

THE PRESTON PILGRIM

The newsletter of
The Preston City
Congregational Church
Gathered 1698

FEBRUARY 2018



CHURCH ADDRESS
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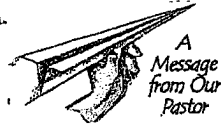
FAX
(860) 887-4647

WORSHIP
9:00 & 10:30 A.M.
(Sept. 10 - May 20)

SUNDAY SCHOOL
8:45 A.M.
(Sept. 10 - May 20)

EMAIL: PCCC@SNET.NET
WEBSITE: prestoncitycongregational.org
Visit us on **FACEBOOK**

News and information for next month's newsletter is **due by February 18th**. You may leave information in the holder located on the wall in the kitchen.



DO YOU PRAY?

I heard an interesting report on the news recently regarding *prayer*. A Gallup Poll asked people, *Do you pray?*

This question was **not asked** following the terrifying and unfortunate mistake of someone pressing the wrong button at the state emergency management agency in Hawaii; alerting people of an incoming ballistic missile.

The poll found that:

- 1 in 4 atheists and agnostics call on God during crisis.
- Doubt is part of our experience with faith.
- 70% of prayers are about family.

A priest speaking about Gallup's findings had some good insight for viewers (those who pray and do not pray) to consider:

- We live in a very "noisy world," with many distractions and voices calling for your attention. Telling you, "Do this," or "Do that."

- **LISTEN.** Be still. God IS speaking to you; directly, or possibly through other people, or situations going on in the world, or in your life. Stop talking, start listening!

Let me ask you again, *Do you pray?* If you had been in Hawaii last week when the alarm was sounded would you have prayed? Many non pray-ers, interviewed by local news reporters said that before calling loved ones to say good-bye, they called on God (they prayed) for protection and a different outcome.

I've seen it so many times in my ministry... When people feel desperate, hopeless, or it seems like there is no way out of their situation or crisis -- no where else to turn, they pray. I've prayed with "pray-ers" and "non pray-ers," and often these people do the same thing as I pray with them. They squeeze my hand, as if to say, "Thanks for praying, I'm trusting in prayer." It's a powerful and affirming moment for me!

Maybe you're like the disciples who admitted to Jesus that they didn't know how to pray. They said to him, "Teach us to pray." He did. He taught them the Lord's Prayer. If you can relate to those twelve followers, I encourage you to *speak to God* as you would a friend. No fancy words, just sincere words spoken from your heart. He will hear you, and in His time, He will answer you. Just remember... LISTEN.

Stay close to God,
Rev. Stan
Rev. Stan

DURING THE MONTH OF DECEMBER and JANUARY

WE WELCOMED into the Household of Christian Through the Sacrament of Baptism:

12.10 **Wesley Woodstock Seifert**, son of Sarah & Thomas Seifert of Griswold, CT

1.21 **Conner Michael Whitworth**, son of Mariah & Justin Whitworth of Sterling, CT
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WE EXPRESSED OUR SYMPATHY to the family of **Ralph Tedeschi** who passed away on January 16th. Please keep his wife and family in your thoughts and prayers.

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2018 BUDGET UPDATE

Although it's a new year, pledge forms are still being accepted. To date, 115 pledges have been offered, totaling \$152,844. The proposed budget to be voted upon at the Annual Meeting is \$259,573. As you can see, we have a way to go to reach this goal. Green pledge forms can be found on the Information Center table. You may place your pledge in the offering plate on Sunday morning, or mail it to the church office. It takes many generous people to keep our church financially healthy from month-to-month. If you have not offered your pledge for this new year, consider doing so today. We appreciate your support!

Amazing news... Our fundraising efforts in 2017 raised \$33,977.40. This only happened because of your efforts, support, and leadership of the various fundraisers held throughout the year.

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FEBRUARY IS SCHOLARSHIP MONTH

Our church scholarship fund was established in 1992, following the passing of church member, Helen Benjamin. After more than 20 years in existence, scholarships have been presented to some well-deserving young people in our congregation. The fund is now named for *Helen & Winthrop Benjamin*.

Throughout the month of February, you will be hearing from past scholarship recipients about their hopes and dreams for life. You will hear how your giving to the fund helped them reach their goal.

