



Stirling Stuff

Pastor's Letter



Now that we hopefully have our basements dried out, we can look ahead to the beginning of Spring. It seems that after a winter of a lot of snow for us Spring is in a hurry to get here. With all of the rain in March, we've moved the old saying up a month: "March showers bring April flowers." The Magnolia tree in the Memorial Garden has big buds on it just ready to pop, so be sure to check it out, as the blossoms are so fragrant.

In April, our lectionary reminds us of the impact of that first Easter. It was so big that it takes a whole season to probe its depths. In the season of Easter, which lasts for seven Sundays, the Old Testament readings are replaced with readings from the book of Acts. This reminds us that Easter was a sign of God's love and continued presence which culminates in the Pentecost event. So the readings from Acts describe the struggles of the early Church to come to grips with what it meant to be the Church of Jesus Christ. There were religious questions and political struggles as the Church tried to organize and define itself in the midst of great persecution from both the Roman and Jewish authorities. The season of Easter is a good time for us to consider what it means to be the Church today. I will be preaching a series in April entitled, *The Function of the Church of Jesus Christ*. The idea for this series came from a sermon I did in 2008 when I shared four questions by John Dominic Crossan.

1. *What is the character of your God?*
2. *What is the content of your faith?* I talked about this last year during the season of Easter in a series based on the Apostles' Creed
3. *What is the function of your church?* The series this month is based on this question.
4. *What is the purpose of your worship?* I plan to do a short series on this sometime in the next year.

I hope you will join me for this series. I believe it is important for us to consider this question from time to time that we might be open to new ways of being the Church.

Enjoy the blooming of new life in the world around us this month and in the church, and don't forget to check out the Magnolia tree!

See you in church!

Tom

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Worship Services and Scripture Passages for April

April 1, 2010

- *Maundy Thursday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
6:30 p.m. – Pot-luck Supper
7:30 p.m. – Worship Service
Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19;
I Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31B-35

April 2, 2010

- *Good Friday*
7:30 p.m. - Tenebrae Service
Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22;
Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42

April 4, 2010

- *The Day of Resurrection*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
7:00 a.m. – Sunrise Service – Hillview Farm
in Meyersville
10:00 a.m. – Worship Service in our Sanctuary
Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24;
1 Corinthians 15:19-26; Luke 24:1-12
Travnicek Memorial Ringers will be playing.

*Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on
Sunday mornings, followed by Coffee Hour
fellowship in Pollard Hall.*

Child Care is provided in the Nursery.

*Children join their families
in church and then leave
for Christian Education classes
after the Children's Talk.*

April 11, 2010

- *Second Sunday of Easter*
Acts 5:27-32; Psalm 118:14-29;
Revelation 1:4-8; John 20:19-31
Series:
The Function of the Church of Jesus Christ

April 18, 2010

- *Third Sunday of Easter*
Acts 9:1-20; Psalm 30;
Revelation 5:11-14; John 21:1-19
Series:
The Function of the Church of Jesus Christ
7:30 p.m. – Taizé Service

April 25, 2010

- *Fourth Sunday of Easter*
Acts 9:36-43; Psalm 23;
Revelation 7:9-17-; John 10:22-30
Series:
The Function of the Church of Jesus Christ

Rev. Tom's sermons are posted on the church website. Visit: www.fpcstirling.org, click on: "Sermons" in the list of links on the left.



Taizé Services

Due to the enthusiastic response we received from those who attended the Taizé services during the first three weeks of Lent, the Session, at the Worship Committee's recommendation, has approved a regular monthly Taizé service on the third Sunday of the month. This service will be held at 7:30 pm. It is a service that helps people to find peace and center their thoughts on God. If you have not experienced it yet, try it out, and recommend it to your friends and neighbors. The service is generally 45 minutes long.

Kudos for a job well done to Kate Coultas and Tierney Gallagan in Watchung Hills Regional High School's recent production of *Bye, Bye Birdie*. Tierney was part of the chorus, and Kate had the female lead of *Rosie*. They did an outstanding job on a complicated musical. Many thanks also to the many members of our church who supported their efforts by attending the musical!

Tom will be on vacation from Monday, April 5th to noon on Thursday, April 8th.

Worship

-Janet Parziale

Holy Week at the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

We began our observance of Holy Week with a Palm Sunday service at 10 a.m. on March 28th. The children passed out branches of eco-palms to the congregation. Rev. Peters lead members of the congregation in a dramatic reading of the Passion Story.

On Maudy Thursday, April 1st, there will be a potluck supper at 6:30 p.m. in Pollard Hall to recall the Last Supper. (Please join us for the supper, even if you have not signed up.) The supper will be followed by a communion service, by intinction, at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.

On Good Friday, April 2nd, Rev. Peters and Rev. Aspinal, from the Meyersville Presbyterian Church, will jointly lead the Tenebrae Service beginning at 7:30 in the evening.

Easter Sunday, April 4th, will find the congregation celebrating with two joyful services. First, a sunrise service will be shared with the Meyersville church at the Hillview Farm in Meyersville, at 6:30 a.m. Then, our regular worship service will be at 10 a.m. to celebrate the resurrection.

