



# Stirling Stuff

Volume 56, No. 2

February 2012

## **Pastor's Letter**

In February we will enter the season of Lent--a season that most people know is important, but don't see on the same level as the major high holy days of Christmas and Easter. Some of the season of Lent's baggage is that people don't understand the season. Episcopal priest, author, and professor, the Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor, writes about Lent in a sermon entitled *Lenten Disciplines*:

Lent comes from the old English word *Lenten*, meaning "Spring." - not only a reference to the season before Easter, but also an invitation to a springtime for the soul. . . Forty days to remember what it is like to live by the grace of God alone and not by what we can supply for ourselves.

I consider Lent to be a sort of spiritual sweat lodge where we deal with the toxins of our lives and open ourselves up to the grace of God. After his temptations, Jesus was ministered to by angels. In having a Lenten discipline centered around time for prayer and introspection, fasting, reading of the Bible and/or a devotional, we not only open ourselves up to the grace of God, but we allow God to minister to us, and we open ourselves up to allow for God to transform our lives.



We begin this process of opening ourselves up to God's grace on Ash Wednesday, February 22<sup>nd</sup>, at 7:30 p.m., with our Service of Ashes and the Sacrament of Communion. We recognize our sinfulness before God, but then we experience God's grace in the sacrament. Please join us for this special service as we begin our Lenten journey.

See you in church!

*Tom*



REMEMBER THAT YOU  
ARE DUST AND TO DUST  
YOU SHALL RETURN

## Worship Services and Scripture Passages for February

### **February 5, 2012**

- *Fifth Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*  
Isaiah 40:21-31; Psalm 147:1-11, 20c  
I Corinthians 9:16-23; Mark 1:29-39  
*Spiritual Lives for Imperfect People*

### **February 12, 2012**

- *Sixth Sunday after Epiphany*  
2 Kings 5:1-14; Psalm 30  
I Corinthians 9:24-27; Mark 1:40-45  
*Jesus and Class Warfare*

### **February 19, 2012**

- *Transfiguration Sunday*  
2 Kings 2:1-12; Psalm 50:1-6;  
2 Corinthians 4:3-6; Mark 9:2-9  
*In the Presence of Holiness*  
7:30 p.m. - Taizé Service

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*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.*

### **February 22, 2012**

- *Ash Wednesday*
- *Service of Ashes – 7:30 p.m.*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*  
Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 51:1-17;  
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18  
*A Spiritual Physical*

### **February 26, 2012**

- *First Sunday in Lent*  
Genesis 9:8-17; Psalm 25:1-10;  
1 Peter 3:18-22; Mark 1:9-15  
*The Road Out of Baptism*

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**Scriptures that are listed after the first Gospel reading are non-lectionary passages that will be used in the sermon.**

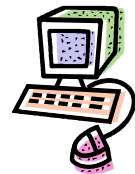
**All the scriptures are provided here for any weekly Bible reading you may do.**

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Rev. Peters' sermons and the scripture readings are posted on the church website.

Visit: [www.fpcstirling.org](http://www.fpcstirling.org), click on:

"Sermon Archive," then select the sermon and/or scripture reading date you would like.



### **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.

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

Over the next few months, the CE committee will be collecting pictures from the congregation of the children over the years. If you could go through your pictures and bring them in, we'd appreciate it. There will be 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!

**Monthly Gathering of Sunday School Children**

Each month during the school year, the 2 classes get together during Sunday School and celebrate birthdays, have a special message for the day, and recite *The Lord's Prayer* together. Since Sunday School is during the worship service, we thought that it's important for the older children to attend communion on the first Sunday of the month. So, we are moving the monthly gathering to the second Sunday of the month starting in February.

**Youth Mission**

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 personally hand out the lunches, and helping with Interfaith Hospitality Network. But, we are open to any and all ideas. If you can help, please let one of the CE committee members know.

**Educational Resources**

We subscribe to *The Thoughtful Christian* ([www.thethoughtfulchristian.com](http://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.

**Adult Education - Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>****- Debra Sprague****"What Does the Bible Say about Homosexuality?"**

As previously announced, the CE Committee is planning a series of education sessions on the topic of "LGBT Questions and the Pursuit of Understanding" (*LGBT is short for "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgendered"*). There are SO many headlines in the news about LGBT issues and how they relate to the church. We thought we'd start by exploring what the Bible has to say. Please join us for a 2-part series, being held after morning worship in Pollard Hall on Feb. 5<sup>th</sup> and 12<sup>th</sup>. (A light lunch will be served.)



