

THE PRESTON PILGRIM

The newsletter of
The Preston City
Congregational Church
Gathered 1698

**FEBRUARY
2017**

CHURCH ADDRESS
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WORSHIP

9:00 & 10:30 A.M.
(Sept. 11 - May 21)

SUNDAY SCHOOL

8:45 A.M.

EMAIL: PCCC@SNET.NET

WEBSITE: prestoncitycongregational.org

Visit us on **FACEBOOK**

News and information for the March newsletter is due in the church office by **February 19th**. You may leave information in the holder located on the wall in the kitchen.



PRACTICE HOSPITALITY!

The Bible has a lot to say on the subject of hospitality. Offering hospitality is a *moral imperative* in the Bible. Showing hospitality to those we know, and especially to those we do not know (the stranger) is a command; "practice hospitality" (Romans 12:13b). *It's not an option.*

Our building shows that we welcome the stranger. There's easy access to the church from every level. There's a ramp outside for those needing assistance, as well as an elevator inside. Both were not available 20 years ago. Some of our long-time members will recall the days when a wheel chair was lifted up the front steps on Sunday mornings to gain entrance to the Sanctuary. Thank God, those days are gone. The ramp and elevator say to those in need, "Welcome. We care about you. Come on in!" Maybe you never thought about it this way before.

While our building is welcoming to those with physical limitations, I'm not convinced that we (the congregation), are always welcoming of those who enter our doors. I do not believe that we show hospitality to ALL, especially the newcomer, the stranger.

Why do I mention this? Because I hope that when people read this message they will begin to practice hospitality if they are not already doing so. It's so important that we be a hospitable church; that's what Christ intended it to be like. I often hear from first-

time visitors, "Other than the person passing out the programs, no one said hi. No one welcomed me. It's like no one even cared that I was here."

Very recently, during a coffee hour, a couple made their way through the crowded room to exit the building. I watched as they maneuvered through the people. When they reached me, I extended my hand and said good morning and welcomed them to the church. Their first words to me were, "You're the first person to speak to us." I apologized on behalf of those in the room. The couple went on to say that they have the same problem in their home church. It shouldn't be this way in any church.

WHY is it SO difficult for people (especially church-going people) to practice hospitality? To welcome the newcomer and the stranger is to welcome Christ (Matthew 25).

How well do you practice hospitality on Sunday morning? Do you see the new face and offer words of welcome? Do you see only your circle of friends, or focus only on your family? There's nothing wrong with conversing with family and friends; just be aware of that new face or family who had the courage to come down for coffee in a room full of unfamiliar people, hoping to meet a welcoming face. Have you ever given thought to how others perceive our church?

I ask you, please look around you and see the newcomer, the stranger. Welcome them. Remember, you, too, were once a stranger in this church.

"Don't forget to show hospitality to strangers..."
(Heb 13:2)

Stay close to God,
P. J. ...

**DURING THE MONTH OF
DECEMBER & JANUARY**

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

December 18, *Kamdyn Matthew Day*, son of Eliza Hopkins and Mark Day of Preston.

December 25, *Carter Joseph Barrows*, son of Kayla Martin and Clifford Barrows.

January 22, *Isa Victoria Thompson*, daughter of Lacey & Corey Thompson of Huntington, MD.

January 29, *Regan Amelia Vajnar*, daughter of Valerie & Jared Vajnar of Uncasville.

January 29, *Ellie Annette Rowe*, daughter of Amy & Jonathan Rowe of Griswold.

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WE EXPRESSED OUR SYMPATHY to the family of *Robin Faulise* who passed from this life into eternity on January 18th. Our thoughts are with her family and friends, especially Robin's husband, Ted, son, T.J., and twin granddaughters.

WE EXPRESSED OUR SYMPATHY to the family of *Ronald "Mac" McCullough* who passed away on January 30th.

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THE AMERICAN FLAG

waving proudly on the annex lawn is given in memory of Floyd Merriam by Shirley & Don Walsh. We appreciate the Walsh's remembering others whenever a new flag is purchased.

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CHRISTMAS GIVING

Those working in the food pantry were so grateful to receive your donation of canned goods during the Advent season. How nice it was on Christmas Sunday to see box-after-box, bag-after-bag all around the Christmas tree in the Fessenden Foyer. Please know that what you did helped many in need. Thank you, so much!

