



Stirling Stuff

Volume 55, No. 10

November 2011

Pastor's Letter

One of the things I've realized about living in a city or suburb is that it is easy to lose the sense of the miracle of the harvest. Having grown up in a city in Indiana, we were not far from the corn, wheat, and soybean fields in the countryside all around us. In the Spring, we saw the fresh tilled and planted soil, then the shoots beginning to grow - we always said it was going to be a good year if the corn was knee high by the fourth of July. Then, the harvest came in the Fall, and the ground lay fallow until the next Spring when the whole process began again. We knew the farmers put in a lot of work, but the crops grew without any human help--except maybe for some fertilizer. What we were aware of is that there is a miracle in the growth of the crops. The growing season and harvest remind us that there are other forces at work in our universe.



As we come upon Thanksgiving this year, I hope we can reconnect with that sense of God at work in our midst. It has been a difficult year or even several years for many people. We've been involved in wars, experienced financial meltdowns, lost jobs, etc., but, through it all, there is this miraculous force that continues to create life over and over again. A number of years ago I came across the story of a young mother who escaped from the Nazis by hiding in the pit of a mass grave and, while she was there, she went into labor and gave birth to her newborn child. In the pit of death, new life began. In the midst of profound difficulties, people can find new beginnings. That is what we should be thankful for this year. Our thanksgiving is not so much about what we have or have been given materially, but that we have a God who continues to bless us when we don't feel blessed, that in the bare ground of our difficult lives lies the beginning of new life and new hope. I want to close with some of the words to that familiar Thanksgiving hymn, *We Plow the Fields*:

*We plow the fields and scatter
The good seed on the land,
But it is fed and watered
By God's almighty hand:
He sends the snow in winter,
The warmth to swell the grain,
The breezes and the sunshine,
And soft, refreshing rain.*

*Refrain:
All good gifts around us
Are sent from heaven above;
Then thank the Lord,
O thank the Lord,
For all His love.*

May God bless each of us with a sense of the miracle of new life in each of us this Thanksgiving.

See you in church!

Tom



Worship Services and Scripture Passages for November

November 6, 2011

- *All Saints Sunday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Remembering family and friends we have lost in the past year*
Revelation 7:9-17; Psalm 34:1-10, 22;
I John 3:1-3; Matthew 5:1-12
In Remembrance

November 13, 2011

- *Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Judges 4:1-7; Psalm 123
I Thessalonians 5:1-11; Matthew 25:14-30
If You Know . . .

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 20, 2011

- *Reign of Christ Sunday*
- *Sacrament of Baptism*
Ezekiel 34:11-16, 20-24; Psalm 100;
Ephesians 1:15-23; Matthew 25:31-46
Cooking Up Thanksgiving
7:30 p.m. - Taizé Service

November 27, 2011

- *First Sunday of Advent*
- *Heritage Sunday*
Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;
I Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37
Advent Themes in the Movies
1. *The Root of Jesse*

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**, for the purpose of electing church officers for 2012.

Advent Movie Series

Once again this Advent, we will look at the themes of Advent through the lens of the movie camera. The movies will lift up the themes of Advent and the Advent candles each week. The movies will be shown the Friday evening before the Sunday they will represent. What will be different this time is that there will be a discussion of the movies following the viewing. For this reason, the movies will begin at 7:00 pm. The dates when the movies will be shown, the themes, and the movies I have chosen are:

Nov. 25 th	Longing	<i>West Side Story</i>
Dec. 2 nd	Peace	<i>The War</i>
Dec. 9 th	Joy	<i>Life is Beautiful</i>
Dec. 16 th	Love	<i>Babette's Feast</i>



While I will not be preaching on Sunday, Dec. 18th (Children's Pageant), I want to show this movie (on Dec. 16th) as a wonderful non-Christmas expression of incarnational (God with us) love, and the discussion can be the sermon for this movie. As you can see, I'm staying away from the traditional Christmas movies because I'm sure you have them in your own movie collection, or you will be able to see them on TV. I hope this will also be a chance for you to get out of the Christmas season rush for some personal time.

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, Nov. 1st, and help is still needed in some areas.**

Please 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!

Christian Education Committee**- Lore Pateman****Adult Education****- Rev. Peters****Monthly Book Study**

The Monthly Book Study of Robert Morris' book, ***Wrestling with Grace***, will meet for their second session on **Wednesday, Nov. 9th, 7:30 p.m.**, at Lore Pateman's home in Millington. Please read Chapters 3-6 for discussion that evening. Even if you were unable to attend the first session, it's not too late to join the group. Please let Lore know if you will be attending and if you need directions to her home.

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, **Nov. 27th**. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.



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!) There will be a brief congregational meeting immediately following worship; then our Halloween fun will begin.

Church Flowers

Don't forget to sign-up on the Flower Chart in Pollard Hall if you would like to place flowers on the chancel for Sunday morning worship in honor or memory of someone. 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 Sierra or Carolyn Malfatone. Thank you.

