



Stirling Stuff

Volume 54, No. 10

November 2010

Pastor's Letter

Recognizing that the month of November is bracketed by two festivals, one religious and one secular, *All Saints Day* and *Thanksgiving*, I decided to Google "saints, thanks." I thought it would be interesting to see what the combination would bring up. I saw lots of references to the New Orleans Saints football team and people giving thanks for them last year. There was even a reference to a USA Today newspaper article that mentions President Obama thanking the Saints football team last August for helping New Orleans get through their difficult time. There were also references to the movie, *The Boondock Saints*, various musical groups that have *saints* in their name and, yes, there were several references to lists of Catholic saints.

Saints and *thanks*, in many ways besides being the brackets for the month of November, create a wonderful theological statement. We understand that, for Protestants, the saints are those who have guided us in our faith journeys and reached out to us in special ways throughout our lives. Therefore, we give thanks not to them, but for them, and for the ways they have touched us. The brackets for the month of November remind us that there is no way we go through life self-sustained, but only with the help and guidance of others. Those who recognize that are more stable and comfortable in the world, which brings me to another aspect of this November . . .

This November also includes the mid-term elections, with all of their rhetoric and anger. What is interesting to note is that, when it comes to elections, it is often *what have you done or not done for me lately?* In many ways, elections are about the present, the short term. I don't believe it has always been that way. Elections have become more about the short-term view and not the long-term view--the quick fix to our nation's ills. Our representatives in the House of Representatives only get two years to make that difference. It's an untenable position for many of them.

I bring this all up because the saints in our lives are the ones who bless us for the long haul. They are the ones who teach us and bless us with wisdom and faith that sustains us for a lifetime, which is why I say they bring stability to our world and allow us to be more comfortable with who we are and what we have in the world. We owe the saints in our lives a deep debt of gratitude for doing that for us. This November, I hope you will spend some time recognizing who those saints are in your life and, if they are still alive, I encourage you to let them know what they have meant to you. Give thanks for everything in them that was/is good, kind, and faithful.

I hope you will join us for our All Saints' Service on November 7th. It will be a time to recognize those who have died in the past year and a time to give thanks for those who have touched your life. On Thanksgiving Day, you can also give thanks for all they have done for you.

Peace!

Tom

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for November

November 7, 2010

- *All Saints Service*
- *Sacrament of Communion*
- *Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Haggai 1:15b-2:9; Psalm 145:1-5, 17-21;
2 Thessalonians 2:1-5, 13-17;
Luke 20:27-38; Job 19:23-27a
What Comes Next?

November 14, 2010

- *Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Isaiah 65:17-25; Psalm 98;
2 Thessalonians 3:6-13; Luke 21:5-19
Ecclesiastes 1:2, 12-14; 2:18-23; Luke 12:13-21
The Vanity of Collecting

*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.*

November 21, 2010

- *Reign of Christ Sunday*
- *Stewardship Dedication Sunday*
Jeremiah 23:1-6; Psalm 46;
Colossians 1:11-20; Luke 23:33-43
Why Does It Get So Dark At Times?

7:30 p.m. – Taizé Service

November 28, 2010

- *First Sunday of Advent*
- *Heritage Sunday*
Isaiah 2:1-5; Psalm 122;
Romans 13:11-14; Matthew 24:36-44
Are You Ready?

Scriptures that are listed after the first Gospel reading are non-lectionary passages that will be used in the sermon. All the scriptures are provided here for any weekly Bible reading you may do.

Rev. Peters' sermons are posted on the church website. Visit: www.fpcstirling.org, click on: "Sermon Archive," then select the Sermon date.



Congregational Meeting

A meeting of the congregation of First Presbyterian Church of Stirling will be held on **Sunday, October 31st**, immediately following morning worship, for the purpose of electing church officers for 2011.



Adult Education**- Debra Sprague****Adult Christian Education Series: *The Religion of Islam***

This series continues at 7:30 p.m. on **Tuesday, November 2nd**, with the topic, *What Do Muslims Believe?*, which was originally scheduled for October 26th. When the final session, *Dialogue with Turkish-American Muslims from the Interfaith Dialogue Center of Central New Jersey*, is rescheduled, we will let you know.



This study and dialogue are desperately needed in our nation today. There are many false stereotypes being propagated today about Muslims and their beliefs. Even if you have not attended the previous sessions, please come and allow yourself to be open to understanding your Muslim neighbors a little better.

