



Stirling Stuff

Volume 56, No. 1

January 2012

Pastor's Letter

2012
2011

So 2011 has come to a close, and we look at the blank slate of 2012. Some of us are glad to see the leaves of the year turn over with the hurts and sadness of 2011; others may have wanted to stay in the old a little while longer with its joys and blessings. But, time marches on, and we need to consider where we have been and where we want to go.

I came across a little piece in a book of poems by Genevieve Whitford entitled, *Queen Anne's Lace: Reflections on birth and death, love and hate, growing up and growing old . . .* the piece is entitled "Reflections."

*I passed a mirror recently
and I saw my mother there.
She seemed surprised to see me . . .
I'd caught her unaware.
But there's no mistake about it.
The dewlaps and graying hair
are so familiar to me,
I'd know them anywhere!*

In a larger sense, the poem says that we are products of our history, our genetics, and those forces of the world that touch us as individuals. Sometimes we feel that we cannot change ourselves--those things about us we wish to change. But there are times we need to change things or they become destructive to ourselves and our institutions. In this season of resolutions, of modification, what things do we really need to change?

The same needs to be said of our little church -- what things need to be altered? It is a question that we each need to ask. Will you ask it of yourself? Can we start to answer it by telling people why we come to this church and inviting them to come with us?

Tom

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for January

January 1, 2012

- *First Sunday after Christmas*
- *New Year's Day*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40
What Do You See?

January 8, 2012

- *Baptism of the Lord Sunday*
- *Renewal of Baptism Sunday*
Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29
Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
It's Been Torn Open!

January 15, 2012

- *Second Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Ordination and Installation of Officers*
1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;
1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
*Listening and Speaking –
the Chicken or the Egg?*
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.*

January 22, 2012

- *Third Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Annual Meeting Sunday*
Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12;
1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20
When We Know All Too Well What God is Asking

January 29, 2012

- *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*
Deuteronomy 18:15-20; Psalm 111;
1 Corinthians 8:1-13; Mark 1:21-28
Do We Have Touching Credentials?

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.



Annual Congregational Meeting

Session has called for the Annual Congregational Meeting of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling to be held in Pollard Hall on **Sunday, January 22nd**, at 11:00 a.m. The purposes of this meeting are to receive the annual reports of the Church; to vote on the 2012 budget; and, to elect the treasurer, financial secretary, and one additional at-large member. Please plan to attend this important event in the life of our Church as we look back over the past year and look ahead to 2012.

Per Capita Apportionment


 The **Per Capita Apportionment for 2012 is \$29** (no increase for the past 2 years). This is the amount that the church is assessed per member to help defray the expenses of the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly for ecclesiastical purposes. Please use the Per Capita envelope in the front of your offering envelopes box to help the church in meeting this requirement. Thank you.

2012 Church Offering Envelopes

If you have not yet picked up your 2012 Church Offering Envelopes, the boxes are labeled and are available in Pollard Hall or the church office. Thank you!

Ordination and Installation of Church Officers

On Sunday, January 15th, the following church members will be ordained and/or installed as Church officers:

<u>Elders:</u>	Chris Scott	<u>Deacons:</u>	Bruce Coultas	Beth Badilla
	Joyce Koenig		Ruth Young	Katherine Ihringer
	Madeline Hahl		Susan Gerecht	

Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Christmas Pageant



This year's pageant was an adaptation of "Christmas in Bethlehem," by Jane Boldenow, and was presented by our Church School students on December 18th, during morning worship. Many thanks to Beth Badilla for directing the play and to everyone who participated in this wonderful program.

Adult Education

- Rev. Peters

Monthly Book Study

The December meeting of the Monthly Book Study of Robert Morris' ***Wrestling with Grace*** was postponed. Please watch for information regarding the rescheduled date and location, and read Chapters 7-10 for discussion. Even if you were unable to attend previous sessions, it's not too late to join the group.

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, **January 22nd**, in the nursery. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.

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

The Interfaith Hospitality Network will be at the Shrine of St. Joseph in January. **Our church's responsibility will be Thurs., January 26th.** We have decided on a menu of hearty soups, breads, and salad for the dinner meal. Please consider joining us as we carry on this most important mission project with our 23rd year of participation. Watch for a sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall or speak to Phyllis or Chris if you can help out.

Looking ahead to future 2012 dates: Thursday, March 1st
Friday, Oct. 19th - Saturday Noon, October 20th

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

On the first Sunday of each month, we collect 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 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 will continue to collect non-perishable food in the baskets located in the entry-ways to the church during the rest of the month.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

On **Sunday, January 8th**, we will celebrate the Baptism of the Lord with a service of renewal of our own baptism. During the service, the congregation will be invited to take a small stone and write one word on it describing what baptism means to them. These rocks will then be placed in water. At the end of the service, everyone will have the opportunity to take one rock with them as a reminder of this special service.

**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 held on **January 15th**.

Worship Committee Thanks the Sanctuary Decorating Crew

Many thanks to all the volunteers who participated in decorating the sanctuary on Sat., December 17th. Activities included putting up and decorating the Christmas tree and decorating the pews and other areas of the sanctuary with greens. It was amazing how much was done in such a short time. (There was even time to put Carolyn Malfatone's ornaments in new, special places.) More than 25 adults and children (including some special visitors from England) also enjoyed a delicious pot-luck luncheon before the decorating began. We closed our festivities with a brief service, led by Rev. Peters. It was definitely a fun afternoon for all!



Christmas Morning Worship

Pictured here are some of our Church school children listening intently to Rev. Peters' "Talk with Children" on Christmas morning. The children had been following the journey of Mary, Joseph, and the animals throughout the Sundays in Advent and were excited to see that they had finally arrived and the baby, Jesus, was in the manger. What a wondrous sight, especially when seen through the eyes of children.



Deacons Corner

- Carolyn Malfatone

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!

Water Available During Worship

There will be a pitcher of water and cups available in the Church narthex in case you need a drink during worship, especially during the winter months when the air is very dry. 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 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, January 6th**, 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. In 2011, we prepared 440 lunches. We appreciate all the support you have given to this much-needed program. **Upcoming dates:** Feb. 3rd and March 9th

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

Please take a look at the "Book Table" in the hallway outside Pollard Hall. Proceeds from this sale to date are \$107.57, which will benefit the Kenya Scholarship Fund. Starting in 2012, all proceeds from book sales will go towards paying down the heating fund loan of our church. For more information, please speak to Ellen Eastty or Jean Hoffman.

Winter Retreat**- Chrissie P**

The Kitchell Memorial Church (East Hanover) has invited our congregation to join them for their winter retreat for the third year running. Those who attended in the past have 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. Rev. Peters will be leading the study group on the book, "Cutting for Stone," by Abraham Verghese.

The retreat will be on **Saturday, February 11th**, at **Johnsonburg Camp & Conference Center**. We will have access to the cozy fireplace in the dining hall throughout the day! You have the option to participate in the activities you choose, or just spend some time relaxing by the fire. The retreat fee is between \$20 –\$31, depending on which meals you attend. If you are concerned about the weather, I will help coordinate carpooling.



Watch for more information about the retreat in Stirling Stuff, the church Bulletin, and via email.

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**

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.

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, or you can give them to Jan. 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 **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
February issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by Jan. 22nd. Thank you!*

Why not invite a friend to church?



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