



Stirling Stuff

Volume 56, No. 3

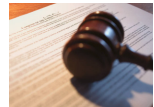
March 2012

Pastor's Letter

I must say that religion has certainly been in the news lately, but not, I'm afraid, in a positive way. There has been quite a bit of declaring who has the right faith and who doesn't. Religion and faith have been used a lot lately to build walls between people, and not just between Christians. One can only wonder what some of our men and women in uniform were thinking when they burned copies of the Qur'an in Afghanistan. It doesn't do well to burn the holy books of a faith that is predominant in the country where the books were burned.

Is it any wonder that men and women of all ages are giving up their faith or not even considering being part of a faith tradition because they are seeing how religious people are beating each other up? We begin to fully understand the wisdom of our founders when they wrote the 1st Amendment to the U.S. Constitution:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof;



We can only imagine how much worse things would be if that was not in the Bill of Rights. This is not why Jesus went to the cross - so that we can beat each other up. The Pharisees embodied much of the talk and rhetoric that we are seeing today, and that is what put Jesus on the cross. But it shouldn't be that way and doesn't have to be that way. In our church and in other churches in our Presbytery, we have the opportunity to give a vision of what faith in Jesus is really about. We have the opportunity to give people a Christ-centered vision of the church that is open to, and responds to, the needs of people and the community.

As I mentioned in my sermon on February 19th, the Session has voted to participate in a program called *New Beginnings*. This program helps churches find a new mission and purpose in light of the strengths of the local church and the needs of the community around it. This is a wonderful opportunity for us to discern what new thing God is calling us to do, and, at the same time, give others a vision of the Church that ministers to them and doesn't judge them. For this to happen, it will be vitally important for us to have the input and thoughts of as many people as we can. So when the time comes in the coming months, please be a part of the process when you are asked. It will mean the difference between success and failure. Let's show our community that there is still a compassionate power in our faith and trust in God the Creator, Son, and Holy Spirit.

See you in church!

Tom



Worship Services and Scripture Passages for March

March 4, 2012

- *Second Sunday in Lent*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Genesis 17:1-16; Psalm 22:23-31
Romans 4:13-25; Mark 8:31-38
The Lord's Guide to Untying Knots
3. *What Version Do We Really Want?*

March 11, 2012

- *Third Sunday in Lent*
Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19
I Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
The Lord's Guide to Untying Knots
4. *What Is the Real Cost of Daily Bread?*

March 18, 2012

- *Fourth Sunday in Lent*
Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22;
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21
The Lord's Guide to Untying Knots
5. *Do We Really Mean This?*

7:30 p.m. - Taizé Service

March 25, 2012

- *Fifth Sunday in Lent*
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 119:9-16;
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33
The Lord's Guide to Untying Knots
6. *Does God Really Test Us?*

The scriptures listed here are the lectionary passages for each Sunday in March. Since I am preaching a series on the Lord's Prayer, some or all of the scriptures read in the worship services in March will be different.

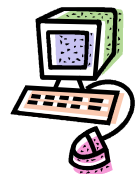
Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings, followed by coffee hour fellowship in Pollard Hall.

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.

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.




Handbell Choir



The Travnicsek Memorial Ringers will be playing during worship on Sunday, March 18th. The selection they will perform is, "The Bells of St. Mary's." Plan to attend worship that morning and enjoy their beautiful music.

Per Capita Apportionment

 This year, the Session voted to not include per capita in the budget and only send in what people pay towards their per capita. There have been questions about what per capita covers. Per capita is the money that pays for the staff and office expenses at the upper levels of our denomination. It is the only way that presbyteries, Synods, and the General Assembly can get the funds they need to operate. Per Capita is an important part of the connectional system that the Presbyterian Church is. Our Presbytery has supported us with loans and with staff and support help over the years.

Our Per Capita Apportionment for 2012 is \$29 per member. It has been the same for the past three years as the Presbytery has tried to hold down the cost of doing its business. If you have not paid your per capita, please do so, and perhaps consider sending a little more to help cover the cost of someone who does not pay. As Rev. Peters said at our annual meeting, it is important to note that Presbytery has to send the money owed to the Synod and General Assembly; so, if we do not send in all of our money, we force Presbytery to deplete its income by covering our amount due to the Synod and General Assembly. Please help us by doing your part.

