



Stirling Stuff

Volume 54, No. 8

September 2010

Pastor's Letter

This past July, a group of us from the three churches met and discussed the topic, Was Our Nation Founded as a Christian Nation? It was an interesting discussion, and we decided that, while we often cite the Bill of Rights and say that religious freedom was a hallmark of our nation at it's founding, we also realized that religious freedom was only the truth if you believed what the leaders believed! In the beginning days of our nation and the individual colonies/states, it becomes quite clear that certain Protestant Christian denominations were the only accepted religion. Roman Catholicism in almost all of the states, and the Church of England, or Anglicanism, in most of the states, was not accepted. Even Quakers were not accepted in many states. Of course forget about the Jews and the Muslims having religious freedom. By not being accepted I mean that, in most cases, they had to leave the town or, in some cases, even the state!

I bring this up because of the debate going on around the creation of an Islamic community center and mosque near, not at, Ground Zero in NYC. It has been interesting to hear what many different people and groups have had to say about this. People and groups who you might expect to say no are saying yes, and many who you would think would not even care are saying no. Jewish groups, many families of those who died on 9/11, the Mayor, and the President of the United States have all said yes, they should be allowed to build it. However, many Christians who often talk about religious freedom in our country are saying no. I hear echoes of our founding fathers in this: Religious freedom, as long as your faith agrees with mine.

In a little over a week, we will be observing the ninth anniversary of 9/11. I recall that there were many people of the Islamic faith who died when those towers fell. Why are we so fearful of having real religious freedom in our country? It in no way minimizes our faith to let others practice their faith. In fact, to be so "my belief or no belief" is evidence of a weak faith. How does it hurt or impinge on you if others around you may be worshipping God in a different way or even worshipping a different God, if they do not get in the way of you practicing your faith? As Bob Braun noted in the Star Ledger, the community center and mosque will be two blocks away, you won't even be able to see them from Ground Zero, and most people won't even know where it is or that it is there. Why not let go of the fear and anger and truly be a people, a nation that gives the idea of religious freedom more than lip service.

See you in church!

Tom

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for September

Sept. 5, 2010

- *Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Jeremiah 18:1-11; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;
Philemon 1-21; Luke 14:25-33
It's No Trip to the Spa!

Sept. 12, 2010

- *Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *Rally Day*
(Beginning of the Sunday School Program)
Jeremiah 8:18-9:1; Psalm 79:1-9;
I Timothy 1:12-17; Luke 15:1-10
(Hosea 5:15-6:6)
Finding God in Spite of Ourselves

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.



Sept. 19, 2010

- *Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Jeremiah 4:11-12, 22-28; Psalm 14;
I Timothy 2:1-7; Luke 16:1-13
Session members will conduct the
worship service.

7:30 p.m. – Taizé Service

Sept. 26, 2010

- *Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Jeremiah 32:1-3a, 6-15; Psalm 19:1-6, 14-16;
I Timothy 6:6-19; Luke 16:19-31
(Matthew 5:1-12)
Peacemaking Series
1. *Is Violence Ever Justified?*

Please note that the Scripture readings may be different in Worship. These are the lectionary readings and are provided here for your own personal reading and meditation.

The scripture readings listed in the () are the basis for the sermon.

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



World Communion & Peacemaking



On Sunday, September 19th, we will begin having the envelopes for the Peacemaking Offering available for you to make a contribution to the peacemaking efforts of our church and our denomination. At its September meeting, the Session will decide where they want the portion we can designate to go. If you have an idea, please let one of the Session members or Tom know.

On Sunday, September 26th, Tom will begin a three week sermon series peacemaking on.

On Sunday, October 3rd, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion with Christians around the world. Plan to join us for this special service. The older youth in our church will be participating in this service.

CROP Walk 2010

On Sunday, September 19th, we will begin registering walkers for this year's CROP Walk in New Providence. The walk will be held on Sunday, **October 17th at 1:30 p.m.** at the Methodist Church on Springfield Ave. The walk is only 2-2.5 miles long and on fairly flat terrain. We really want to get a lot of people walking this year. It is open to people and animals of all ages – yes, some people even bring their dogs along for the fun or pull their little children in wagons. When you sign-up, you will get a sponsor envelope to use to collect names and money of those who will sponsor you for the walk. We hope you will join us for this event.



Taizé Service Time Change

Tom broke his own rule. Normally all evening services and meetings are held at 7:30 p.m. so that it's easy to remember; but, for some crazy reason, he scheduled the Taizé service at 7:00 p.m. From now on, the service will be at **7:30 p.m.** Plan to join us for this very simple and peaceful service. The next one is Sept. 19th.

Mission

Interfaith Hospitality Network

- Phyllis Clemson, Chris Scott

Our last responsibility for 2010 will be Thursday, **October 7th**. This date also marks the end of our **21st year** of involvement in this most worthy cause.

We will need volunteers to prepare food, two evening hosts, and two overnight hosts. Look for the sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall in the next few weeks. Please help us with this ongoing Mission Project. The homeless of Morris County need our help.

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, Sept. 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 continuing support of this very important program! Looking ahead, future dates this year are: Oct. 8, Nov. 12, and Dec. 10.

