



Stirling Stuff

Volume 55, No. 9

October 2011

A Letter from the Christian Education Committee

LGBT* Questions and the Pursuit of Understanding

**LGBT is short for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered"*

We hear so much in the news today about LGBT issues. Recent headlines include topics such as:

- The end of "Don't Ask, Don't Tell"
- The suicide of Rutgers student, Tyler Clemente, and the trial of his roommate
- Civil Unions and Same-Sex Marriages
- Gender questions about a "Dancing With The Stars" contestant
- New ordination standards in the PCUSA

Many people have strong feelings about these topics and frame arguments as moral or religious issues.

How do we respond? What are our church's teachings about topics of gender and sexuality? We've heard parts of the Bible that pertain to traditional marriage. What else is there?

We are working on a series of sessions to explore some of these questions. Topics will include:

- What does the Bible say about marriage and sexuality?
- How do we respond to people who identify as LGBT, both inside and outside the church?

We invite you to join in the conversations as we explore these questions.

Please watch your email and the church bulletin for announcements of the dates as they are scheduled.

Rev. Peters will also begin the study of Robert Morris' book, *Wrestling With Grace*.

Look for information about this book study on page 3 of this newsletter.

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for October

October 2, 2011

- *World Communion*
- *Twenty-Seventh Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Exodus 20:1-4, 7-9, 12-20; Psalm 19;
Philippians 3:4b-14; Matthew 21:33-46
Celebration Series:
2. *This Supper Thing – Who’s Invited?*

October 9, 2011

- *Twenty-Eighth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Exodus 32:1-14; Psalm 106:1-6, 19-23
Philippians 4:1-9; Matthew 22:1-14
Standing in the Breach of Anger

October 16, 2011

- *Twenty-Ninth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Exodus 33:12-23; Psalm 99;
I Thessalonians 1:1-10; Matthew 22:15-22
The Dedication of God
7:30 p.m. - Taizé Service

*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.*

October 23, 2011

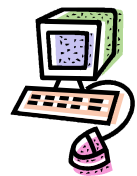
- *Thirtieth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Deuteronomy 34:1-12; Psalm 90:1-6, 13-17;
I Thessalonians 2:1-8; Matthew 22:34-46
What is Most Important?

October 30, 2011

- *Thirty-First Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *Reformation Sunday*
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 46;
Romans 3:19-28; John 8:31-36
Celebration Series:
3. *Celebrating a Radical Nation*

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 and the scripture readings are posted on the church website. Visit: www.fpcstirling.org, click on: “Sermon Archive,” then select the sermon and/or scripture reading date you would like.



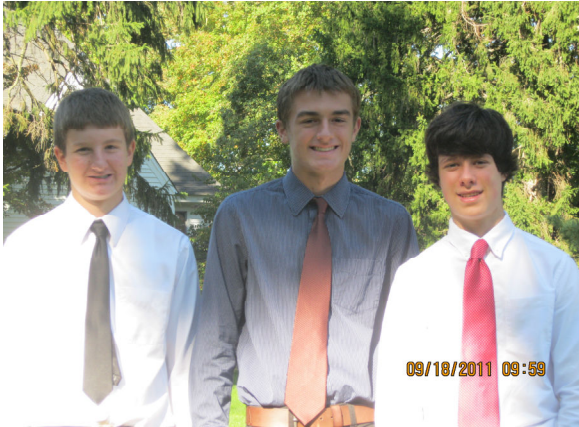
Congregational Meeting

The Session has called a meeting of the congregation immediately following morning worship on **Sunday, October 30th**. The purpose of this meeting is to elect Elders and Deacons to begin serving their terms in January 2012.

Confirmation Class Joins Church

After meeting with the Session of our church, our three confirmands were received as church members. Then, on Sunday, Sept. 18th, they professed their faith during worship.

Pictured here, from left to right, are: Garrett Blakeslee, George Filippatos, and Chris DeMatteo.



Pictured here with Rev. Peters are the three young men with their sponsors, Kai Ihringer, Debra Sprague, and Tom Parziale.



We welcome Garrett, George, and Chris to our congregation and congratulate them for their hard work this past year in preparing for this very important step in their Christian journey.

Christian Education Committee

- Debra Sprague

Adult Education

- Debra Sprague

Monthly Book Study

The survey results are in, and we will be studying Robert Morris' book, ***Wrestling with Grace***. The first study session will be on **Wed., October 12th, 7:30 p.m.**, at Rev. Peters' home (149 Sandford Ave., North Plainfield; ask Tom if you need directions). Please read the first two chapters of the book for the first class.

There are several ways you can receive your copy of the book. You can order the book (\$12.75) online at Amazon (http://www.amazon.com/Wrestling-Grace-Spirituality-Rough-Edges/dp/0835809854/ref=sr_1_1?ie=UTF8&qid=1316530490&sr=8-1). You can also order the electronic version for Kindle, iPad, etc. (\$7.95) at the same link. If you would like Rev. Peters to order a copy for you, please let him know ASAP. Also, please let Rev. Peters know if you are planning to be a part of this study so he can have an idea of how many will be attending.