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ANNUAL MEETING

You are invited and encouraged to attend the Annual Meeting of the church on Tuesday evening, February 14th. Coffee and refreshments will be available at 6:30 P.M. and the meeting will begin at 7 P.M. in Halls' Hall. Come and hear the happenings of 2016 and the hopes for 2017. Annual Reports will be available for your review on February 12th in the Information Center. If you're unable to get to the church to pick up a copy, please call the office and we will mail one to you.

MEN'S GROUP NEWS

You're invited to join with other men of the church for coffee, donuts, and conversation on Saturday morning, February 11th from 8-9:30 in the coffee hour room. This is a great way to meet and get to know other men in the church. For more information contact Ken Sebastian (860.887.4323) or Tim Bowles (860.889.9936). We hope to see you there!

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ASH WEDNESDAY

The beginning of Lent is March 1st. We mark the start of the Lenten season with a Prayer Vigil in the Sanctuary from noon until 6 P.M. followed by a communion service at 7. For the vigil, we ask individuals to sign-up to pray for 15 minutes in the Sanctuary; a prayer list will be provided. If you would like to submit a prayer request, please fill out a form by the upper level elevator and place it in the box nearby. You will also find a box with forms on the Information Center table. Plan to take part in these quiet, reflective, and meaningful Ash Wednesday events.

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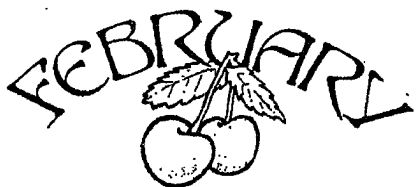
FEBRUARY IS SCHOLARSHIP MONTH

Our church scholarship fund was established in 1992, following the passing of church member, Helen Benjamin. After nearly two decades, many scholarships have been presented to deserving young people in our congregation *thanks to your generosity!* The fund has been renamed *The Helen & Winthrop Benjamin Scholarship Fund* to honor and remember these wonderful church members who cared a lot about children and young people in our church family.

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 has helped them reach their goal.

We ask the 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 listing of all donors (no amounts) will be listed in the worship folder on Scholarship Sunday (June 11th). 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. They bring life and joy to the church. Let's show them how much we care for them and their future aspirations. Please give as you are able.



CONFIRMATION SUNDAY

Six young people plan to join the church on February 12th, (10:30) through the Rite of Confirmation. These ninth grade students have been meeting with Mrs. Dudek and Rev. Stan since September preparing for this special day. Join them and their parents as they become our newest church members.

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FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY

FPU will be offered again beginning March 7th, starting at 6:30 P.M. many people have already registered with FPU coordinator, Bob Vescovi. The course is taught by Dave Ramsey via DVD. The course is \$93 per married couple or single adult. Speak with Bob on Sunday morning (by the TV) in the coffee hour room if you have questions, or call him at 401.583.7840. This program has helped so many people, here at the church and around the country. Consider taking part in this worthwhile and life-changing nine-week course.

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WEB STREAMING NEWS

If you're interested in learning how to operate the web streaming equipment, contact Jim Wright (860.535.2709). He'll tell you what you need to know, show you what you need to do, and give you the opportunity to experience the various jobs in a hands-on manner. Several people have already come forward to see what's involved in producing our Sunday morning (9 A.M.) service. We're still looking for a few more volunteers. We thank the web streaming volunteers who have been involved in this important outreach ministry since June. Consider getting involved.

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2016 BUDGET NEWS

I have been your treasurer for the past 2 ½ years, and I would like to share an observation with you. Even though I have worked with business and governmental accounting for many years, this church is like no other. Each year we do a "pledge" drive for the new year, and even though the numbers have been consistent, they don't meet our budget. I used to worry about how the church would meet the new budget, and what happens if we don't? What I have come to realize is, this is a place of FAITH, not a business, club, or organization. We come together to do God's work and He blesses us in many ways, one being the continuation of this church. This year, with a budget of \$240,151.00, we received \$17,000.00 more and under-spent the budget by \$16,699 leaving us with a balance in the **BLACK**. This is not the first time this has happened, and I'm sure it won't be the last. All I can say is WOW, all things are possible with God! --Shirley Hodkinson

**GREAT
JOB!**

CAN YOU HELP?