Please use the special Per Capita envelope in the front of your offering envelopes box, or just note **Per Capita** on your check. Thank you!



Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Souper Bowl Collection

The "Souper Bowl" collection by the youth of the congregation on Super Bowl Sunday, Feb. 5th, raised \$191.36. The youth decided to split the donation 50-50 between: Market Street Mission, Morristown and Family Promise of Morris County. Thank you to all who contributed! It's wonderful that our congregation is so generous and great role models for our young people.

You can learn more about Souper Bowl of Caring at: <http://www.souperbowl.org/resources>

Special CE Project

Over the next few months, the CE committee will be collecting pictures of the 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

Joint-Church Lenten Soup Supper and Study Series



We will once again join Trinity United Church in Warren and Meyersville Presbyterian Church for Sunday evenings during Lent for the fourth year of our joint-church Soup Supper and Study Series. The series started on Feb. 26th and will continue through the month of March as we explore this year's education series topic, "**Searching for Answers to Big Questions.**"

Sessions will be led by Rev. Peters, Rev. Barbara Aspinall (Meyersville), and Elder Andrew Galgoci (Trinity United). The locations will rotate among the three churches, with the host church providing a soup supper and child care. Soup is served at 5 pm, and the discussions conclude by 7 pm.

Please sign up on the fellowship board in Pollard Hall so we can give the host church an idea of how many people to expect. There's also a sign-up sheet for help on March 18th, when we will be hosting the program.

Schedule:

March 4th – 5 pm, Meyersville Presbyterian Church - topic: "Who Is God? (Pt 2)"
led by Rev. Barbara Aspinall

March 11th – 5 pm, Trinity United Church - topic: "The Man Comes Around: Who Is Satan?"
led by Rev. Barbara Aspinall

March 18th – 5 pm, First Presbyterian Church - topic: "Who is the Antichrist?"
led by Andrew Galgoci

March 25th – 5 pm, Meyersville Presbyterian Church - topic: "What Do We Mean, Life After Death?"
led by Rev. Peters



Meyersville Presbyterian Church will be hosting a musical program before each week's soup supper. "We invite folks to join us for a quiet Lenten Vespers music program, 4-4:30 pm on the Sundays in Lent. It will be a mixture of piano, organ, and vocal music."

Monthly Book Study

- Rev. Peters

The next meeting of the Monthly Book Study of Robert Morris' *Wrestling with Grace* will be held on Wed., March 14th, 7:30 p.m., at the church. Please read Chapters 14-16 for discussion.

Fourth Sunday Focus - March 25th**- 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, March 4th**

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.

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 **March 18th**.

Looking Ahead to Holy Week

April 1st: Palm Sunday - Worship Service - 10:00 a.m.

April 5th: Maundy Thursday - Potluck Supper - 6:30 p.m.; Worship Service - 7:30 p.m.

April 6th: Good Friday - Worship Service - 7:30 p.m. - **at Meyersville Presbyterian Church**

April 8th: Easter Sunday - Sunrise Service - 7 a.m. - Hillview Farm, Meyersville; Church Service - 10:00 a.m.

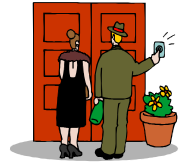
Deacons Corner**- Katherine Ihringer**

As you know, the church does not always know when someone is ill. Please let one of the Deacons or Rev. Peters know so we can send a card or visit you if you would like. If there is a message you want the entire church to be aware of, please notify one of the Deacons so that the phone chain or church-wide e-mail can be used to get the information out to everyone. Also, we have some homebound members of our church who would love to have company. A visit to them will mean a lot and be much appreciated. Thank you!

Our Homebound Members

- Jan Somers

To expand just a bit on Katherine's message, here is some information to help you keep in touch with two very special ladies. Mildred Hurlock and Jackie Dickson are long-time members of our church who are now homebound. One of the things they miss most is attending worship and keeping up with all that's happening at Stirling Presbyterian Church. A visit or call from others in the congregation can help "close the distance" and give them a sense of being connected.