Fourth Sunday Focus

- Tom Parziale

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 join us whenever you can. Our next "Fourth Sunday Focus" gathering will be on Sunday, **Oct. 23rd**. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.



Sunday School**- Tom Parziale**

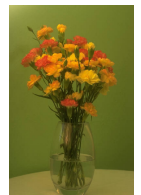
Another year of Sunday School got off to a great start on Rally Day 2011, which took place on Sept 11th. Elaine Giordano is leading the Pre-K/First Grade class, and Tom Parziale is working with the Junior/Senior High class. This year, the curriculum for the younger group comes from PCUSA, *Wee Believe*. They are meeting for part of their time downstairs in one of the Sunday School rooms, where the children are putting together a "book" about Abraham. They then "journey" with backpacks up to the childcare room for special activities. The older group is using *Seasons of the Spirit*. They continue to have a blend of Scripture, current events, and a bit of humor as they journey together through the weekly lessons.

Deacons Corner**- Carolyn Malfatone****Halloween Coffee Hour**

The Deacons are sponsoring a Halloween Coffee Hour on **Sunday, October 30th**. Children are invited to come to church in costume or bring their costume to change into after church. (Adults are also invited to dress up for this fun event!)

Church Flowers

Don't forget to sign-up if you would like to place flowers on the chancel for Sunday morning worship in honor or memory of someone; or, contact Israel Sierra, Jr. Allow enough lead time to have them ordered for the date you would like. The cost is \$30, and cash or checks (made payable to Cash) should be given to Israel or Carolyn Malfatone. Thank you.

**Worship Help**

Please sign up for dates when you can help out as Liturgist, Usher, or host/sponsor of Coffee Hour. The Worship Help chart is posted in Pollard Hall and **there are lots of openings**. If you would like to donate to a coffee hour and have someone else host it, please speak to Jan Somers. If you have questions about any of these duties, please speak with any Deacon. Thank you!

Deacons' Fund Envelopes

Please remember to use the green *Deacons' Fund* envelopes to help the Deacons purchase items. These envelopes are available in the pew racks or in the church office and may be placed in the offering plate.

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

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, Oct. 7th**, 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall. We can always use juice containers, bottled water, fruit cups, and packets of cookies or other snacks. You can drop these items off in Pollard Hall on Sunday mornings. To date, we have prepared over 200 lunches, and we are serving a great need. We appreciate all the support you have given to this program. Remaining dates this year: Nov. 4th and Dec. 9th

Community Food Bank of NJ**- Tom Parziale**

We have scheduled a volunteer morning at the Community Food Bank in Hillside for Saturday, **October 8th, from 9-11:30 a.m.** We usually meet at the church around 8:00 and carpool to Hillside. The minimum age for volunteers is 12.

Volunteers provide the needed function of getting donated food and grocery products sorted for distribution. Without the sorting, the food can't be distributed to those in need. Please contact Tom Parziale if you can join the team that will be helping that morning.

CROP Walk

On Sunday, **October 16th**, we will once again join with other churches to raise money to fight hunger by participating in the annual New Providence CROP Walk. The Walk begins at 1:30 p.m., so we will gather at the church at 12:45 p.m. to carpool to the Methodist Church in New Providence, where the walk begins and ends. If you would like to walk, please contact Rev. Peters to get your sponsor sheet and envelope. If you cannot walk, please sponsor a walker and make a donation to help fight hunger.

**Worship Committee****- Janet Parziale****World Communion Sunday**

On Sunday, **October 2nd**, we will celebrate the Sacrament of Communion with Christians around the world. We hope you will join us for this special service, and we invite you to wear some traditional garb representing your ethnic background.



World Communion Sunday is a celebration observed by several Christian denominations, taking place on the first Sunday of every October, that promotes Christian unity and ecumenical cooperation. The tradition originated in the Shadyside Presbyterian Church in 1933, was adopted throughout the US Presbyterian Church in 1936, and subsequently spread to other denominations. In 1940, the Federal Council of Churches (now the National Council of Churches), led by Jesse Moren Bader, endorsed World Communion Sunday and began to promote it to Christian churches worldwide.

(From Wikipedia)

Celebration Sermon Series

This series continues on **October 2nd and 30th**, with Rev. Peters preaching on what he believes our church should celebrate about its ministry. These sermons will be held throughout the fall.

Canned Food Collection

Beginning on Sunday, October 2nd, and on the first Sunday of each subsequent month, we will be collecting donations of non-perishable food during the worship service. As we celebrate the Lord's Supper, it is appropriate to remember those who don't have enough food to put on their table. The food will be donated to the township food pantry at St. Vincent Church. The offering will be received during the Children's Talk, so keep your non-perishable food items with you in the pew for the children to collect.