From time-to-time, people/families in our congregation are in need of a home-cooked meal. Maybe it's following a hospital stay, or when a baby is born, or upon the passing of a loved one, etc. If you're interested in helping out with this important outreach, please call meal coordinator Lois Woodmansee at 860.889.2128. *Thank you*

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SCARECROW NEWS

We are very excited to start planning for this year's Scarecrow Festival. Did you know it takes around 225 volunteers to make this event a success? The committee is looking to change-up the **Crow's Nest** this year. Maybe you and a few friends, or family members are interested? We're also looking for someone for the **Pumpkin Patch**. If you have a crafty mind, and like working with children, this is the committee for you! You get to pick the crafts the children will make during the festival. The **Chili/Chowder booth** needs someone to make chili and chowder. How about you? If you would like more information about volunteering, please contact Joy (860.234.1011) or Bob (401.583.7840).

We're looking to bring back **Circle K Farm animals** again this year; everyone enjoyed them. The committee is seeking donations to offset the cost of \$800. If you would like to help, please make your check payable to the *Scarecrow Festival* with a note in the memo section stating that your check is for the animals.

Thanks for your support of the festival!

Joy and Bob, Co-Chairs

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BIBLE STUDY

Save your Monday mornings for an interesting, informative, and educational gathering with others! We meet in Halls' Hall from 10 -11 A.M. We're beginning a new video study, "*The Story of Heaven*" led by Max Lucado and Randy Frazee. They will lead us through a three-week study about heaven and hope. Plan to attend whatever week fits your schedule. As always, the coffee pot will be on! Rev. Stan will lead the study.

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YOU'RE INVITED

A series of six hands-on cooking experiences for individuals or families is being offered here at the church on Thursday evenings from 4:30-6:30, once a week starting March 9th. The program will be facilitated by UConn Extension EFNEP (Expanded Food and Nutrition Education Program). We'll be making and eating healthy, affordable, and delicious food. The program is free but registration is required. Please contact Robin Whitely at 860.885.2821 or robin.whitely@uconn.edu We thank Robin and UConn for offering these classes.



The Preston Junior Pilgrim



Preston City Congregational Church Sunday School Newsletter

FROM THE DIRECTOR OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION:



COMING SOON... "TELL ME YOUR STORY"... This bulletin board will be under construction within the next few weeks, so named by the Sunday School High School Class. It is in the Information Center Hallway and will feature pictures and interviews that the class has had with seniors from our congregation. The first one that they did this January was "awesome" I am told. The interview was with **Bill and Jean Muttart**. Our seniors have a lot of life experiences and stories to tell that will be so meaningful to our young people. Most anyone with any age has lived through the bad and the good, things they thought they could never make it through, and live to tell about it. Has having faith made a difference? I can bet it did. Be sure to be watching for the Muttart's story on the bulletin board.

WHAT IS your story? Everyone has a story and only God knows it all. God knows everything about you and loves you with all your successes and failures. What peace it can bring to one's soul to know this. If you do, why not share this "good news" with someone who does not know Christ or someone who is feeling down this winter. Share your faith, invite them to church. Connect with them. Cell phones do not replace a face to face conversation, facebook, although very popular, does not always present the truth. If you post on it, ask yourself, "is it kind", "will any good be served by posting this", "will it be hurtful to anyone"...think about it. God wants His children to live lives of joy and light. I like what Maltbie D. Babcock (1858-1901) writes in "*God's Boundless Love*" (1st verse of 5): "God's boundless love! As arching sky

Above us when we wake and sleep,
Above us when we smile and weep,
Above us when we live and die."

"He that keepeth thee will not slumber." Psalm 121:3

THIS VALENTINE'S DAY when "romantic" love is generally highlighted, let's be sure that those in our lives know just how much we love them and more important than that how much God loves them without end. "**GOD IS LOVE.**" 1 John 4:8 (Our Toddler 4 Class Goal is to learn this verse!)

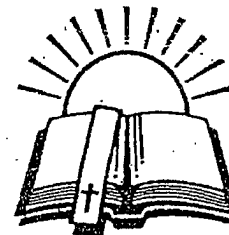
May the SONshine through me,

Sandy Dudek



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." (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 Dudek 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.

ON CONFIRMATION SUNDAY six young people will become members of this church. They are: Elizabeth Bartoshevich, Lindsay Bernier, Kiana Burdick, Jonathan Daniewicz, Jessica Lavoie, and Haley Price. We hope you will be at worship on **February 12th** (10:30) to witness and celebrate this very special day in their lives and in our church. They give me great hope for the future of the Congregational church!

