



Stirling Stuff

Volume 56, No. 4

April 2012

Pastor's Letter

Once again, we have come to Holy Week followed by the Easter season. I say the Easter season because, in the liturgical year, Easter is not just one day, but a season that lasts until the day of Pentecost. Of course, every Sunday is also a celebration of the resurrection, because without the resurrection there is no Church. The tendency for us as humans is to enjoy the triumphal entry on Palm Sunday and then skip to Easter and forgo the events of Holy Week. Holy Week is seen as a dark and depressing time of the church year. I've been saying for years that you cannot know the joy and high of Easter until you've experienced the darkness and lows of Holy Week. Holy Week brings the Easter celebration into sharper focus for our lives.

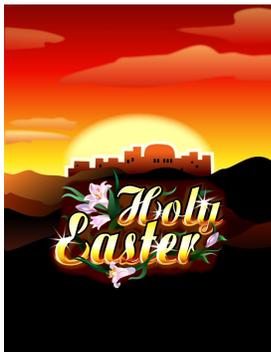


The lesson of Holy Week is that had we been there we would have acted just like the various players of the Holy Week story. Many people have a problem with that because they don't feel they would have been the same. Many feel they would not deny Jesus like Peter did. Many feel they would not desert Jesus like all of the disciples did, and so on. We have to remember we are looking back at the story in hindsight, and we do not have the fear of the time driving us. There was fear of the Roman army, fear of the religious authorities, and fear of the mob. As humans, we all experience that fear and fatigue of spirit. This is why the words of forgiveness of Jesus from the cross are so powerful and why the resurrection is so filled with joy.

The story of Holy Week is our story and, when we realize that, we can confess and experience the joyful grace of God. I hope you will join us for our Holy Week celebrations. On Palm Sunday, April 1st, our service will start with the triumphal entry, but the focus of the service will be on the events of the rest of the week. We will celebrate Maundy Thursday with the pot-luck supper at 6:30 p.m. and then our service of communion at 7:30 p.m. This year, the Good Friday service will be held at Meyersville Presbyterian Church at 7:30 pm. Our Easter celebration will be held at 10 a.m. on Sunday, April 8th. Please join us on this important pilgrimage.

See you in church!

Tom



Worship Services and Scripture Passages for April

April 1, 2012

- *Palm/Passion Sunday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
Mark 11:1-11; Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16;
Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1-15:47
Heaven On Our Minds?

April 5, 2012

- *Maundy Thursday*
- *6:30 p.m. - Pot Luck Supper*
- *7:30 p.m. - Service of Holy Communion*
Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19;
I Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17; 31b-35
Where Have Your Feet Been?

April 6, 2012

- *Good Friday*
- *7:30 p.m. - Service at Meyersville Presbyterian Church*
Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22;
Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42

April 8, 2012

- *Resurrection of the Lord*
7:00 a.m. - Service at Hillview Farm, Meyersville
10:00 a.m. - Worship Service in our Sanctuary
Travnicek Memorial Ringers playing
Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24;
I Corinthians 15:1-11; Mark 16:1-8
How Would You Run A Resurrection?

*Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings,
followed by Fellowship Hour 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.*

April 15, 2012

- *Second Sunday of Easter*
Acts 4:32-35; Psalm 133;
I John 1:1-2:2; John 20:19-31
Rev. Frank Benson preaching

April 22, 2012

- *Third Sunday of Easter*
- *Earth Day*
Acts 3:12-19; Psalm 4;
I John 3:1-7; Luke 24:36b-48
Sustainable Stewardship
Genesis 2:4b-15; Luke 12:13-21

April 29, 2012

- *Fourth Sunday of Easter*
Acts 4:5-12; Psalm 236;
I John 3:16-24; John 10:11-18
Finding a Home In God In Each Other

The scriptures provided here are the lectionary passages for those services. For Earth Day, April 22nd, I put the passages I will be using below the sermon title.

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.



New Beginnings

We have had the assessment, and now we are awaiting the assessor's report and the training of our group leaders. Then, the small groups will begin a series of meetings to reflect on what new direction we believe God is calling us to take. If we contact you and ask you to be a small group leader, please carefully consider it as we believe you have gifts that are needed to make this process work. When you are invited to become part of a small group, please know that your voice and spirit are important to the whole process, and we need you to be a part of the dialogue. This promises to be an exciting time in the life of our church, and we want you to be a part of it.



Special After-Church Meetings

As you may know, the Session has been conducting after-church Sunday meetings with members to discuss topics dealing with attracting new members and church finances. All members and friends of the church are invited to participate. We have held two meetings so far this year.

One recent suggestion was to inform people of the different purposes for which they can donate funds to the Church in addition to their regular weekly giving.

Money that the church receives through regular pledges and offerings goes into the **General Operations** account. This account supports the budget that was approved by the Session and the congregation.

There are also a number of **Dedicated Fund** accounts, which are used for specific projects or expenses. Additional money given to the church may be designated for one of the Dedicated Funds; otherwise, donated money goes into the General Account.

