



The Preston Pilgrim

the monthly
newsletter of the
Preston City
Congregational
Church

"Gathering in Faith Since 1698"

SEPTEMBER 2026

Church Office Hours:
Mon– Fri 9AM – Noon
Minister Office Hours:
Mon, Tu, Thu 10A - 2P

CLOSED
SEPTEMBER 7
LABOR DAY

Minister

Reverend Thomas, Burke, Jr.
203-297-0254
pastortompccc@gmail.com

Minister Emeritus

Rev. Stan White - 860 303-9622
sewhite3022@gmail.com

Have a question? Need help?

Please call: The Office
860 887-4647 or 860 886-7200

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.



Join us September 6th for our
last Lemonade on the Lawn
of the year following our
service.



Coffee Fellowship

Join us in Halls' Hall
for fellowship, coffee
and punch beginning
September 13th.

FROM THE DESK OF REV. TOM...

There is something about September that always feels like a new beginning. The backpacks come out, school buses return to the roads, summer vacations come to an end, and suddenly our calendars seem to fill up overnight.

As a father, I always notice this transition. There is something both exciting and a little bittersweet about watching our children get ready for another school year. They are growing, learning, becoming more independent and somehow doing it much faster than I would prefer! Thomas started Pre-K this year and Archie is making new friends in preschool.

September reminds me that life is full of seasons. Some are busy, some are quiet. Some we look forward to, while others arrive before we are quite ready for them. And every time the season changes, we have an opportunity to ask ourselves what we want to carry with us and what we might be ready to leave behind.

I think that is one of the gifts of our faith: we are always allowed to begin again. We do not have to have everything figured out. We do not have to pretend that the past didn't happen. We simply trust that God is still at work in us, and that there is always more life ahead.

Sometimes beginning again looks like something dramatic. But more often it is something small. Being a little more patient. Offering forgiveness. Calling someone we have been meaning to call. Trying one more time. Making room for something new.

And maybe that is what I hope for us as we begin this new season together. Every Sunday when we gather, we get another chance to begin again. We bring through those doors everything the week has given us. Our joys, our worries, our questions, our exhaustion—and we discover that we don't have to carry any of it alone.

That is what I love about this church. We don't come together because we have everything figured out. We come because we need one another, and because we believe that God's grace is big enough to meet us exactly where we are. As September begins, I hope you will take a moment to notice where God might be inviting you to begin again.

Maybe there is something you need to let go of. Maybe there is something you have been afraid to try. Maybe you simply need to be reminded that you are loved. The leaves will soon begin to change, the days will grow shorter, and another season will arrive. But through all of it, God's love remains.

So let us step into September together with open hearts, a little courage, and maybe a bit of patience for those school buses that are about to make us all late for work. I am grateful to be walking into another season with you.

God Bless
Rev. Tom

The September Church Meeting is scheduled for September 20, 2026 at 10:45A. All may attend, however, only church members may vote.

Sue Brosnan, Clerk

FROM THE CHURCH OFFICE



A funeral service will be held for Kathleen St. Germain-Rabon on Saturday, September 5, 2026 at 10A.



A PATRIOT GRAVE MARKING CEREMONY was held at the Poquetanuck Cemetery hosted by The Connecticut Society Sons of the American Revolution on August 22nd. It was commemorating the 250th Anniversary of the American Revolution 1775-1783.

I was so happy to be able to attend this wonderful patriotic event with my husband and some others from the church. Preston City Congregational Church was one of the sponsors of this event which honored and remembered 9 patriots interred in this cemetery who served in the cause of American Independence. The following were the patriots honored that day with a permanent marker in the soil that would not be easy to steal like the previous markers that were there. The following patriots were honored that day: Pvt Daniel Adams, Pvt James Avery, Pvt William Billings, Pvt Joseph Chapman, Cpl Robert Geer, CAPT John Lamb, Surg Mate Prosper Rose, Pvt Abel Spicer, Cpl Daniel Thomas. There are short biographies in the program given out that day that I have in the office.

