



# Stirling Stuff

Volume 55, No. 2

February 2011

## **Pastor's Letter**

With Lent not starting until March 9<sup>th</sup> this year, February is kind of an in-between month--after the holidays and before Lent. However, I would suggest to you that there are some important events in February that are important for you not to miss:

### **February 13<sup>th</sup>**

The Session has called a meeting of the congregation for **February 13<sup>th</sup>**, immediately following morning worship, to hear and receive the 2011 church budget, discuss enlarging the Board of Deacons from six to nine members, and vote on whether or not to change the terms of the paying of the manse renovation loan at Millington Savings Bank. Also at this meeting, we will hold a review session of the sexual misconduct policy of our church. This will be just a review of the policy and will not address the larger questions of why we need to do this. The Session is asking that all church officers, staff, and anyone who works with children and youth attend this gathering. If you have attended one in the past, the Session asks that you attend again to renew your signed statement that you are familiar with the policy. If you have not attended one in the past, you must attend and not only sign the policy familiarity statement, but also fill out a release so that a limited background check can be done.

On **February 12<sup>th</sup>**, we will meet for an all-day retreat with our brothers and sisters from the Kitchell Memorial Church (East Hanover) at Johnsonburg Camp and Conference Center. If you have not yet signed up, please do so ASAP so we have a good idea of numbers. You can find forms in the church narthex, Pollard Hall, and office. Those who attended last year had a marvelous time enjoying many events, the campgrounds, and each other's company.

In February, our **2011 Confirmation Class** will begin its journey to Confirmation on Pentecost Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>. This year's class is made up of Garrett Blakeslee with Kai Ihringer as his Sponsor, Chris DeMatteo with Tom Parziale as his Sponsor, and George Filippatos with Debra Sprague as his sponsor. The class will be meeting on Sundays after worship. They will also be attending worship services at a Jewish temple, Roman Catholic church, American Orthodox church, and possibly others. They will be conducting interviews, doing a mission project, attending Session and Presbytery meetings, and writing a 500-word Statement of Faith. There is a lot that will be happening, and I hope you will keep the confirmands, their sponsors, and me as their teacher in your prayers.

These are all big things, and I hope you will support them in whatever way you can. Let us all also pray for a little "up tick" on the temperature gauge as well.

See you in church!

*Tom*

## Worship Services and Scripture Passages for February

### February 6, 2011

- *Fifth Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*  
Isaiah 58:1-9b; Psalm 112:1-9;  
1 Corinthians 2:1-12; Matthew 5:13-20  
*Getting Out of The Way*

### February 13, 2011

- *Sixth Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Congregational Meeting Following Worship*  
Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8;  
1 Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37  
*Captive = Free*

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*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.*

### February 20, 2011

- *Seventh Sunday after Epiphany*  
Leviticus 19:1-2, 9-18; Psalm 119:33-40;  
I Corinthians 3:10-11, 16-23; Matthew 5:38-48  
*Pride Goes before the Fall*  
7:30 p.m. Taizé Service

### February 27, 2011

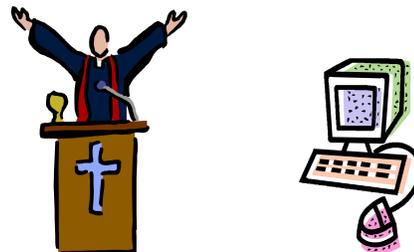
- *Eighth Sunday after Epiphany*  
Isaiah 49:8-16a; Psalm 131;  
I Corinthians 4:1-5; Matthew 6:24-34  
*Coming Home to God*

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**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.**

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Rev. Peters' sermons and the scripture readings are posted on the church website. Visit: [www.fpcstirling.org](http://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 for Sunday, February 13<sup>th</sup>, immediately following worship. This meeting is for the following purposes:

- ✓ Hearing and receiving the 2011 budget
- ✓ Possibly acting on enlarging the Board of Deacons
- ✓ Changing the terms of the manse renovation loan
- ✓ Reviewing the sexual misconduct policy (please see Pastor's Letter regarding this)

## **Christian Education Committee**

**- Lore Pateman**

### **2010 Mile of Pennies Campaign**



As of January 24<sup>th</sup>, we have raised **\$535.89**. **Donations from January 8<sup>th</sup> - 23<sup>rd</sup> totaled \$247.23. That's great! Our 2010 cut-off is January 30<sup>th</sup>.** Hopefully, we will receive the remaining generous donations to get us to our annual goal of **\$844.80**. That's \$308.91 more to go!

### Kenyan Student Scholarships Costs - -

Primary Scholarships: \$50 - School is free at primary level - goes towards school supplies and uniforms.  
Secondary Scholarships: \$225 - School is not free - goes towards tuition, school supplies, and uniforms.

So, our Mile of Pennies (\$844.80) can provide just under four secondary scholarships, or just under 17 primary scholarships, or just over 3 secondary and 3 primary scholarships. This makes a tremendous difference in young people's lives!

Thank you all for your generosity, spirit of love, and learning that you foster!

## **2011 Confirmation Class Under Way**

This year we have three young men taking the Confirmation journey. They are Garrett Blakeslee, Chris DeMatteo, and George Filippatos. All three are in the ninth grade at Watchung Hills Regional High School. On Sunday evening, January 23<sup>rd</sup>, the confirmands, parents, sponsors, Rev. Peters, and some session members met for a pop-luck dinner and kick-off meeting for the Confirmation journey.