Fourth Sunday Focus**- Tom Parziale**

Everyone is invited to join us at our next “Fourth Sunday Focus” gathering on **November 28th**.

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. We meet in Pollard Hall. If you have a topic you’d like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.

Breadsticks

Back by popular demand, we will be baking breadsticks again this holiday season and delivering them in time for Thanksgiving. The price per box remains the same: \$6.00 for Rosemary, and \$6.50 for Cheese. You can place your order during coffee hour or contact Jean Hoffman. The deadline to order is **Friday, November 12th**, and they can be picked up in Pollard Hall on **Sunday, November 21st**.

**Mission Committee****- Yvonne Fletcher****Bridges Outreach Lunch Program****- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator**

Our final commitment date this year for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, December 10th**, 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall. We welcome donations of bottled water, juice drinks, snacks, and fruit cups. You can drop them off in Pollard Hall on Sunday mornings. Thank you for your support of this program all year.

Turkey Donations

The supermarkets are once again promoting free turkeys during the holiday season. If you are eligible to receive a turkey that you will not be using, please consider donating it. We will be collecting the frozen turkeys at church the Sunday before Thanksgiving (**November 21st**) and delivering them to the Market Street Mission for distribution. Your support of this program is appreciated.



Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****All Saints Sunday**

On **November 7th**, we will be celebrating *All Saints Sunday*, a day when Christians give thanks for all the good people God has placed in our lives. At this service, we will take time to remember those special people who have passed away during the past year. Please fill out the form in the Sunday bulletin or contact the church office with the names of anyone you would like remembered ***and*** their relationship to you. Also, feel free to add a few words telling us who this person is and why they are special to you. **The deadline is Nov. 2nd**.

Following worship, there will be a special luncheon sponsored by Ruth Young, in memory of her son, Kent, husband, Cliff, and others who died during the past year. Please join us as we celebrate their lives and how they touched us.

Rev. Tom Peters' 20th Anniversary

On **November 14th**, we will honor Rev. Tom Peters on the 20th anniversary of his ministry at First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. Following worship, there will be a special coffee hour hosted by the Worship Committee. This will be an opportunity to recognize Tom's commitment, not only to the church, but to the community-at-large. Please plan to attend and celebrate this occasion with Tom.

Heritage Sunday—Kirkin' of the Tartan

On **November 28th**, we will be celebrating the Scottish heritage of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. We will follow the *Scottish Book of Common Order* for the worship service. As in the past, we will have a guest bagpiper, Dave Paladino, play the tune Richard Streeton composed for our church, "Stirling on the Hill." The service will include a special ceremony called the Kirkin' of the Tartan, which comes out of Scottish history when it was against the law to wear a tartan, and they held secret services to bless the tartans.

Following worship, there will be a special coffee hour with lots of Scottish goodies to enjoy. We invite anyone who enjoys baking to bring their favorite Scottish goodies to share. Also, bring along the recipe, as you're sure to be asked for it. Some of the goodies we're expecting are scones and shortbread. Of course, a fine pot of tea will also be served! We hope you will plan to celebrate our church's Scottish heritage. Also, remember to wear a wee bit of plaid, preferably one connected to your family.

**First Sunday of Advent**

November 28th is also the first Sunday of Advent. We will begin a special program that will continue through the season of Advent, and we will be asking for your help in lighting the Advent candles. We will need one adult and one child to participate in the ceremony at the beginning of the worship service each Sunday during Advent. If you would like to be part of this special program, please speak to Janet Parziale.

Christian Education Committee**- Lore Pateman****Game Night**

Come one, come all for a fun-filled game night on **Friday, November 5th**, starting at 6:30 p.m. We'll provide pizza and drinks and ask everyone to bring a dessert and your favorite game. Please sign up in Pollard Hall or contact Lore Pateman so that pizza can be ordered ahead of time. You can also come just for the games. Hope to see you there!



Children's Mission Project – Bake Sale

Since it was so successful last year, we are holding a bake sale again this year. It will be held on **Saturday, November 13th**. We're doing it a little earlier in hopes of warmer weather this time. We can use your support by providing baked goods for the sale. The children and a few adult helpers will work at the sale. Please sign up in Pollard Hall if you can help out. Thanks!