We ask members and friends of the church to consider giving a financial gift to the scholarship fund this year. Give your gift in memory of someone, or in honor of someone, or some special event (a birthday, anniversary, etc.). A listing of all donors (no amounts) will be posted in the worship folder on Scholarship Sunday (June 10th). 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 in our church who will graduate this June. They bring life and joy to the church. Let's show how much we care for them and their future aspirations. Please give as you are able. *Thanks!*

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THE SEASON OF LENT

begins with Ash Wednesday, February 14th. To mark the start of this important season of reflection, prayer, and sacrifice, we will hold our annual *Prayer Vigil* in the Sanctuary from noon to 5:45 P.M. We ask individuals/couples to sign up for a 15-minute time of prayer; a special prayer list will be prepared for this day. Imagine it... for six hours people will be praying for themselves and others. If you'd like to participate in this meaningful event, please sign up at the Information Center bulletin board. Please make note of the time you will be praying. When you arrive on that day, please enter and exit by the front door. Be sure to cross your name off the sheet, pick up a prayer list, and set the timer for 15-minutes. You may sit anywhere you wish. Please contact the church office if you have any questions.

At 7 P.M. that evening, there will be a communion service in the Sanctuary. Plan to join us for this quiet and meaningful service.

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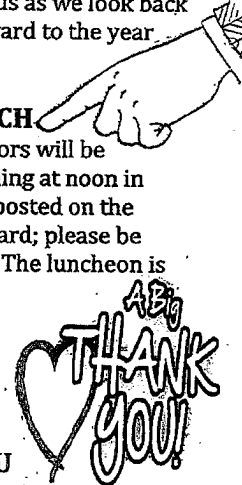
ANNUAL MEETING

Tuesday, February 13, 2018
Refreshments & Coffee at 6:30 P.M.
Meeting begins at 7 P.M. in Halls' Hall
Annual Reports for the year 2017 will be available for your review on Sunday, February 11th. You can pick up your copy on the Information Center table. Join us as we look back on the past year, and look forward to the year ahead.

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SENIOR LUNCHEON

The next luncheon for our seniors will be Tuesday, February 13th, beginning at noon in Dudek Hall. A sign-up sheet is posted on the Information Center bulletin board; please be sure to sign one name per line. The luncheon is limited to 60 people.



THANK YOU

We appreciate the many coats, mittens and hats that were given to the coat drive during December and January. And we thank Laurie Bowers for the many trips she made to area agencies to deliver your contributions. Due to the overwhelming need for coats, the drive was extended through January. Thank you for your generosity, we'll let you know how many items were collected at the end of January.

The Preston Junior Pilgrim



Preston City Congregational Church Sunday School Newsletter

A WORD FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION...

"THE FREEZING FAITHFUL"...This article title caught my eye when it came across my computer from the Congregational Library & Archives. I don't like the cold and have been ready for summer from the first day I had to wear a coat...how about you? I want to share a little bit of this article with you that helped me feel a lot more appreciative of what we have:

"It was so cold in Boston's Third Church meetinghouse on January 15, 1716 that the bread froze on the communion table. We know that from a laconic entry in the diary of Samuel Sewall, one of the church's most prominent and controversial members. Right after that is the equally bland mention of the unfortunate John Tuckerman, the baby baptized the same day.

DURING THE WINTER MONTHS New England Congregationalists were used to seeing their ministers preaching in hats, cloaks, and woolen mittens. In fact, a hundred years later the conditions were still fairly dire. On one especially arctic Sunday in Salem, Massachusetts, in 1810, the hands of the meetinghouse clock had to be moved manually after they froze in place. The Congregation was "very thin," church records remark,

Episodes like these add human texture to a library collection. The old sermon I pore over at my leisure in front of a piping hot radiator probably came across differently to people whose teeth were chattering. They also explain a couple of curious objects we keep on display for visitors. Ministers could stay warm by flailing and pacing, but what of their congregants huddled below in drafty box pews? Some people invited the family dog to church so the poor beast could lie across their frozen feet. Others found what had to be cold comfort by bringing coals from the hearth in a clay pot and putting them in a warming box-a solution not likely to last for the duration of a two-hour church service.

This is just an excerpt of a very interesting article about endurance of our forebears. Though stories of frozen communion bread may give pause when we grouse about the weather, beastly as it's been this year so far, history isn't about moral calculus. After all, our ancestors knew nothing of nuclear war or traffic jams, dangers and privations we almost take for granted.

