



Stirling Stuff

Volume 56, No. 8

September 2012

Pastor's Letter

Congregational ministry, like most organizational missions in our day, is undergoing radical change. For the past 30 years, social scientists and cultural historians have been telling us that we are really in a new period in history. Like periods named before (e.g. Mesopotamian era, Greco-Roman period, Renaissance, Enlightenment), our time in history seems to be distinctively different from what has preceded it. We are in a "post-modern" world, characterized by global interconnection, technological revolution, a plurality of philosophical and religious frameworks to describe life and meaning, and unprecedented consumption of the earth's resources by humankind.



In most places in the world, and certainly in North America, people have experienced dramatic changes in the way they receive and process information, the races and languages spoken in city and village streets, the subjects studied in school and the tools used to study, forms of entertainment, and forums for making decisions. Is it any wonder that our congregational ministry should be undergoing dramatic change as well? When we think about it, we are all clear: what worked in the 1950s and 60s doesn't work now. And yet, like the people of the early years of any new historic era, we're not sure at all what will work in these new times, what new forms of church are emerging, and how we will share the gospel in ways appropriate to new generations. For a generation of people who prided themselves on building systems and industries and corporations that "worked," not knowing how to do and be a church is enormously frustrating—not to mention the grief and despair felt over losing "the church" that was so important in days past. [From: *New Beginnings: House Meeting Leader's Guide*, Presbyterian Church (USA)].

The book mentions that 67% of mainline denominations have been in decline. So, we have lots of company in our current predicament. However, unlike a lot of churches, your Session, your pastor, and those who are leading the house meetings have said the present course is not acceptable. So, we will not stay the course, but we will enter into a dialogue together with members of the church and God about a new direction God wants us to take. We will look at how the church needs to be different in today's post-modern world and not only find a new direction but also find a new passion and energy for the ministry of our family of faith.

The house groups will start the week of September 9th, and we hope you will join us. The sign-up sheets for the five different groups are posted, and you may sign up anytime you are at the church. The days and times are: Sunday - 11:30 am; Tuesday - 7:30 pm; Wednesday - 10 am and 7:30 pm; and, Thursday - 10am. I strongly encourage you to be a part of this very important process.

See you in church!

Tom

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for September

September 2, 2012 – Worship 9:30 a.m.

- *Twenty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Labor Day Sunday*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
James 1:17-27; Psalm 45:1-2, 6-9;
James 1:17-27; Mark 7:1-8, 14-15, 21-23
Rev. Dorothy Morris preaching

September 9, 2012 – Worship 10:00 a.m.

- *Twenty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *New Beginnings starts*
Proverbs 22:1-2, 8-9, 22-23; Psalm 125;
James 2:1-17; Mark 7:24-37
What Do You See From the Belfry?

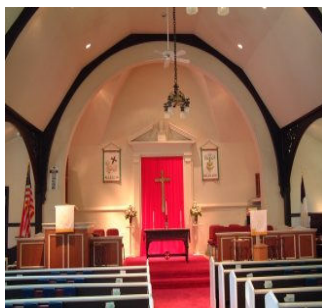
September 16, 2012

- *Twenty-Fourth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
- *Rally Day*
- *Commissioning of Church School Staff*
Proverbs 1:20-33; Psalm 19;
James 3:1-12; Mark 8:27-38
Shouting at the Street Corner

*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.*



September 23, 2012

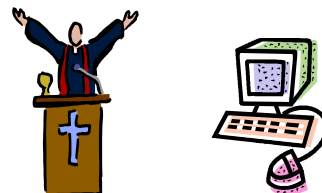
- *Twenty-Fifth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Proverbs 31:10-31; Psalm 1;
James 3:13-4:3, 7-8a; Mark 9:30-37
The Open Blossom

September 30, 2012

- *Twenty-Sixth Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Esther 7:1-6, 9-10, 9:20-22; Psalm 124;
James 5:13-20; Mark 9:38-50
What's Being Covered Up?

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.



Worship Schedule

Reminder: On Sept. 2nd, worship will still be at 9:30 a.m.
On Sept. 9th, worship time returns to 10:00 a.m.