The Dedicated Fund accounts are:

1. *Memorial Garden Fund*

· The Memorial Garden is a cremation burial location for members of the church family; this fund supports the ongoing expenses of the Memorial Garden.

2. *Presbytery Heating Loan Fund*

· This fund consists of money that has been donated to repay the loan that was used to upgrade the church's heating system

3. *Door Replacement Fund*

· This fund will enable us to replace the old doors with more energy-efficient, safe, and beautiful doors.

4. *Major Maintenance Fund*

· The Major Maintenance Fund helps to fund major repairs. The current top priority is the replacement of the flat roof on the back of the building with a pitched roof.

5. *Bell Choir*

· The Bell Choir funds are used for the purchase and repair of equipment used by the Bell Choir.

6. Mission Fund

- Money that has been donated for mission projects goes into this fund.

7. Voucher Program

- Rather than donating to this account, people can easily help the church by purchasing gift cards (at face value) to do their regular shopping at Shop Rite. Gift cards are available in Pollard Hall each Sunday after church.

Another way to help is to name the church as a beneficiary in your Will. Bequests usually go into the Church Endowment; earnings from the endowment funds support mission and church maintenance on an ongoing basis.

Please remember that the church needs your financial support, especially in these tough economic times.

iGive**- Debra Sprague**

Want to help our church financially, in a way that doesn't have to cost you anything? Sign up for **iGive!** **iGive** is an online portal. You can shop through it; you can search online through it. Either way, each time you use it, the church can earn a small fee.

It costs nothing to sign up - and the church can earn \$5 for each person who signs up. Make one purchase through it, and the church earns another \$5.

To sign up, or for more information, go to: <http://www.igive.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-StirlingNJ>

Check it out, and let me know what you think of **iGive!**

Christian Education Committee**- Lore Pateman****Special CE Project**

The CE committee is collecting pictures of the church school children over the years. If you could go through your pictures and bring them in, we'd appreciate it. There is a box in Pollard Hall for the pictures. Then, down the road, we will schedule a fellowship event to put together scrap books. Thanks in advance for your pictures!

**Youth Mission Projects**

We are looking for a few volunteers to lead some youth mission projects this year. In particular, the CE committee thinks it is important that the projects give the students the opportunity to interact with other people. Some ideas we are considering are helping at a soup kitchen, doing a Bridges run where they help hand out the lunches, and helping with Family Promise of Morris County. But, we are open to any and all ideas. If you can help, please let one of the CE committee members know.



Adult Education**- Debra Sprague****Monthly Book Study****- Rev. Peters**

The final meeting of the Monthly Book Study of Robert Morris' *Wrestling with Grace* will be held on Wed., April 18th, 7:30 p.m., at the church. Please read Chap. 16-17 for discussion and review Exercise 7, pg. 228.

Fourth Sunday Focus - April 22nd**- Tom Parziale**

Just want to remind everyone about Fourth Sunday Focus gatherings. We meet at 8:45 a.m. and end at 9:45 a.m., but come and join us whenever you can. We have a Box o' Joe, a Pot of Tea, some Munchkins, and some conversation. In February, we discussed *A View of Lent*; March's topic has not yet been finalized. Tom Parziale facilitates the sessions, and we look forward to seeing you at one of the upcoming discussions. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please let Tom know.

**Educational Resources**

We subscribe to *The Thoughtful Christian* (www.thethoughtfulchristian.com) and use it as a source for many studies. *The Thoughtful Christian* is changing the pricing structure this year, but our subscription is good through June. Please take time to look at the website. Any downloadable studies you are interested in can be downloaded for no extra cost. Just let Debra Sprague know what studies you'd like. The studies can be for adult education, youth education, or just for your own use.

Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Canned Food Collection, April 1st**

On the first Sunday of each month, we collect donations of non-perishable food during the worship service. The food is donated to the township food pantry at St. Vincent Church. Please keep your food items with you in church for the children to collect. We continue to collect non-perishable food in the baskets located in the entry-ways to the church during the rest of the month.

Holy Week

We begin our observance of Holy Week with a Palm Sunday service at 10 a.m. on April 1st. The church youth will be participating in the service, and the children will pass out branches of eco-palms to the congregation.



On Maudy Thursday, April 5th, there will be a potluck supper at 6:30 p.m. in Pollard Hall to recall the Last Supper. (Please join us for the supper, even if you have not signed up.) The supper will be followed by a communion service at 7:30 p.m. in the sanctuary.

On Good Friday, April 6th, we will meet at the **Meyersville Presbyterian Church** at 7:30 p.m., for a service of worship led by Rev. Peters and Rev. Aspinal.

Easter Sunday, April 8th, will find the congregation celebrating with two joyful services. First, a sunrise service will be shared with the Meyersville church at the Hillview Farm in Meyersville, at 7:00 a.m. Then, we will celebrate the resurrection with a worship service in our sanctuary at 10 a.m. The Travnicek Memorial Ringers will be playing two songs during the service.

