.brosnan@gmail.com or leave information at the office.

Would you like to receive an electronic version of the Little Pilgrim newsletter delivered to your email? Contact Sue Brosnan (susan.brosnan@gmail.com) or the church office with your name and email address. Your name will be added to our mailing list.