Please consider bringing a friend to any of the services during this significant time of year. Visitors are always welcome.

Organ Dedication

On Sunday, March 21st, a "new to us" church organ was dedicated. It was announced that the Gerecht family was donating the organ in memory of Anna Gerecht and William & Thelma Eggert.

Pictured at the organ are: Rev. Peters; Tatiana, our organist; Sue, Matthew, Ed, and Amanda Gerecht



Gifts of Men Sunday

On Sunday, March 21st, we also celebrated Gifts of Men Sunday by honoring Tom Parziale for his many contributions to the congregation and to the community-at-large. Debra Sprague highlighted some of Tom's many efforts, and the Worship Committee prepared a special coffee hour.

Tom first came to the church with his wife, Janet, in 1982. His first involvement was teaching Sunday School as part of a team with Janet. He was involved as one of the church's participants at the Saturday recycling days in town, has coordinated a number of volunteer days at the Community Food Bank in Hillside, and can be seen playing hand bells with the Travnicek Memorial Ringers. Tom joined the Buildings and Grounds Committee in 1993 and, in 1995, took over as Chairperson,

where remains today. Tom has been very active on this committee, organizing various activities. On a weekly basis, he usually does a walkthrough of the church complex to make sure there are no issues. He works closely with all contractors and with the management of the Montessori School.

Tom has been teaching Sunday School for the past 10 years and is also an active member of the Christian Education Committee. You can find his Jr. High and High School class meeting every Sunday in a circle set up in Pollard Hall. We hear his lessons are a cross between stand-up comedy, scripture reviews, and a current events lesson. In the words of one member, "Tom has made teaching Sunday School more than just meeting once a week with a small group and telling a Bible story. He has embarked on a mission to help our children feel God's presence in their lives. He has made this time a fun refuge for our children and shared with them his compassion for the world."



Pictured here are, from left: Lukas Ihringer; Elen Filippatos; Mae, Brandon, and Ryan Higgins; Garrett Blakeslee (in front); Tom; Ian Blakeslee; and, Amanda and Matthew Gerecht

Deacon's Corner

- Matthew Gerecht

A Night at the Museum

On Friday, March 12th, a group of church members and friends enjoyed a wonderful evening at the Morris Museum for a private showing of Jack Walsh's contemporary art quilt collection. Our thanks to Jack for arranging this special event and to Chris Scott for organizing a very nice reception.

Worship Help

The 2010 Worship Help chart is posted in Pollard Hall. Please sign up for dates when you can help out as Liturgist, Usher, or host/donor of Coffee Hour. If you have questions about any of these duties, please speak with any Deacon.

Coffee Hour

Would you be willing to supply goodies or make a donation for Coffee Hour and have someone else actually host? Would you be willing to host coffee hour if someone else sponsors it? Coffee Hour need not be anything fancy—just some basic goodies will suffice, along with coffee, tea, and juice. Please sign up on the chart in Pollard Hall as host or donor. Thank you!

Community Food Bank of NJ

- Tom Parziale

Here are some statistics from the 2009 Food Bank Newsletter: 830,000 people were helped by the Community Food Bank of NJ in 2009. That is a 45% increase over the 2005 statistics. 1000 children identified as being at risk of being hungry on weekends were provided weekly nutritious food packs. 1200 children of low income families were provided a hot meal every school day in their after-school program. The mobile pantry delivered food to needy senior citizens each month. 33 million pounds of food and groceries (10 million pounds more than in 2008) were distributed.

Volunteers provide the needed function of getting donated food and grocery products sorted for distribution. Without the sorting, the food can't be distributed!

The church is planning another volunteer morning at the Community Food Bank on Saturday, May 8th, from 9-11:30. We usually meet at the church around 8:00 and carpool to Hillside. The minimum age for volunteers is 12 years old. The Community Food Bank of New Jersey is located at 31 Evans Terminal Road in Hillside. Please contact Tom Parziale if you can join the team that will be helping that morning, or sign-up in Pollard Hall.

Christian Education

- Lori Pateman, Debra Sprague

Fourth Sunday Focus on Connections

- Tom Parziale

You are invited to join us at the next "Fourth Sunday" gathering on **April 25th** in Pollard Hall. Fourth Sundays give us an opportunity to connect with other members of our church family in a relaxed atmosphere: a pot of tea, a Box o' Joe, Munchkins . . . and conversation.

We start around 8:45 a.m. and end by about 9:45 a.m. --- but, come and join us whenever you can. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.



Interfaith Hospitality Network

- Phyllis Clemson

We have received information regarding an opportunity to support the Interfaith Council for Homeless Families of Morris County simply by designating this organization as the recipient of a donation from participating stores when you shop on-line. Registration is free, and there are over 700 participating retailers. It's an easy way to support this Morris County program that does so much good for so many people. For more information, go to www.iGive.come/ICHF-MC, or look for the flyer posted in Pollard Hall.