Taizé Service

Our Taizé service is held on the third Sunday of each month at 7:30 p.m. It is a service that helps people find peace and center their thoughts on God. The service is generally 45 minutes long. Our next Taizé service will be on **Oct. 16th**.

Travnicek Memorial Ringers

Our handbell choir is in need of additional ringers. They rehearse on Monday evenings at 7:30 p.m. You do not need to know how to read music to ring the handbells. Please speak with Rev. Peters if you are interested.

Remembrance Sunday, November 6th

On **November 6th**, we will be celebrating *All Saints Sunday*, a day when Christians give thanks for all the good people God has placed in their lives. At this service, we will take time to remember those special people who have passed away during the past year. There will be a form in the church bulletins during October that you may complete with information about someone you would like to remember during this service. Or, you can contact the church office with the information.

Interfaith Hospitality Network**- Phyllis Clemson, Chris Scott**

The Interfaith Hospitality Network will be at the Shrine of St. Joseph the week of October 30th. **Our responsibility will be Tuesday, November 1, 2011.** The meat dish for that evening is chicken. Please watch for the sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall, and support this on-going mission project of our church. This date marks the end of our church's **22nd year** of involvement in this most worthy cause!

Fellowship Committee**- Tom Parziale****Annual Softball Game**

On Sunday, Sept. 18th, we played our annual church softball game at Meyersville Field with two local churches involved. The weather was perfect and, as to the final score....the most important one was that after playing for about 2 hours, no injuries were recorded for any of the players. After the 6 innings were completed, the actual final score was 14-13. The post-game barbecue at Meyersville Church was fantastic, as always.



Buildings & Grounds**- Tom Parziale**

Recent updates in our church's boiler room include a new sump pump and a new French drain system. Benefits are already evident as we have stayed dry during the heavy rain in recent weeks.

Fundraising Committee**- Jean Hoffman****On-Going Book Sale**

Please take a look at the "Book Table" in Pollard Hall. The sale is going well and, therefore, we could use more current books/paperbacks, including children's books. Proceeds from this sale so far are \$68.75, which will benefit the Kenya Scholarship Fund. For more information, please speak to any committee member: Ellen Eastty, Jean Hoffman, or Mariann Powell.



Visitation Schedule**- Rev. Peters**

There is a sign-up sheet posted in Pollard Hall with dates and times when I will be available to make visitations. If you would like to have me visit you, please sign up for a time that is convenient. This does not affect emergency visitations, if you are in the hospital or at home ill. This is for general weekday visits. I hope this will facilitate my meeting with you to talk about life and faith and also give you the opportunity to ask questions or share thoughts you may have. If you do not have the opportunity to sign up in Pollard Hall, please contact me to arrange a convenient time for a visit.

The Presbytery of Newton**- Phyllis Clemson****September Presbytery Meeting Highlights**

To find out what happened at the September Presbytery Meeting, please go to www.newtonpresbytery.org and click on September Meeting Highlights!

Volunteers for Disaster Assistance

Following the recent storms, the State Department is directing volunteers to some of the hardest hit areas. Those interested in helping should contact the Governor's Office of Volunteerism at 609-633-9627 or 609-775-5236. You can also go online to VolunteerNJ.org or e-mail Rowena.madden@sos.state.nj.us to find out about other places where help is needed.

Box Tops for Education**- Jan Somers**

We see these little "Box Tops for Education" coupons on many products. They each have a point value, and the points are used by parent organizations to earn free educational/recreational items for schools. With so many budget cuts, they are more useful than ever in providing little extras for students and teachers.

If you do not use them elsewhere, I invite you to cut them out, and bring them to church. They will be donated to the schools where members of our church families attend. It's an easy way to get something for free that can be put to very good use! A collection canister will be available during coffee hour each week. Thank you!

Ongoing Mission Programs

Mile of Pennies

Change (and more) collected during coffee hour supports scholarships for Kenyan students. Please help us reach our goal.

Food Pantry

Items can be left in baskets labeled "Food Pantry Donations" located in the Church narthex and on the table outside of Pollard Hall.

Toiletries

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

Sneaker Project

Place used pairs of sneakers (any size) on the pew inside Pollard Hall. To date, we have collected **172** pairs, which are sent to the Somerset Food Bank and other charities.

Eyeglasses, Sunglasses, Cell Phones

Place used glasses and cell phones on the pew inside 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

ShopRite Gift Cards

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
- ✓ Church earns 5%
- ✓ Denominations available:
 - \$20/\$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
November issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by Oct. 23^d. Thank you!*



Why not invite a friend to church?

First Presbyterian Church

158 Central Avenue
Stirling, NJ 07980

Editor: Jan Somers

The Rev. Dr. Thomas T. Peters, Pastor
pastor@fpcstirling.org
Paulette Irlander, Office Manager
Secretary@fpcstirling.org
Church Office: 908-647-1033
Website: www.fpcstirling.org