Fred Potter, President of the Poquetanuck Cemetery Association did an excellent job in his research to make this event meaningful. The keynote speaker was State Senator Heather Somers who is a descendent of Connecticut Declaration of Independence Signer and Patriot Roger Sherman. She was an excellent speaker, very interesting and informative.

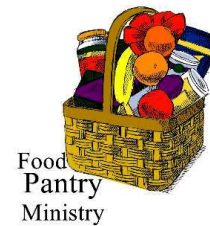
At the end of their program, It said: *Until we meet again, let us remember our obligations to our forefathers who gave us our Constitution, the Bill of Rights, an independent Supreme Court and a nation of free men.* Respectfully submitted, Sandy Dudek

REMEMBER - INCLEMENT WEATHER CANCELLATIONS

can refer to many situations. If you are unsure if the church is open, follow the instructions below. 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.

Active members who wish to borrow items from the church (chairs, tables), please check with the office. They may have been requested by someone else! There is now a form to fill out to help keep track of borrowed items.

TWO CAN FOOD PANTRY



OUR ITEM-OF-THE-MONTH FOR SEPTEMBER is CEREAL. Did you know cereal is the most requested item at food pantries? Not only a good way to start the day, cereal makes a great snack as well!

Thoughts from a Friend...

Overheard one Sunday morning: "That was a great sermon today on patience," one friend commented to another as they walked to their cars after church. "Yeah," the other agreed, "but it was 5 minutes too long."

SUNDAY SCHOOL UPDATE

Mrs. Megan and Mrs. Liz are excited for a new Sunday School year to start on September 13th! The



teachers had a meeting and the classrooms are set up for all of the children to start. We wrapped up the summer with a successful movie night watching *Monsters University* and a Blessings of the Backpack ceremony!

- If you haven't already done so, please register for Sunday School by following this link: <https://forms.gle/EtPBq14jrgawfQMd6>
- Did you know that the Sunday School has a Facebook page? Follow us and hear all about the events, lessons and activities the children of our church are up to! <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=61593065654667>

Keep Shining God's Light,
Mrs. Megan & Mrs. Liz

BOARD OF RELIGIOUS EDUCATION NEWS

The Board of Religious Education would like to congratulate and welcome the new co-directors Liz Stammel and Megan Linevitch! We're looking forward to an exciting Sunday School year! We would also like to extend a huge thank you to Hunter for filling in as interim director over the last couple of months!

WOMEN'S FELLOWSHIP UPDATE

Last Saturday, on 8/08, the Women's Fellowship created 46 Kindness Bags for the Food Pantry to hand out. Thank you to all the ladies who so generously donated items for this effort.



Book Club

The Book Club is currently reading "Somehow: Thoughts on Love" by Anne Lamott. The next meeting will be held on September 5th at 10:00 AM at the church to discuss the book.

Food Pantry Birthday Bundles

Each October, we create "Birthday Bundles" for the Food Pantry, and it is never too soon to start collecting items. Please place your donations in the wooden chest located in the hallway between Halls' Hall and Dudek Hall. What is a Birthday Bundle? A birthday bundle is a package containing all the essentials a family needs to bake a cake and celebrate a child's or family member's special day.

Standard Bundle Contents

- **Boxed cake mix** and a container of frosting
- **12 oz can of soda** (like Sprite or ginger ale), which replaces eggs, oil, and water in the mix
- **9x13 disposable foil pan** to hold the items and bake the cake
- **Birthday candles**
- **A small note** or recipe card explaining the soda-substitution trick

There are also sugar-free cake and frosting mixes available, as well as gluten-free cake mix!

FALL RETREAT

This year's Women's Fall Retreat at Camp Monadnock is Oct. 16-18th. Last year, three of us attended the retreat. It was the 1st time we had attended a Christian retreat. Each of us enjoyed it very much and will be returning this year. Register by Sept. 16 to secure the \$265 rate. Beginning Sept. 17th, registration increases to \$280. If you have any question about the retreat or the camp please see Bridget Park, Koren Jopson or Donna McClimon. Please consider joining us. The camp is a short 2-hour drive from Preston. The link below will take you directly to their website. Bridget Park monadnock.camp/womensretreats



MEN'S GROUP

The Men's Group next meeting is Saturday September 12th at 10A.