Earth Day - April 22, 2010



This year is the 40th Anniversary of Earth Day. It is a pivotal opportunity for individuals, corporations, and governments to join together and create a global green economy. Join the more than one billion people in 190 countries that are taking action for Earth Day. Log on to www.earthday.net to learn more about the events that are planned and the ways in which you can "Go Green." Thank you!

Mission

-Yvonne Fletcher

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator

Our next commitment for preparing lunches is Friday, **April 9, 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall.** We can always use juice boxes, fruit cups, and snacks (small packets of chips, cheese crackers, cookies, etc.). Large packages of cookies are broken down to lunch sizes. We have sufficient paper supplies at this time. Beginning in March, we increased our donation to 40 lunches per month. Looking ahead: upcoming preparation dates are May 7th and June 4th.



Church Yard Sale – May 14th & 15th**- Jean Hoffman, Mariann Powell****Fri., May 14, 10-2 & Sat., May 15, 9-3**

When you are doing your spring cleaning, please keep in mind that **we can use the following items**, and set them aside. This is not a complete list, so if you have questions, use your judgment, or call Mariann Powell or Jean Hoffman, who are coordinating the sale.



- ✓ Easily transported small furniture
- ✓ New, unused gifts
- ✓ Kitchen utensils, china, glassware
- ✓ Small appliances that work: radios, toasters, clocks, etc.
- ✓ Bric-a-brac, lamps, vases
- ✓ Linens: sheets, towels, blankets
- ✓ Up-to-date hardcover books/paperbacks
- ✓ Jewelry
- ✓ Christmas ornaments in good condition; no lights
- ✓ Children's toys: puzzles with no missing pieces, etc.
- ✓ Children's items: strollers, chairs, etc., but **no clothing**
- ✓ Houseplants
- ✓ Tools, gardening items (such as rakes, hoes)

**Items that do not sell in a short sale:**

- ✓ Mugs
- ✓ Florist vases
- ✓ Stuffed toys
- ✓ Small, inexpensive items that we cannot tag for at least \$1
- ✓ Clothing
- ✓ Baskets

We will also have a "**Goodie Sale**" - mostly baked goods, but if you make candy, jelly, or relish, these items sell well.

Proceeds from the yard sale will go toward paying down the heating loan.

Presbyterian Women of Newton Presbytery

Following are two upcoming events sponsored by the Presbyterian Women of Newton Presbytery:

Spring Gathering: The Well Woman - "Caring for Ourselves, Caring for Others"

Date: **April 25th**
 Location: First Presbyterian Church of Succasunna
 99 Main St., Succasunna, NJ 07876
 Time: Register: 2:00-2:30 p.m.
 Program: 2:30-7:00 p.m.
 Dinner: 5:15 p.m.
 Cost: \$5
 Child care provided upon request.



- Business Meeting
- Parish Nursing
- Global Women's Health Issues

Offering to Breast Cancer and Global Women's Health

RSVP by April 16th to Janet (Succasunna Church Office) at 973-584-5238 or
fpcsunna@optonline.net

Sunday Gospel Brunch

The Spiritual Life Committee of Newton Presbytery's Presbyterian Women invites everyone to enjoy an *all you can eat* soul food brunch while listening to the voices of the world famous Harlem Gospel Choir.

Date: **May 30th**
 Location: B.B. King Blues Club
 237 West 42nd St., NYC, NY
 Time: 12:30 p.m.
 Cost: \$42 per person

Reservation deadline is April 15th
 Contact CLP Linda Gaden at 973-462-1543

Ongoing Mission Programs

Mile of Pennies

Change (and more) collected during coffee hour supports scholarships for Kenyan students. We're into our fourth year/mile now, as we begin our 2010 drive. Please help us reach our goal.

Food Pantry

Items can be left in baskets marked "Food Pantry Donations."

Toiletries

Full-sized bars of soap and "courtesy" sizes of soap, shampoo, conditioner, and shower caps are donated to various causes. Place on the table outside Pollard Hall.

Sneaker Project

Place used pairs of sneakers (any size) on the pew inside Pollard Hall. To date, we have collected 120 pairs, which are sent to the Somerset Food Bank.

Eyeglasses, Sunglasses, Cell Phones

Place used glasses and cell phones on the table outside Pollard Hall.

Yarn & Cotton Material

Yarn is used to make lap robes for wounded veterans; any color is acceptable. Fabric (with the exception of wool and stretchables) of about 1/2 yard is used to make small bears for children, totes for wheelchair patients, etc. Place on pew inside Pollard Hall.

Ongoing Fundraiser

Grocery Store Gift Cards

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
- ✓ Church earns **5%**
- ✓ Denominations available:
 - **ShopRite** in \$20/\$50/\$100
 - **Pathmark** in \$25/\$50/\$100

Gift cards are available each week during coffee hour, or call Jean Hoffman (908) 756-1075.

*Please e-mail submissions for the
May issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by April 22nd. Thank you!*



Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

First Presbyterian Church

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