Each confirmand selected a sponsor to be a guide, friend, and "sounding board" for their journey. Garrett's sponsor is Kai Ihringer, Chris's sponsor is Tom Parziale, and George's sponsor is Debra Sprague.

It's always exciting to see children who have grown up before the congregation get to this point in their spiritual journey. Please keep the young men, their sponsors, and Rev. Peters in your prayers as they go through this process.

Confirmation will be on Pentecost Sunday, June 12<sup>th</sup>.

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

Everyone is invited to join us at our next "Fourth Sunday Focus" gathering on **February 27<sup>th</sup>**. *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.

**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 download any studies they would like to have.

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

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, February 11<sup>th</sup>**, 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. Upcoming dates: March 18, April 8, May 13, and June 10. Thank you to all who have supported this program through donations and by helping to prepare the lunches!

**Ongoing Fundraiser****- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator****Grocery Store Gift Cards**

Due to their uncertain financial future, we are no longer selling gift cards for Pathmark. We are continuing to sell Shop-Rite gift cards, which can be purchased on Sunday mornings in Pollard Hall or by contacting Jean Hoffman. They are available in denominations of \$20, \$50, or \$100, and the church receives a percentage of every dollar purchased.

**Worship Committee****- Janet Parziale****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 to find peace and center their thoughts on God. The service is generally 45 minutes long. Our next Taizé service will be on **February 20<sup>th</sup>**.

**Deacons Corner****- Matthew Gerecht****Following is a list of the Board of Deacons for 2011 and their responsibilities:**

|                   |  |
|-------------------|--|
| Carolyn Malfatone | Moderator, Paraments/Chancel Set Up, Reception Coordinator |
| Mariann Powell    | Secretary, Corresponding Secretary                         |
| Bruce Coultas     | Treasurer  |
| Sue Sanders       | Vice-Moderator, Nominating Committee, Coffee Hour          |
| Israel Sierra     | Flowers  |
| Matthew Gerecht   | Deacons Corner/Newsletter                                  |

**Church Flowers**

If you would like to place flowers on the chancel for Sunday morning worship in honor or memory of someone, please contact Israel Sierra. 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 *Murphy Garden Center*) should be given to Israel or Carolyn Malfatone ahead of time since we have to pay for the flowers when they are delivered. Thank you.

**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. Thank you!

**Coffee Hour**

Several months ago, we started a *Coffee Hour Fund* that is used to provide refreshments on Sundays when no one has signed up as host. Jan Somers maintains the fund through donations. If you would like to contribute, please see Jan. Thank you!

**Water Available**

There will be a pitcher of water and cups available in the Church narthex in case you need a drink during worship. Please feel free to help yourself or signal an Usher to bring it to 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.

## Attention Children and Teens

### Survey of Musical Talent

In an effort to help our organist, Tatiana, better understand the musical talents we have in our congregation, the Personnel Committee has designed a short survey. Please take a moment to fill out the survey below, and send it to the church office, or give it to Tatiana on Sunday at worship. Thank you.

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We all enjoy the music during worship and feel that it adds so much to our service. In an effort to utilize the talent we have among the youth in our church family, we are asking our **children and teens** to answer the questions below. If you play a musical instrument and are willing to play it on occasion during one of our worship services, we want to hear from you. If you are able to sing and would be willing to sing a solo or sing with a few other church members, we want to know that too.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

I play a musical instrument and would be willing to play it at a worship service.

The instrument I play is: \_\_\_\_\_.

Check which applies to you:

\_\_\_\_\_ I would be willing to sing a solo during one of our worship services.

\_\_\_\_\_ I would be willing to sing with a few other church members.

Thank you for volunteering to add something special musically to our worship services.



Please return this questionnaire to our organist, Tatiana, or to the Church office.

**Book Request****- Mariann Powell & Toni Hopcraft**

Mariann and Toni are collecting books for an upcoming event they will be attending. The **very specific** books they need are:



**Reader's Digest Condensed, hard cover, with gold pages (edges)**

If you have any of these books that you no longer need, please bring them on Sundays in February. The deadline is **Feb. 27<sup>th</sup>**. Thank you.

**Visitation Schedule****- Rev. Peters**

From time to time, there will be a poster board 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 so that we can arrange a convenient time for a visit.

**Winter Retreat****- Chrissie P**

Once again, Kitchell Memorial Church (East Hanover) has invited our congregation to join them for their winter retreat. Those who attended in 2010 enjoyed a fun day of events including sledding, hiking, singing, a craft project, good food, worshipping, a scavenger hunt, a book chat, and, of course, good fellowship. The retreat will be on **Saturday, February 12<sup>th</sup>, at**



**Johnsonburg.** We will also have access to the cozy fireplace in the dining hall throughout the day! Registration forms are available in the Church narthex, Pollard Hall, and office. If you are concerned about the weather, I will help coordinate carpooling.

**Church Website**

Reminder: Our Church website, **[www.fpcstirling.org](http://www.fpcstirling.org)**, is your source for church news, the Church calendar, Stirling Stuff, upcoming events/programs, Pastor's sermons, Scripture readings, Church history, and more. Please make it a point to log on regularly and keep up-to-date with what's happening.

**These Days**

Our Church has a subscription for multiple copies of the devotional booklet, *These Days*. The latest issue is available in the Church narthex.

### 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 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 **158** 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

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

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*Please e-mail submissions for the February issue of Stirling Stuff to: [jsomers17@hotmail.com](mailto:jsomers17@hotmail.com) by February 20th. Thank you!*



*Stirling Stuff* is the newsletter of the

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