Summer choir continues through Sept 6. Packets of music are available on the small table in the main entrance. We will practice at 9A in the large meeting room before our Sunday service. Everyone is welcome to join as we sing some familiar hymns. Regular choir resumes on Sept. 13 (which is the Sunday after Labor Day).

See Organist/Choir Director Trish Maerkle or call (860) 705-5391 for more information.

News from the Scarecrow Festival Committee



September 26, 2026 will soon be here and our volunteer lists are ready for you to sign up! Are you available to help for an hour or two? Check the sign-up sheets to choose your time slots and where you would like to help.

Have you started building your scarecrow yet?

We are collecting items to build the best, most creative, and accessorized scarecrows and we are asking for donations of the following:

Old clothes
Hats
Costumes
Gloves
Tights
Accessories
Artificial flowers and vines
Stuffing material

And anything else that you think may contribute to a prize-winning scarecrow. All donations can be deposited in the TRUNK, which is next to the information table outside Halls' Hall.



STRAWBERRY PARK BINGO

Come join the fun!

Our sessions are winding down but, help is still needed selling the cards the players use.

A Personal Identification Number (PIN) is no longer necessary to help!

Just check the list of available dates posted on our bulletin board, pick your date, and sign up! For more information contact Lee Ann Fessenden or Lisa Fessenden.

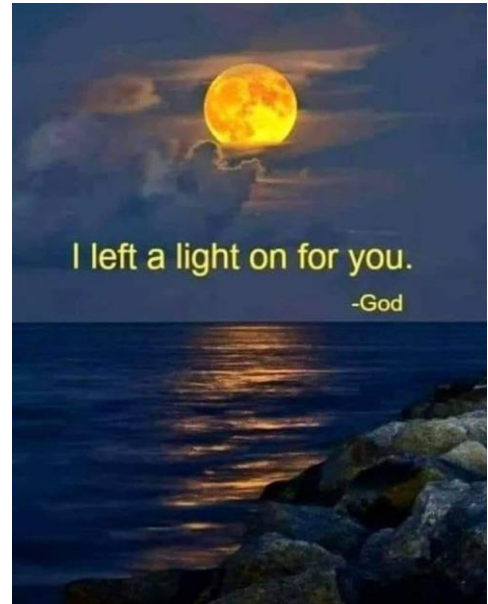
Thank you to those who sign up to assist and continue to make this a successful mission for our church.

THE FALL YARD SALE is scheduled for Saturday October 3rd from 8A – 2P. Rain date is Saturday October 10th. Donations will be accepted starting September 3rd – no bulky items, air conditioners, clothing, or tires. No items

should be left outside the church or annex. See Stella Dawley to arrange to drop items off. All items should be clean before bringing them. Help is needed at 6:00 a.m. for set-up and at 1:30 p.m. to begin pickup. Pickup trucks are needed. Please sign up on the hallway bulletin board if you can help.

THE CHRISTMAS BAZAAR

The date for this year's Christmas Bazaar is going to be November 14th, so mark your calendars. First, we need to get through our Scarecrow Festival. But please put aside any gently used toys, decorations, handmade items, or gift items you may want to donate for the bazaar this year. Thank you so much, Nancy Obreiter.



THE NOMINATING COMMITTEE will begin seeking candidates to fill the many positions in our church. Now is time to ask yourself "How can I help to keep my church moving forward?" "What talents do I have that can be shared with my church?" It takes many people to keep our church running smoothly throughout the year. Please consider serving in one of the open positions when they are announced. The current list of Boards and Committees can be found on our website and what they do can be found in our bylaws or by talking with a member of the committee you are interested in. Ask them what they do! There are positions that our friends may fill as well, where church membership is not required. We welcome everyone!



The Office will be CLOSED
for the holiday, Monday, September 7th.