Worship**- Janet Parziale****How About Joining the Worship Committee!**

The Worship Committee is seeking additional members. If you are interested in the worship process, please consider becoming part of our group. We are always open to new ideas for the worship services. Current members of this committee include Ellen Eastty, Phyllis Clemson, Lynne Combs, and Janet Parziale. During the school year, we meet about eight times with Rev. Peters to discuss upcoming worship services with Rev. Peters and plan events such as Heritage Sunday, Archive Sunday, Gifts of Men and Gifts of Women Sundays, and the Maundy Thursday dinner. Our committee is also responsible for making the beautiful Advent Wreath each year. In previous years, we have enjoyed working on other worship projects such as the Worship Survey, the prayer cards, the new hymnals (both the hardbound and softbound copies), securing special speakers, submitting articles and requests for ads in the local newspaper, and the making of banners for the sanctuary.

If you are interested in becoming part of this wonderful group, please email Janet Parziale at janetparziale@comcast.net or speak to any of the committee members or Rev. Peters.

Christian Education**- Lore Pateman, Debra Sprague**

Sunday school will begin this year with Rally Day on September 12th. There are two classes scheduled, with Elaine Giordano leading the Pre-K class and Tom Parziale leading the Grades 7 & Up class. The CE committee has additional plans to involve other members of the congregation to assist and visit these classes. On Rally Day, there will be a commissioning service for those involved with Sunday School.

Adult Education**- Debra Sprague****Fourth Sunday Focus****- Tom Parziale**

Everyone is invited to join us at our next "Fourth Sunday Focus" gathering on **Sept. 26th**.

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 may meet in the Memorial Garden, weather permitting -- or else in the nursery.* If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.



Explore your connection to the wider church with these two special upcoming events relating to what's going on in the PCUSA -----

Mark your calendar now, and plan to join us on Tuesday evening, August 31st, and Saturday morning, September 18th:

Fifth Tuesday - "What Happened at General Assembly?"

The General Assembly (GA) of the PCUSA met this summer for its biannual meeting. At our next "Fifth Tuesday" joint church discussion, we will learn about **"What Happened at GA?"** and what it might mean for us. It will be held on Tuesday, August 31st, 7:30 p.m., at FPC Stirling and will be led by our own Rev. Tom Peters.

"The Confession of Belhar: What We Need to Know to Vote Prayerfully"

One action taken by this summer's GA was to send **The Belhar Confession** to the presbyteries to be voted upon. (Our presbytery is voting on it in January.) It needs a 2/3 vote to move on to approval at the 2012 General Assembly before becoming the 12th document in the *Book of Confessions*.

It is a wonderful cry from the heart of the mixed race Reformed Church in 1986 during apartheid in South Africa. One of its central themes is "Unity." At this presentation and discussion, we will explore the very Presbyterian reasons for why this belongs in our Book of Confessions.

The Rev. Janet McCune Edwards, Ph.D., of Pittsburgh, PA, Co-Moderator of "More Light" Presbyterians, will be at **Trinity United Church** on **Saturday, September 18th at 10:00 a.m.** for this presentation and discussion on the Belhar Confession.

All are invited to Trinity United Church, 118 King George Road, Warren, for this very special event. **There is no fee to attend, but reservations are required.** Please email thesecretary@trinityunitedchurch by September 9th to reserve your seat, or call Trinity at 732-469-5044. (Reservations will be confirmed after August 31, 2010.)

Deacon's Corner

- Matthew Gerecht

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.

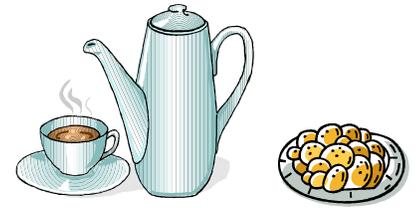


Worship Help

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!

**Welcome to Our New Members**

On Sunday, August 22nd, we welcomed three new members into the membership of our church: Jenny and Ed Chang and Israel Sierra, Jr. Although they are already involved, we look forward to their becoming a part of the life and ministry of our church.

Sacrament of Baptism

On Sunday, **August 29th**, during morning worship we will celebrate the Sacrament of Baptism. Addison Brown, daughter of Todd and Jill (Mackay) Brown and granddaughter of Dawn and Sandy Mackay, will be baptized. Plan to join us on this wonderful occasion. The sermon for this service is entitled, "Do We Want A God Who Is Unmoved?"

Stirling Stuff Mailing List

Paulette is updating our SS mailing list. If your information needs corrections, if you are a college student and would like to receive SS at school, or if you would like to be removed from our mailing list, please notify the church office by mail, phone, or e-mail. (Contact information can be found on the last page of this newsletter.) Most church members and friends are now receiving their SS via e-mail. Please let Paulette know if you would prefer to have it mailed.

Church Directory Alert

Enclosed is a form for updating our Church Directory. Please verify that your information in the current directory is accurate; if not, please complete the form and return it to the church office by mail or place it in the offering plate. Thank you.



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 **142** 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.

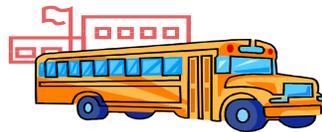
Ongoing Fundraiser

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
October issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by September 19th. Thank you!*



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