Reclaiming Christmas

If you're like most Christians, the upcoming Christmas season will be a mixed blessing. Along with spending time with friends and family and at least some attempt to focus on "the reason for the season," you will probably find yourself eating too much, drinking too much, spending too much, and experiencing too much stress about family gatherings and gift giving. Perhaps you have the nagging feeling that your experience of Christmas should somehow be different. But, what might an alternative Christmas look like for people of faith?

Join us on **Tuesday, November 30th** at 7:30 p.m., when we will trace the history of Christmas, learn to recognize the secular elements of this Christian holiday, and consider ways in which the celebration of Christmas might be more spiritually meaningful.

Personnel Committee

- Chris Scott

Staff Appraisals

The committee has posted Staff Appraisal forms on the church website. These forms are very brief and take only a few minutes to complete. Your input regarding staff performance over the past year is very important to the annual review process. Please take some time to share your thoughts. If you do not have access to the church website, you can pick up a copy of the form in Pollard Hall. We greatly appreciate your participation in this annual survey. (www.fpcstirling.org/surveys.html)

Deacon's Corner

- Matthew Gerecht

Equal Exchange Coffee

A few weeks ago, we started serving coffee purchased through a program called, "Equal Exchange." This program lets us enjoy delicious, fairly-traded coffee, while supporting small-scale farmers across the world.



Farmers earn a fair price for their products, have access to affordable credit, and can invest in education, health care, and sustainable agriculture, enabling them to build a better future for their families. We welcome any feedback you have about this new coffee.

Please remember to continue to use the green Deacons Fund envelopes to help the Deacons purchase items including the coffee. These envelopes are available in the pew racks or in the church office.

Candle Lighting

When you serve as an usher and light the candles on the Communion table, please remember to pull the wick in the candle lighter back down to extinguish the candle. Then, push the wick back up before it cools so that the wax does not harden inside the brass candle lighter. Once the wick dries and hardens, it sticks to the brass holder and has to be cleaned out before it can be used again. Thank you!

Church Flowers

If you would like to place flowers on the chancel for Sunday worship in honor or memory of someone, contact Matthew Gerecht. Allow enough lead time to have them ordered for the date you would like. The cost is \$30. Currently, we are using artificial flowers, but fresh flowers look and smell so beautiful and add so much to the service.

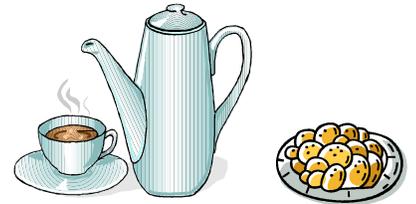


Worship Help

The 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 towards Coffee Hour and have someone else actually host? Or, would you be willing to host coffee hour if someone else sponsors it? Coffee Hour need not be anything fancy--just some basic goodies, coffee, tea, and juice will suffice. Please sign up on the chart in Pollard Hall as host or donor, or speak to Rene' Phelan or Jan Somers. Thank you!

**These Days**

Our church has a subscription for multiple copies of this devotional booklet. Please pick up a copy of the latest issue on the table in the church narthex.

Striving to Become Good Christians**- Debra Sprague**

Our church is a subscriber to *The Thoughtful Christian*, the source for many of our church's educational materials. As subscribers, we can access any downloadable studies. I encourage you to visit the site (<http://www.thethoughtfulchristian.com/TabCenter/GroupStudies.aspx>), and see the many studies that are offered. Please let me know of:

- a. any study you think would make a good topic for an Adult Education class, a Fourth Sunday Focus, or some other gathering
- b. any study you personally would like to have

Members of our congregation may receive any studies they would like to have.

Ongoing Mission Programs**Sneaker Project**

On the past page of this newsletter is a section entitled, Ongoing Mission Programs. I'd like to highlight one of these programs this month. To date, our *Sneaker Project* has collected 152 pairs of sneakers, which are delivered to the Somerset Food Bank for distribution. That's a lot of sneakers for a small congregation, and I'm sure those on the receiving end are very appreciative. So, if you have sneakers, any size, that are in good condition but you can no longer use them, please bring them in and leave them on the pew in Pollard Hall. They will be put to good use! Thank you for your support of this and all of our mission programs.

**Thank You**

Rene' and Chuck Phelan have expressed their thanks to the congregation for all your cards, notes, and prayers. They really appreciate all of your support.

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. 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 **152** pairs, which are sent to the Somerset Food Bank for distribution.

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 you can contact Jean Hoffman (908-756-1075).

*Please e-mail submissions for the
December issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by November 24th. Thank you!*



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