As I typed this article for your reading, I was feeling very fortunate to be sitting in my warm office and was feeling how fortunate we are to come to church on Sunday morning and know we are not going to be freezing. Praise be to God from whom all blessings flow...

May the SONshine through me,

Sandy Oudek



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)

PLEASE ENCOURAGE students to learn these verses; they will serve them well the rest of their lives. To qualify for an award at the end of the year, verses must be correctly recited by the end of each month to Mrs. Dudek or their teacher. **PLEASE NOTE:** Bible cutouts are posted on the bulletin board in the back of the Sunday School Hall. When the child has recited the monthly verse, they will place a sticker on the proper month. Let's hope many students get all nine of them this year...even if they miss one, there will be an opportunity to make up one missed verse.



YOUTH MISSION TRIP...Five young people have signed up to serve at Rutland/Green Mountains, Vermont. The leaders accompanying them are Scott & Lisa Van Alst. They will be departing from the church on July 22, 2018. We are so grateful for the support of the congregation for these youth mission trips.

INCLEMENT WEATHER:

Check Channel 3

Check Facebook or our website:

Prestoncitycongregational.org



FEBRUARY 2018

To place flowers in church during February, sign the Flower chart on the mid-level bulletin board, fill out the form next to the chart, and give to the	Flower Committee contact for February, Carolyn Shea (860.887.8592)	Please check with Rev. Stan or Sandy before using our names as references. This courtesy would be appreciated.	LOST OR FOUND something at church? There is a basket in the Information Center	1 Adult choir 7p	2	3 Men's Group 8-9:30a
4 Comm. worship 9a, 10:30a Adult choir sings 9a Sunday School Communion 9:05a Two-can Sunday	5 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	6 Handbells 6p Board of Religious Education 6p Scarecrow Festival meeting 6:30p	7 AA 7:30p	8 Adult choir 7p	9	10
11 Worship 9a, 10:30a Youth Sunday 10:30a	12 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	13 Senior lunch noon Handbells 6p Annual meeting 7p Refreshments 6:30p	14 Ash Wednesday Prayer-vigil Noon-5:45p St. Jude worship 11a Communion worship 7p AA 7:30p	15 Adult choir 7p	16	17
18 Worship 9a, 10:30a Adult choir sings 9a	19 Presidents' Day Office closed NO Bible study NO Confirmation Yoga 6:30p Pastoral Exploratory Committee mtg. 6:30	20 Handbells 6p Lenten Bible study 6-7:30p	21 NO Trustees' mtg. NO Standing Committee meeting AA 7:30p	22 Adult choir 7p	23	24 Soup/Chill Supper 4-6p
25 Worship 9a, 10:30a Food distribution (following service)	26 Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p	27 Handbells 6p Lenten Bible study 6-7:30p	28 Creamery Brook 3p AA 7:30p			

Please note: Active church members who wish to borrow church property (tables, chairs) call the church office.



IMPORTANT INFORMATION:

SUNDAYS:

Morning worship, 9, 10:30 a.m.

9:00 a.m. service is web streamed.

Sunday School 8:45 a.m.

Coffee hour, 9:50 a.m., 11:30 a.m.

Kidz Praise: 10-10:25 a.m.

Senior Pilgrim Fellowship.

Check church worship folder

The newsletter is posted on our website:

prestoncitycongregational.org

DID YOU KNOW that our Faith Community

Nurse, Sandra Wright is available on the

First Sunday of each month, between

services in Room 18. You can drop in for a

quick blood pressure check or bring your

"health & wellness" questions along, too.

Her email address is:

SandraLMWright@gmail.com

WE ARE PLEASED to announce a special Bible

study program being held at the church through

the Lenten Season on Tuesday nights from

6:00-7:30 p.m. The first session is Tuesday,

February 20th. We will begin each session by

sharing a meal of bread and soup. After the meal

and fellowship, we will turn our attention to God's

word. Lent is a time of reflection and renewal; it is

a time of preparation for Easter. Throughout the

six weeks of Lent, the Bible study will cover weekly

aspects of the Christian life. A reading plan is

provided for daily reading and reflection

During the Bible study, we will review and discuss

the daily readings and their meaning for our journey

of faith. Everyone is welcome. You can pick up the

reading plan from the bulletin board outside Halls

Hall. If you have questions, please contact Scott

Van Alist (401-439-5520).