THE APPRECIATION DINNER for all youth volunteers which includes our teachers, the Board of Religious Education, Youth Choirs leaders, and Youth Group leaders is scheduled for **Saturday, February 25th at 6:00 p.m. in Halls' Hall**. This event is held to show our appreciation to those who serve in all our youth ministries in our church. Many food items are needed for this; monetary donations are helpful as well (paper goods, entertainment, etc.) A full course turkey dinner is served complete with homemade pies followed by a short entertainment program. Help will be needed to prepare the meal. There is a signup sheet on the Information Center Bulletin Board or you may call Sandy who is coordinating this event to offer your help (860.887.4647). These volunteers give so much of themselves to make our church appealing to children and youth, this is a small way to give a big message of THANKS!



DOOR MONITORS

Volunteers are needed for especially during the 10:30 service. Please lend a hand if you able. All the details pertaining to door monitors are posted on the Information Center bulletin board. Contact Lowell Calkins if you have any questions (860.887.5939). *Thanks!*

LOOKING AHEAD TO MARCH

- 1st, Ash Wednesday Prayer Vigil
- 11th, Meatloaf Supper
- 12th, Daylight Saving Time begins. Turn your clocks ahead one hour.
- 25th, Lasagna Supper (a fundraising event by the Pilgrim Fellowship)

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VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL... is scheduled for **July 10th-14th**. Please make a note of this date when planning vacations. If you would have an interest in directing VBS this summer, please speak to Sandy Dudek. The curriculum will soon be chosen. The children so look forward to this summer activity. Everyone including the teens and adults involved have a great week.



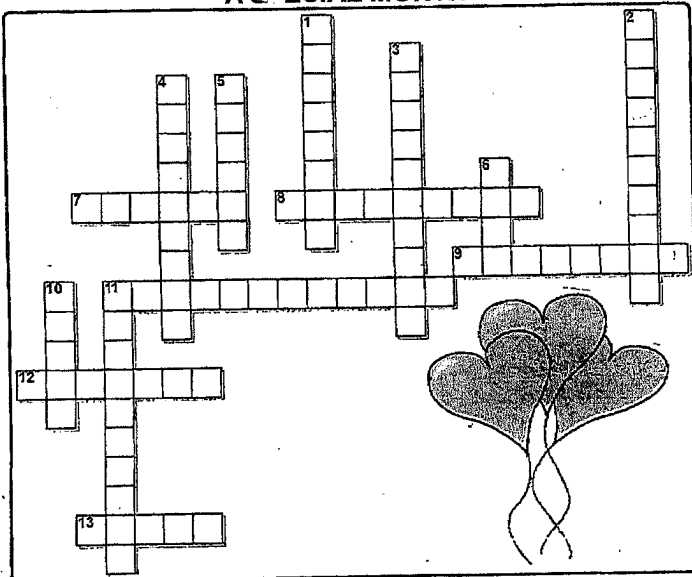
THE SENIOR PILGRIM FELLOWSHIP has planned an Ice Skating activity this month on **Sunday, February 12th from 1:00-4:00 p.m.** They will meet at the church and travel to the Norwich Rose Garden Ice Rink. Someone in the church donated tickets so the only cost will be \$4 if you need to rent skates and money for snacks. Questions, call Scott or Lisa Van Alst (860.230.9947 or Lisa on her cell (860.710.1262). You can get a consent form from the Van Alsts or call the church office. If you are in grades 9-12 you are invited to participate.

THE SENIOR P.F. also participated in a New Year's Ball here at the church which contained a large saran wrap ball with prizes in it. Word has it that it was lots of fun. Thank you Lisa and Scott and Liz Stammel for coming up with such a unique idea for our youth.

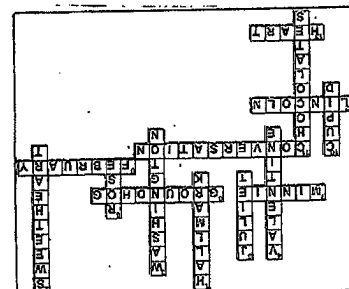
ENVELOPES similar to those the adults use for worship are available to the children. Please ask me if you'd like a box for your child. The Sunday School is self-supporting so even if your child attends church in the summertime, when the offering is placed in a Sunday School envelope, it is given to the Board of Religious Education treasurer.

THE SCRIP PROGRAM is an ongoing fundraiser that greatly benefits the youth missions trips program. Scrip (debit) cards are available to purchase for hundreds of stores, gas stations, donut shops, bookstores, grocery stores, etc. where you do business. You do not pay any extra amount to purchase these cards; however, the youth missions will receive a percentage back that varies according to the business. For example...if you purchase a Macy's card for \$100.00, youth missions will be rewarded 10% for the sale...no charge to you, but profit to the program; WalMart is 2%, Stop & Shop 4%, etc. Cards can be purchased for varying amounts. Sheets with participating businesses listed are available in the Information Center. Checks to purchase these cards should be made out to "PCCC Youth Missions". If you have questions, call coordinators Jerry & Cheryl Giuliano (860-376-8901).