New Beginnings



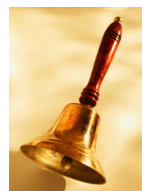
New Beginnings will start on Sunday, **Sept. 9th**, during worship and continue with a brunch and discussions following worship. Everyone is encouraged to make a point of attending worship on the 9th as we begin this important process in the life of our church together.

Confirmation Class

There are some big changes to our confirmation class this year. First of all, we will be starting in September instead of January, and we will be conducting a joint confirmation program with Meyersville Presbyterian Church. The program will begin with an orientation gathering on Saturday, **Sept. 15th at 6 p.m.** at Meyersville. All 8th grade and high school students who have not been confirmed are invited to attend the orientation session. We are also asking the parents of the confirmands and members of Session to attend this orientation. There will be a pot-luck dinner, so everyone is asked to bring a dish to share.

Handbell Choir Practice Starts

Anyone wishing to ring handbells this year is invited to our first rehearsal on Monday night, **Sept. 10th at 7:30 pm.** The choir is open to anyone who can count. We have fun together and we play during worship, generally once a month, as well as the concert in June with the Wilson Memorial Church Bell Choir. The choir members make sure that the director does not take things too seriously during rehearsal.



Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Join us for 2012 Christian Education Rally Day – Sunday, Sept. 16th

Kick off of 2012 Christian Education is Sunday, Sept. 16th. As in past years, the children and youth will participate in the beginning of worship and leave for Sunday School following the Children's Talk. We are blessed again this year to have CE teachers, Elaine Giordano and Tom Parziale.

Elaine will be teaching the younger children using the *Wee Believe* curriculum. The children seemed to respond to it well last year. Tom Parziale will be teaching the older youth using the *+Seasons of the Spirit* curriculum. During the service, Rev. Peters will commission the teachers for the coming year.

We will also continue to have many adult education opportunities throughout the year, and Tom Parziale will continue offering Fourth Sunday Focus gatherings each month.

Please come join us for Rally Day!

Adult Education**- Debra Sprague****Fourth Sunday Focus, September 30th****- 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. 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.

**Worship Committee****- Janet Parziale****Canned Food Collection, September 2nd**

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.

**World Communion Sunday, October 7th**

World Communion Sunday originated in the Presbyterian Church (USA). In 1936, for the first time, the first Sunday in October was celebrated in Presbyterian churches in the United States and overseas. From the beginning, it was planned so that other denominations could make use of it and, after a few years, the idea spread beyond the Presbyterian Church.



The Worship Committee is working with Rev. Peters to plan a special service, and members of the congregation will be invited to participate. The Peacemaking offering will also be received that morning.

Deacons Corner**- Katherine Ihringer****Worship/Fellowship Hour Help**

Please sign up for dates when you can help out as Liturgist, Usher, or host/sponsor of Fellowship Hour. The Worship/Fellowship Hour sign-up chart is posted in Pollard Hall, and **there are lots of openings**. Fellowship Hour can be simple; just bring some juice and some cookies, and you are good to go! 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

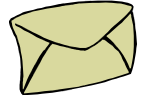
Don't forget to sign-up on the Flower Chart in Pollard Hall if you would like to place flowers on the chancel for Sunday morning worship in honor or memory of someone. Allow enough lead time to have them ordered for the date you would like. The cost is \$30, and cash or checks (made payable to Flowers on the Ridge) should be given to Israel Sierra.



When you sign up on the flower chart, please be specific, i.e. in memory, honor, given by, and print clearly.

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**

We have recently received some interesting information regarding this program, which we participate in through our donation of 40 lunches each month. Most of us have little knowledge of how the project works, so we will be excerpting items from their publication from time to time to highlight some of what they do.

“The Bridges Run,” or outreach visit, is at the heart of the mission *to bring the housed and homeless together in community*. The *Run* is an opportunity for a group of trained volunteers, along with a Bridges employee, to go directly to the streets and shelters to meet with homeless men, women, and families.

