

First Presbyterian Church of Stirling



150th Anniversary—Archive Sunday

A Search Through the Archives

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Archive Sunday, November 26, 2023

Today let's go on a journey through the archives of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. This year marks the church's 150th anniversary as a Presbyterian Church in the town of Stirling.

Our Church has a history dating back to the 1870s. We have kept track of the highlights in the life of our church and its members in numerous scrapbooks over the past several decades. These scrapbooks are kept in the Church library in Pollard Hall. Below is a brief history of the beginning of our church as was recorded in 1875.

"The first preaching service in Stirling proper was held on the morning of the first Sunday in February, 1872 in a new store near the depot, when Mr. Grant preached from 1st Corinthians 2:2, to an audience of 17.

June 19th, 1873, 24 people signed a pledge to become members of a Presbyterian Church at Stirling, NJ, as soon as it can be in due form organized, to be under the care of the Presbytery of Morris and Orange. This pledge, meeting the approval of the Morris and Orange Church Executive Committee, that committee was called to meet at Stirling July 9th, 1873, at two o'clock P.M., to organize a Presbyterian church. Nineteen letters were presented. The letters were accepted and the church consisting of nineteen members was duly organized. Rev. Henry M. Grant was called as the church's first pastor.

On July 19th, 1874, the chapel being fully completed, was solemnly dedicated to God, virtually free from debt. It was a delightful and inspiring occasion. "With devout gratitude did we as people and Pastor then recognize, 'Hitherto hath the Lord helped us!'" — Rev. Henry M. Grant, September 20, 1975

So, we come together to celebrate our 150th with a special journey through our archives during coffee hour this morning. We hope you will get a plate of delicious goodies and browse the many archive binders and artifacts that have been maintained through the years by many members of the church, especially Irma Mikulyak, the original member who started this collection of history. Now, turn to the next page and see how many things you know about our church through the years. Have fun hunting and browsing the archives. Feel free to work with a friend!

ARCHIVE SUNDAY - HISTORICAL QUESTIONS—See how many you know!

1. Are you aware that at one time we had dogs in downstairs Pollard Hall?
2. What special type of wedding did we have in 1951?
3. Did we ever have a shipwreck in Pollard Hall?
4. In which Stirling store did our church hold services for a year?
5. Did you know the women of the church wrote a song at retreat?
6. How many retreats did the women have at Johnsonburg? When was the first retreat?
7. Who turned over the 1st, shovel of ground to build the addition to Pollard Hall?
8. Who was our first woman elder?
9. Who was the longest serving Pastor of First Presbyterian Church of Stirling?
10. Did we ever celebrate with a Seder supper on Maundy Thursday?
11. Who made our kneeling bench and has maintained our church sign over the years?
12. Did you know that through our Deacon's efforts, the Township Sr. Citizens group got its start?
13. Also did you know a committee of our church members started the project for "Fair Housing for Senior Citizens?"
14. What are church cherubs?
15. Did we ever have a couple's club?
16. The Men's Group used to do annual Spaghetti Dinners in Pollard Hall. In 1999, who was the manager of the men for this occasion?
17. When the Long Hill Senior Center was constructed there were many volunteers as they positioned the A-frames. Which of our past ministers was part of the volunteers?
18. Did you know beginning in 2008, the nursery school that runs in the lower level of the church complex was renamed to be The Long Hill Montessori School. What was the original name of the school?
19. Who was the church secretary before Paulette Irlander?

20. Who was the church treasurer after Carolyn Karthaus? This gentleman held this position for nine years!
21. What annual event was held on the church grounds during mid-December that usually involved hot cider and hot cocoa afterwards?
22. Who is currently (2023) the longest attending member at this time?
23. Did we ever work with the Morristown Habitat for Humanity to build a house? What year – 2000, 2002, 2004?
24. Who were the two members of the church who took a trans-American bike trip across the country in 1998? They also biked from Millington to Cape May and back in the summer of 1983. Check the archives for the answer.
25. Who wrote “Stirling on the Hill” for our church and when is it usually played? Hint: Check the archives for 1998.
26. Did we ever have a youth car wash in the church parking lot? When was the last one held?
27. Did the youth of our church ever go rafting on the Delaware River in the Poconos? If so, who went? Hint: check the archives for 2001.
28. Who was the speech therapist and also a church member who, along with her partner (Carol Gray), created an instructional video “Oral Aerobics” to help actor Kirk Douglas after he had a stroke in 1996? Check for the article in the 1999 archive book.
29. In 1999 who was the church member who was the treasurer of the Long Hill Historical Society?
30. Which church members created the beautiful banners that hang in the sanctuary of our church? Hint: check the 2001 archive book.
31. Did you know that a member of our church had a renowned quilt collection on display at the church on March 20, 1999? Who was this member?
32. What special dedication was held on June 6, 1999, during a worship service at church?
33. Did you know that our Travnicek Memorial Bell Ringers had several concerts together with another church? Name the other church from the 2012 archive book.
34. At the turn of the century, in the year 2000, what was another special dedication that was held at our church?