**Worship Help**

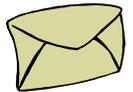
Please sign up for dates when you can help out as Liturgist, Usher, or host/sponsor of Coffee Hour. The Worship Help chart is posted in Pollard Hall, and **there are lots of openings**. If you would like to donate to a coffee hour and have someone else host it, please speak to Jan Somers. If you have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

Usher/Building Use Responsibilities

You have probably noticed new signs posted on/near the exit doors of both the sanctuary and Pollard Hall. These are meant to be reminders of specific responsibilities for ushers and anyone who uses the church or Pollard Hall. They are: turn off lights, turn off fans, lock doors. We will be highlighting other duties in the future, but these are especially important to the safety and security of our facilities.

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, Nov. 4th**, 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. Final date this year: Dec. 9th

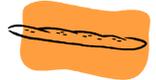
Coat Collection

We will continue collecting coats/jackets/children's outerwear for the next few weeks. Please place your donations on the pew in Pollard Hall **by Sunday, Nov. 6th**. Thank you.



Breadsticks

Once again we will be baking breadsticks 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 by contacting Jean Hoffman. The deadline to order is **Friday, November 11th**, and they can be picked up in Pollard Hall on **Sunday, November 20th**.



Thanksgiving Turkey/Ham Donations

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator

The supermarkets are once again promoting free turkeys/hams during the holiday season. If you are eligible to receive a turkey/ham that you will not be using, please consider donating it. As you know, the list of hungry people grows longer each day, and the food banks cannot keep up with the demand. We will be collecting the turkeys (please keep them frozen) and hams at church on the Sunday before Thanksgiving (**November 20th**) and delivering them to the Market Street Mission in Morristown for distribution. Your support of this program is very much appreciated.



Community Food Bank of NJ

- Tom Parziale

A group of 10 volunteers traveled to the Community Food Bank in Hillside on Saturday, October 8th, where they spent the morning sorting donated food and grocery products for distribution to those in need. Our hard working team included Chrissie Parziale, Madeline Hahl, Chris Scott, Kai Ihringer, Lukas Ihringer, Ian Blakeslee, Katherine Ihringer, Juliana Engler, Gabe Perrozi, and Tom Parziale. Thank you all!

Sewing Circle

- Jean Hoffman & Jan Somers

We are beginning to look into starting a knitting/crocheting/sewing group that would make items such as infant hats, wheelchair lap robes, and afghans to be donated to hospitals, nursing homes, and veteran's facilities. From time-to-time, we donate items made by church members, but we would like to have our own group meet at the church or in someone's home to work together on these projects. It could be a wonderful opportunity for both fellowship and mission work. Wool would be donated by the Pioneers, and we can request additional yarn and fabric through our newsletter.

Joyce Crawford, a former member of our congregation, is part of a group like this in PA. They were featured recently in a local news story called, "Charity of the Week: Sew Others May Be Warm." You can read about the work they are doing and get an idea of what we would like to start here in Stirling by going to: Palmer-ForksPA.Patch.com, search for *Sew Others May Be Warm*, and click on the article from Oct. 11, 2011. There are several pictures of the group (including Joyce) and many of the items they have made and donated.

Please let Jean Hoffman or Jan Somers know if you are interested in being part of this group. Thank you.

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

On **Nov. 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. During this service, we will take time to remember those special people we have lost during the past year, and a candle will be lit for each person as their name is read aloud.

Please contact the church office with information about anyone you would like to remember on this day.

Canned Food Collection, Nov. 6th

On the **first Sunday of each 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. The October collection—our first—was very successful. Thank you to all who contributed and to the children for their good work getting it all in their wagon.

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 Nov. 20th.**

Heritage Sunday

On **Sunday, Nov. 27th**, the church will be celebrating Heritage Sunday. As in the past, we will have a guest bagpiper; Dave Paladino will play the tune Richard Streeton composed for our church, *Stirling on the Hill*.

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 goodie to share. 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 join us to celebrate our church's Scottish heritage. Also, remember to wear a wee bit of plaid.

**First Sunday of Advent**

Nov. 27th is also the first Sunday of Advent, and we will begin a special program that will continue on the four Sundays in the season of Advent. We will be asking for participation in lighting the Advent candles and doing the readings. More information about Advent and our special services and programs will be included in the December issue of *Stirling Stuff*.

Stirling Stuff Mailing List

Our Church secretary, Paulette, is updating the *Stirling Stuff* mailing list. If your mail or e-mail information needs updating, 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. (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. Thank you.



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.

Fundraising Committee

- Jean Hoffman

On-Going Book Sale

Please take a look at the "Book Table" in Pollard Hall. Proceeds from this sale so far are \$84.70, 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.

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. They are very useful 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 Sunday. Thank you!

CHURCH DIRECTORY ALERT

We are updating our church directory. If your name, address, phone, or e-mail has changed, please fill out this form with **YOUR NAME AND THE NEW INFORMATION**, and place it in the collection plate, or drop it off/mail it to the church office. Also, please include any cell phones (and whose they are) if you would like them included in the directory. You do not need to complete this form if your information is correct as shown in the current directory.



Name: _____

Address: _____

Email: (Name): _____

(Name): _____

Home Phone: _____

Cell Phone: (Name): _____

Cell Phone: (Name): _____

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 **178** 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
December issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by Nov. 20th. 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