Mildred is 97 years old and has a better memory than most (myself definitely included). She really enjoys reminiscing about the Church, the town, church families, and old friends. Please call her caregiver, Charmaine, and she will bring the phone to Mildred to chat with you or let you know a good time to visit.



Jackie also loves to hear about happenings at the church and in town. Since she was an educator for many years, she enjoys hearing about children. You can call Jackie for a chat or to schedule a visit.

Best time to call or visit Mildred or Jackie is late morning until 7 p.m.



I guarantee that the time you spend with either of these ladies will make you both feel good! (Contact information for Jackie and Mildred can be obtained from the church directory.)

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!



Easter Plants/Flowers

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of plants/flowers to be placed on the chancel for Easter morning in memory or honor of someone special in your life. Please use the order form below, which will also be available in the Sunday bulletins, to place your order. **The deadline to order is Palm Sunday, April 1st.**



EASTER FLOWER ORDER:

	<u>What Color?</u>	<u>How many?</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
Azalea @ \$15.50 (Red, White, Pink)	_____	_____	_____
Hyacinth @ \$10 (Pink, White, Blue)	_____	_____	_____
Tulips @ \$10 (Yellow, White, Purple, or other)	_____	_____	_____
Lilies @ \$11 (White)	_____	_____	_____
TOTALS		=====	=====

Flowers are purchased in **memory / honor** of:
(Please circle one)

By: _____

Please print clearly

To be picked up _____ To be planted _____
(following worship on Easter morning)

Please submit your order by Palm Sunday, April 1st, to Israel Sierra, or place in the offering plate.

**Make checks payable to: Flowers on the Ridge
and note: Easter Flowers**

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

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, March 9th**, 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: April 13th, May 11th, June 8th

One Great Hour of Sharing (OGHS)**- Rev. Tom Peters**

During Lent, we will be collecting our OGHS offering, which benefits three different groups in the Presbyterian Church (USA): Presbyterian Hunger Program, Self-Development of People, and Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA). After my 3-day seminar with PDA, I can attest to the power of our OGHS dollars. We reach many people in desperate need through this offering and, unless people direct their giving specifically to them, this is the only way these three vital organizations get funding. So, I hope you will give generously. There will be special OGHS offering envelopes in the pews, and more information will be included in the bulletin in the coming weeks.

**Interfaith Hospitality Network
(Family Promise of Morris County)****- Phyllis Clemson, Chris Scott**

Here are some excerpts from a letter we received from Joann Bjornson, Executive Director:

In January 2012, the Interfaith Hospitality Network became Family Promise of Morris County. The new name is shared with the national office and hundreds of other U.S. affiliates and conveys our mission and vision for the community. In addition to our shelter families, we also work with families who are currently housed to maintain their self-sufficiency.

Our day-to-day activities and local partnerships will not change or in any way be impacted by our name change. We are here to serve, support, and help our community families. Since opening its doors in 1988, our organization has served children and families facing homelessness and moved most of these families into permanent housing at a very high success rate. Our families have over a 90% success rate in achieving and maintaining self-sufficiency.

Our new website is www.familypromisemorris.org. We look forward to continuing and strengthening our relationship with you. In the meantime, we will continue making a difference - one family at a time.

March is Family Promise of Morris County Awareness Month**- Jean Hoffman, Mission Committee**

With the loss of Mission Endowment funds for 2012, we will not be able to make cash disbursements to our usual charities. Therefore, we have designated the month of March for collecting paper products for Interfaith, a program our church has supported for over 20 years. Please bring whatever you can afford in the way of paper towels, bath tissue, facial tissues, etc., and leave them on the pew in Pollard Hall. Your efforts are very much appreciated!

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. In January, we made \$10, which 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 Parziale**

On Sat., Feb. 11th, several members and friends of our congregation joined the Kitchell Memorial Church from East Hanover for their winter retreat at Johnsonburg Camp & Conference Center. We enjoyed a beautiful day of hiking, singing, doing crafts, eating good food, playing games, discussing the book *Cutting for Stone*, worshipping, and, of course, sharing lots of wonderful fellowship.