*Please sign up on the Fellowship board in Pollard Hall. If you'd like to help by bringing something for the lunch, please contact Debra Sprague.*

**Monthly Book Study**

- Rev. Peters

The next meeting of the Monthly Book Study of Robert Morris' *Wrestling with Grace* will be held on Wed., Feb. 8<sup>th</sup>, at 7:30 p.m., at Rene' Phelan's home. (Please contact Rene' if you need directions.) Please read Chapters 11-13 for discussion.

**Fourth Sunday Focus - Sunday, February 26th**

- 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 January, we discussed *Seeing God in Winter*. February'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.

**Joint Church Adult Ed - Lenten Sunday Soup Supper and Study**

- Debra Sprague



Mark your calendar for Sunday evenings during Lent (Feb. 26 - March 27), 5 - 7 pm. We will once again join with members of Meyersville Presbyterian Church and Trinity United Church in Warren for a joint 5-week Lenten Soup Supper and Study series. Rotating among the churches, each church will host one or two Soup Suppers, followed by an interactive study session.

This has been a fun and well-attended learning and fellowship program for the past 3 years; if you haven't joined us in the past, please consider doing so this year. Child care is provided. The topic is still being finalized; we will announce the topic, along with a schedule of locations, in the church bulletin by mid-February.

Our church will likely host on March 18<sup>th</sup>, and we will need people to provide soup, bread/butter, dessert, and child care. More info will follow in next month's *Stirling Stuff*, or contact Debra.

**Interfaith Hospitality Network  
(Family Promise of Morris County)**

- Phyllis Clemson, Chris Scott

Thank you to everyone who helped this past week. Our church's next responsibility will be Thursday, March 1st. Please consider joining us as we carry on this most important mission project with our 23<sup>rd</sup> 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: Friday, Oct. 19<sup>th</sup> - Saturday Noon, Oct. 20<sup>th</sup>

**Worship Committee**

- Janet Parziale

**Canned Food Collection, Feb. 5<sup>th</sup>**

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 **Feb. 19<sup>th</sup>**.

Deacons Corner**- Katherine Ihringer**

Congratulations are in order to the two new deacons who were recently ordained and installed: Susan Gerecht and Katherine Ihringer! At the last Deacons meeting, we came to a consensus of who will do what job in the church:

Israel Sierra, Jr.	Moderator, Flowers
Bruce Coultas	Vice-Moderator, Treasurer
Susan Gerecht	Recording Secretary
Janet Parziale	Corresponding Secretary, Nominating Committee
Katherine Ihringer	Deacons Corner/Stirling Stuff
Matthew Gerecht	Paraments

The positions for Coffee Hour and Reception Coordinator are yet to be decided.

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

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. Please feel free to help yourself or signal an Usher to bring it to you.

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

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, February 3<sup>rd</sup>**, 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 date:** March 9<sup>th</sup>

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

Please take a look at the "Book Table" in the hallway outside Pollard Hall. 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 Easty 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 11<sup>th</sup>**, 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. If you plan to attend and have not yet signed up, please contact Chrissie ASAP.

**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](http://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.

**The Presbytery of Newton****- Phyllis Clemson****The Design Team of Newton Presbytery Announces "Town Meetings"**

The Design Team has been given a mandate to re-design the Presbytery. The Team has been working for more than a year. We would like to share the current design with you and get your feedback.

**Who should attend?**

- Teaching Elders (Ministers)
- Ruling Elders
- Committee Chairs and Members
- All those interested in how Presbytery does and will do ministry
- Everyone!

**WHEN****WHERE**Wed., Feb. 1<sup>st</sup>, 7-9 p.m.Stanhope Presbyterian  
100 Main St. Stanhope, NJTues., Feb. 7<sup>th</sup>, 2-4 p.m.Washington Presbyterian  
40 E. Church St., Washington, NJSat., Feb. 18<sup>th</sup>, 10 a.m.-12 noonCommunity Presbyterian  
220 Main St. Chester, NJ**Design Team Members:**

Revs. Jen VanZandt, (Chair) Judy Kolwicz, Tony MacNaughton, and Chris Scrivens  
Elders Paula Benson, Jeff Betz, Wendy Doidge, and Carl Erickson

RSVP to: The Presbytery Office @ 973-361-0084 or e-mail: [office@newtonpresbytery.org](mailto:office@newtonpresbytery.org)

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**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.

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## 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.

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*Please e-mail submissions for the  
March issue of Stirling Stuff to:  
[jsomers17@hotmail.com](mailto:jsomers17@hotmail.com)  
by Feb. 26<sup>th</sup>. Thank you!*

## Why not invite a friend to church?



**Stirling Stuff** is the newsletter of the

## First Presbyterian Church

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