In this fiscal year (as of May 2012), Bridges made a total of 210 Runs to NYC, Newark, and Irvington, averaging four per week, an 11% increase over last year. Bridges met more than 500 people in need each week and delivered 100,000 brown bag meals; 9,000 toiletry kits; 13,000 pairs of socks; and 1,500 gallons of soup, hot chocolate, and lemonade.



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, Sept. 7th**, 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall. We are really low on practically everything, so we welcome donations of juice boxes, small water bottles, fruit/pudding cups, snacks of all kinds, fruit, 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: **Oct. 5th, Nov. 9th, Dec. 7th**

Crop Walk - October 14th

Please sign up in Pollard Hall and get your sponsor sheet for the Crop Walk to be held on **Sunday, Oct. 14th, at 1:30 p.m.** Get your exercise and have some fun for a good cause. If you cannot walk, please sponsor a walker, and make a donation to help fight hunger.

**Fundraising Committee****- Jean Hoffman****Church Yard Sale, October 19-20****- Madeline Hahl**

Consider cleaning out your garage, basement, or attic before the fall and contributing to the Church Yard Sale, to be held on Friday and Saturday, **Oct. 19th & 20th**. All items in good, working condition will be accepted. However, we will not be selling clothing, florist vases, or stuffed animals. Because of the use of Pollard Hall by outside groups, we ask that your donations not be delivered to the church before the last week in September. We are limited in storage space, and your consideration in this respect will be appreciated. Please contact Madeline Hahl with any questions.

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. To date, we have raised \$98.65, which benefits the Church Heating Loan. For more information, please speak to Ellen Easty or Jean Hoffman.



Fellowship

An Evening at the Ballpark

On Friday evening, August 10th, a group of 27 members and friends of our congregation enjoyed watching a Somerset Patriots baseball game in Bridgewater. It was a humid night, but at least the heavy rain from earlier that day ended in time to avoid a rainout. In addition to baseball, the evening included lots of snacks, knitting, catching a t-shirt shot into the stands, and fireworks. Thank you to Tom Parziale for organizing this fun evening.



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*.

"Featuring daily meditations and devotions wonderfully written by clergy and lay leaders, These Days continues to be the source of comfort and hope throughout the world and has been for thirty-five years." (Taken from *These Days* website)

The latest issue is available in the Church narthex.

Labels/Box Tops for Education**- Jan Somers**

Please continue to cut out "Labels for Education" and "Box Tops 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 in Pollard Hall on Sunday. The coupons we collect will be donated to the schools where members of our church families attend.

**Pop-Top Can Tabs**

Something else you can save are pop-top can tabs. Ronald McDonald Houses collect pop tabs instead of entire aluminum cans because it's more hygienic to store tabs than cans, and collection and storage is easier. Recycling centers send the local Chapter a check for the total value based upon weight. This program is an easy way for people of all ages to support RMH and know they are making a difference for families and children. While it does vary by Chapter, RMHC Upper Midwest raises approximately \$30,000 a year through their pop tab program.

If you would like to support this project, please put the tabs in the same collection canister, and I will sort them out.

Thank you for supporting of all these programs.

Remembering 9/11

The Tower of Remembrance, located at the Shrine of St. Joseph, Long Hill Road, Stirling, is a place where everyone can reflect on the sacredness of lives remembered. A bell tolls forty-six minutes after each hour starting at 8:46 a.m. and ending at 8:46 p.m. It tolls four times in remembrance of the lives lost at the North Tower, at the South Tower, at the Pentagon, and in the field in Pennsylvania.

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. They 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.

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

First Presbyterian Church

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Ongoing Fundraisers

ShopRite Gift Cards

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
- ✓ Purchase cards at face value
- ✓ Church earns 5%
- ✓ Denominations available: \$20, \$50, \$100
- ✓ Cards are available each week during fellowship hour.

iGive

- ✓ No cost to you
- ✓ Log on / sign up / find out more at:
<http://www.igive.com/FirstPresbyterianChurch-StirlingNJ>
- ✓ E-mail this link to your friends

*Please e-mail submissions for the
 October issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
 by September 20th. Thank you!*

Why not invite a friend to church?