A particular highlight was during a game in which teams had to guess the answers based on clues read by their teammate. Each round was timed, so clues had to be given very quickly. Janet P. read this clue, “A **desert** that breaks apart . . .” The answer was, “How the cookie crumbles.” (If you get a chance, ask Janet why her team didn’t get that one.)

Here are some pictures of our group enjoying their day at Johnsonburg:



Rev. Peters (threading a needle),
Emily, Tom, and George



Relaxing by the beautiful, warm fireplace



Beth & Ronnie, hiking



George, Beth, Kai, Tom, Janet, Ronnie, Jan
Emily, Lisa, Chrissie, Rev. Peters

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 new year.

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 coffee 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.

2012 Session Responsibilities

In the February issue, the Board of Deacons responsibilities for 2012 were listed. Here are the 2012 Session responsibilities. Please refer to this list if you would like to speak to someone regarding a specific area of church life, a concern, a suggestion, etc.

<u>Position</u>	<u>Elder</u>
Clerk of Session:	
Take Minutes	Susan Brodziak
Take Minutes	Chris Scott
Data Entry into Records	Lore Pateman, Official Clerk of Session
Update Register and Prepare Statistical Reports	Madeline Hahl
President of Trustees	Ed Gerech, Jr.
Buildings & Grounds	Michael Nugent
Christian Education	Lore Pateman
Communications	Madeline Hahl
Finance	John Chen
Fund Raising	Susan Brodziak
Mission	Yvonne Fletcher
Nominating	Ed Gerech, Jr.
Nominating	Joyce Koenig
Personnel	Chris Scott
Presbytery Commissioner	Madeline Hahl
Property Administration	John Chen
Worship	Joyce Koenig

Prayer Concerns

Please continue to keep these members, friends, and loved ones in your prayers:



Mildred Hurlock
 Kamã Church
 Anthony Norcia (*Lynn Blakeslee*)
 Georgeine Lorentzen
 Nanette (*Madeline Hahl*)
 Jackie McCurdy (*Madeline Hahl*)
 Virginia Norcia (*Lynn Blakeslee*)
 Joe Richardella (*Sue Sanders*)
 Coalition Troops in Afghanistan
 Rev. David and Ann Muyskens (*Newton Presbytery*)
 Mary (*Madeline Hahl*)
 Curtis (*Israel Sierra*)
 Nancy (*Bill Hopcraft*)
 Donna (*Joyce Koenig*)
 Barbara (*Toni Hopcraft*)
 Fire Victims in South Plainfield
 Jean Hoffman

Diane (*The Hopcrafts*)
 Bill Richter (*Marie Darby*)
 Ted Moody, Jr.
 Jackie Dickson
 Antoinette Sarafino (*Tom Parziale*)
 Ryan Hudak (*Jan Somers*)
 Nina (*Tatiana Akhounzianova*)
 Bonnie Miller (*Edna & Sue Sanders*)
 Beth & Howard Blum (*Edna & Sue Sanders*)
 Virginia Marotte (*Carolyn Malfatone*)
 James (*Evelyn Smith*)
 Ed Gerecht, Sr.
 Venice (*Joyce Koenig*)
 Cary Brown (*Lore Pateman*)
 Charmaine McDonald (*Joyce Koenig*)

In remembrance . . .
 Please remember the family and friends of
 Trudy Brown, Lore Pateman's mother, who
 passed away on February 25th.

*Should you be admitted to the hospital,
 please have someone contact the church
 office so that Rev. Peters may visit.*



Happy Birthday!

Madison Thievon	2
Kim Pateman	4
Greg Andrus	6
Mitch Andrus	6
Bruce Coultas	10
Kylin Szewczuk	13
Bob Eastty	19
Jeff Blakeslee	25
Ray Adamus	24

Happy Anniversary!

Lore & Rich Pateman	8
Rosie & Mitch Andrus	24



**Daylight Savings Time begins
 on Sunday, March 11th; don't
 forget to turn all your clocks
AHEAD 1 hour on Sat. night.**

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.

Eye-glasses, 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
April issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by March 25th. Thank you!*

Why not invite a friend to church?



Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

First Presbyterian Church

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