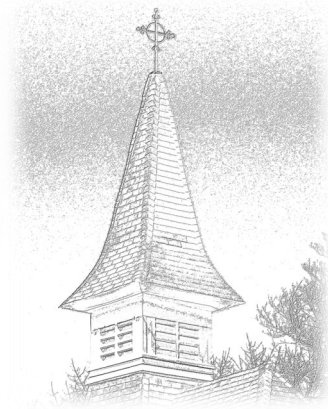
35. How did members of the church come dressed to the service on June 14, 1998?
What was the special occasion?
36. Did you know that in June 2002, Rev. Peters blessed a communion cloth with Joan Dennick which was later presented to our sister church in Nairobi, Kenya? What was the name of that church?
37. Did you know Rev. Peters participated annually in the Remembrance Service at the Shrine of St. Joseph each year on September 11th?
38. Did you know that one Archive Sunday was celebrated along with Mother's Day? The Men's group had a special coffee hour for the moms and the Worship Committee created the display of the Archives for all to view. Which year was this done – 2002, 2003, or 2004?
39. Did you know in the year 2003, a long-time member of our church was honored for his service in the Korean War? Who was this member?
40. Who were the two church members who grew up in Chatham, were classmates in kindergarten, and later married?
41. Did you know our church housed an office of RSVP (Retired Senior Volunteer Program) for many years? Who was the church member who served 30 years with RSVP and was recognized in December 2003 for her work.
42. Did you know that the women of the church held many annual cookie exchanges during the Christmas season? Find a picture in December 2003.
43. Did you know that for many years our church annually held a Spring Cleanup Day to spruce up the church property. These days were organized by the building and grounds group. Who helped at the April 25, 2004 cleanup day?
44. Which member of our church later became a member of Brothers of the Beloved Disciple in SanAntonio, Texas, was ordained on May 29, 2004 and then had his first homecoming mass at St. Vincent de Paul church on July 16 of that year?
45. Did you know that after 94 years, the Long Hill Women's Club had to disband because of aging and dwindling membership. When in 2004 did their last gathering occur?
46. Did you know for many, many years, our church was known for its Christmas Pageants held during the Christmas season. Check out pictures from those held in 2005 and 2012.

47. Did you know that Rev. Peters spent some time in Kenya visiting the Kamae Church and other places of interest? What month did he go to Kenya in 2006?
48. Did you know that we held a special Mardi Gras celebration at FPCS on February 26, 2006? Check out the fun pics of those who attended.
49. Rev. Peters was known for the work he did to encourage local churches, synagogues, and mosques to get together for interfaith services. Did you know he participated in a Community of Faith service at St. Vincent de Paul church for Morris, Union, and Somerset counties in October 2006? Check out the pictures and news articles in the archive book for 2006.
50. Did you know members of our church got together in 2006 to hold a fun Halloween Party at FPCS? Check the archive books for super pictures of the costumes. Who came dressed as Rev. Tom and who came dressed as William Wallace from Braveheart?
51. Check out the pictures and statements of Faith from the big confirmation class of May 2007. There were eight students involved.
52. MPC and FPCS were known to challenge each other each year for a friendly game of what sport? Check out the pics from 2007 and 2011 for pictures of this fun event.
53. Did you know the members of our church often volunteered at the Hillside Community Food Bank? See pictures from two such occasions from January and August 2008.
54. Which church member earned his pilot's license on June 26, 2007?
55. Which church member won a prize worth \$3500 from the Millington Savings Bank during their 100th anniversary celebration as described in the Echoes Sentinel article of July 28th, 2011?
56. Did you know that several members of our church got together on many occasions to attend a baseball game at the local Patriots stadium in Bridgewater, NJ? Check out the pictures and note some of the attendees at the games from August 2011 and August 2012.
57. Did you know one of our young members started a local band, "Root Glen," and played in eateries around town in May 2011? Who was this young member of our church?
58. Did you know that our church along with Meyersville Presbyterian and Trinity United held many joint soup suppers? Check the article from February 2012 describing one of those series.
59. What year is on the cornerstone of the church?
60. Did you know the church building has been declared a historic site? Check the plaque

hanging on the outside the building by the front doors to the sanctuary.

61. How is the front of the church different from the original structure? Can you find a picture showing the difference?
62. What shape does the interior of the sanctuary make? Hint: Stand by the vestibule and look inside. Remember to include the two wings right and left of the chancel.
63. Did you know the original church sanctuary had no center aisle as it does today? Why?
64. How many ministers do you remember serving at First Presbyterian Church of Stirling, including Rev. Stefanie Muntzel, our current pastor. Name them. (Hint: check out the third edition of "A History of The First Presbyterian Church Stirling, New Jersey.")
65. Who wrote the first edition of our pamphlet, "A History of The First Presbyterian Church Stirling, New Jersey?" The second edition? The third edition?
66. Who was the first pastor of our church, First Presbyterian Church of Stirling?
67. Did you know that at one time there were two services here at Stirling—one at 9:30 am and the other at 11:00 am and two Sunday School sessions as well? When did this occur?
68. What was the reason behind the 1963 addition in the rear of the sanctuary at a cost of \$60,000?
69. The Pollard Hall addition (first floor and basement) was added in 1947-48. Who provided the majority of the funds and in whose memory was it dedicated?
70. What was the Y.M.C.A. building that sat on the part of the parking lot nearest to the church.

We hope you enjoyed learning a little more about our church, First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. We have had a very interesting 150 years—filled with ups and downs that have challenged each generation of members. Here's to our next 150 years!



First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

158 Central Avenue

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Our Mission:

Jesus said, "Feed My Sheep." This welcoming and caring family, empowered by the love of Christ, shares the grace and peace of God's blessings by serving those who are hungry in body or spirit.