Please consider bringing a friend to any of the services during this significant time of year. Visitors are always welcome.

Taizé Service

Due to a decline in the numbers attending the 3rd Sunday of the month Taizé Service, it is being discontinued at this time.

Deacons Corner

- Katherine Ihringer

The Deacons have decided to officially change the name of Coffee Hour to Fellowship Hour! We need some people to sign up for Fellowship Hour, liturgist, and ushers. Don't be afraid to sign up for Fellowship Hour. It does not have to be elaborate and, if you are afraid to make the coffee, then you do not have to make it! Fellowship Hour can be simple; just bring some juice and some cookies, and you are good to go! The Deacons and the rest of the church will appreciate it. Thanks!

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 each church family signs up for one Sunday for each responsibility, most weeks will be covered. If you would like to donate to a coffee hour and have someone else host it, contact Jan Somers. Please speak with any Deacon if you have questions about any of these duties. Thank you!

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 Flowers on the Ridge) should be given to Israel Sierra. Please note: When you sign up on the flower chart, please be specific, i.e. in memory, honor, given by, and print clearly. Thank you.



Deacons' Fund Envelopes

Please remember to use the green *Deacons' Fund* envelopes for donations to help the Deacons with their Mission work. These envelopes are available in the pew racks or in the church office and may be placed in the offering plate. Thank you!



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

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, April 13th**, 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall. We can always use juice containers, bottled water, fruit cups, packets of cookies or other snacks, and plastic spoons. You can drop these items off in Pollard Hall on Sunday mornings. We appreciate all the support you have given to this much-needed program.

Upcoming dates: May 11th, June 8th

Community Food Bank**- Kai Ihringer**

Our church is planning to volunteer at the NJ Community Food Bank in Hillside on the morning of Friday, April 6th. This would be a really **GOOD** way to spend a small part of our **Good Friday!** The food bank is always looking for assistance, and this effort is one of the best ways to make a positive difference in the lives of other people who need our help. In return for our hard work, we get that **GOOD** feeling that comes from helping others and also enjoy some fellowship with our church family and friends.

Here is the information:

Date: Friday, April 6th

Departure: Meet at 9:00 a.m. in the church parking lot to carpool. Leave shortly thereafter.

Food Bank Slot: 10 a.m. to 12 noon

Return: Back at church parking lot between 12:30 p.m. and 1:00 p.m.

Please consider joining us and doing a **good deed on Good Friday!** If you plan to attend and have not yet signed up, please contact Kai so he can provide the Food Bank with a fairly **good** estimate of the size of our group.

And don't forget to reach out to non-church members who may want to join our group. Thanks!

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

We have received many new books, so please take a look at the "Book Table" in the hallway outside Pollard Hall. For more information, please speak to Ellen Eastty or Jean Hoffman.

**Church Archives****- Ellen Eastty**

Ellen Eastty is trying to update and finalize our church archives from the past few years. If you have any pictures, newspaper articles, awards, etc. involving church members, please give them to Ellen so she can finish this process and move on to the next year.

Recipe

By popular demand, following is the recipe for the delicious **Swedish Apple Pie** we enjoyed at a recent coffee hour:

Fill a 9" well-buttered pie plate 2/3 full with sliced apples
Sprinkle with: 1 tsp. cinnamon and 1 tblspn. Sugar

Mix together: 1½ sticks of melted butter
1 cup sugar
1 cup flour
1 beaten egg
pinch of salt
(½ cup chopped nuts, if desired)

Pour mixture over apples

Bake at 350° for 45 minutes or until top is golden brown



Final step: Sign up to host Fellowship Hour so you can share it with everyone!

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.

Church Website

Reminder: Our Church website, **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 new issue is available in the Church narthex.

Box Tops for Education**- Jan Somers**

Please continue to cut out "Box Tops for Education" and "Labels for Education" coupons that can be found on many food and paper products. If you do not use them elsewhere, please bring them to church and put them in the collection canister in the church office or during Fellowship Hour on Sunday. Each coupon has a point value, and the points are used by parent organizations to earn free educational/recreational items for schools. The coupons we collect will be donated to the schools where members of our church families attend. It's an easy way to get some free materials that can be put to very good use!

Thank you for your support of this ongoing project.

Earth Day 2012 - Mobilize the Earth

On April 22, 2012 more than one billion people around the globe will participate in Earth Day 2012 and help Mobilize the Earth™. People of all nationalities and backgrounds will voice their appreciation for the planet and demand its protection. Together we will stand united for a sustainable future and call upon individuals, organizations, and governments to do their part.



Attend a local Earth Day event and join one of our Earth Day campaigns as we collect A Billion Acts of Green® and elevate the importance of environmental issues around the world. Together we will Mobilize the Earth™ on April 22nd and demand change. (Taken from the Earth Day 2012 web-site)

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 **180** 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.

*Please e-mail submissions for the
May issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by April 22nd. Thank you!*

Why not invite a friend to church?



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