A SPECIAL MONTH



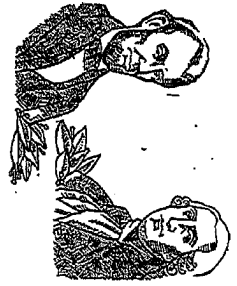
- Across:
- 7 Mickey Mouse's valentine
 - 8 Be on the lookout February 2nd
 - 9 This month has 28 days
 - 11 These candy hearts have messages on them
 - 12 A President known for abolishing slavery
 - 13 A symbol for Valentine's Day
- Down:
- 1 The card company that sells the most Valentines
 - 2 "Let me call you _____"
 - 3 Fact or fiction, this President cut down a cherry tree
 - 4 Agreeing of love sent in February
 - 5 Romeo & ???
 - 6 A popular Valentine's Day flower
 - 10 A winged child shooting love arrows
 - 11 A popular Valentine's Day candy



Crossword Solution



FEBRUARY 2017

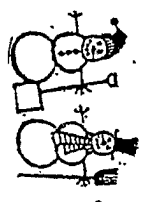


Sun Mon Tue Wed Thu Fri Sat

<p>To place flowers in church during February, call Joyce Brewster (860.376.4167)</p>	<p>Please check with Rev. Stan or Sandy before using our names as references. This courtesy would be appreciated.</p>	<p>LOST OR FOUND There is a basket in the Information Center next to the table.</p>	<p>1 AA 7:30p</p>	<p>2 Adult choir 7p</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4 Motorcycle Riders meeting 9a Soup/Chill Supper CANCELLED!</p>
<p>5 Communion worship 9, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a SS Communion 9:05a Adult choir sings 9a *Wo-Can Sunday*</p>	<p>6 Bible study 10a Confirmation 6:30p Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>7 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30a Handbells 6p Bible study 6-7p</p>	<p>8 St. Jude worship 11a AA 7:30p</p>	<p>9 Adult choir 7p</p>	<p>10 Newcomers Dinner 6p</p>	<p>11 Men's Group 8-9:30a Sr. Pilgrim Fellowship ice skating 1-4p Meal PCCC</p>
<p>12 Worship 9a, 10:30a Sunday School 8:45a Confirmation Sunday 10:30a Eagle Scout Bake Sale</p>	<p>13 Bible study 10a Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>14 Friends & Family Café 8-30a Handbells 6p No Board of Rel. Ed. Annual meeting re-freshments 6:30p Annual meeting 7p NO Bible study</p>	<p>16A NO Trustees' meeting NO Standing Comm. meeting AA 7:30p</p>	<p>16 Adult choir 7p</p>	<p>17</p>	<p>18</p>
<p>19 Worship 9, 10:30a - Adult choir sings 9a Baptism 10:30a</p>	<p>20 Presidents Day Office closed NO Bible study Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>21 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30a Handbells 6p Bible study 6-7p</p>	<p>22 Creamery Brook worship 3p AA 7:30p</p>	<p>23 Adult choir 7p</p>	<p>24</p>	<p>25 Youth Volunteers Appreciation Dinner 6p</p>
<p>26 Worship 9, 10:30a Food distribution Sunday following worship</p>	<p>27 Bible study 10a Yoga 6:30p</p>	<p>28 Friends & Family Café 9-11:30a Handbells 6p Bible study 6-7p</p>	<p>JANUARY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30 31</p> <p>FEBRUARY S M T W T F S 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17 18 19 20 21 22 23 24 25 26 27 28 29 30</p>	<p>Please note: active church members who wish to borrow church property (tables, chairs), call the church office.</p>		

IMPORTANT INFORMATION:
SUNDAYS:
 Morning worship, 9, 10:30 a.m.
 Sunday School 8:45 a.m.
 Coffee hour, 9:50 a.m., 11:30 a.m.
 Children's Choir: 10-10:25 a.m.
 Youth Choir: 10-10:25 a.m.
 Senior Pilgrim Fellowship
 Check church bulletin
 The newsletter is posted on our website:
 presoncitycongregational.org

DDD 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:
 Sandra.MWright@gmail.com



INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS: Tune in to Television Channel 3 or you may check Facebook or our website: presoncitycongregational.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.