



Stirling Stuff

Volume 57, No. 1

January 2013

Pastor's Letter



As we begin 2013, the big question as I am writing this seems to be, "are we going over the fiscal cliff?" It is no secret that Washington has been dysfunctional for some time. It seems that politicians today are not intent on creating better and safer lives for the people of our nation, but on creating power for themselves. There was a time when our political parties respected each other and worked together to make things happen. But now it is "my way or the highway."

I write this mindful of the fact that God calls us to live a different way. God calls us to respect all people, and this is evident in our celebration of the baptism of the Lord (January 13th). In his baptism, Jesus hears God's voice calling him *beloved*. As I have mentioned often over the years, God calls us *beloved* as well. Each and every person is one of God's beloved children. That statement has some far-reaching implications for us, if we choose to recognize them. If everyone is God's beloved, that means we must live our lives in ways that respect everyone's right to live a decent life or, as the Continental Congress declared in the Declaration of Independence, "the right to life, liberty, and the pursuit of happiness."

2012 was a difficult year in that it was filled with a lot of anger and a lot of denigration of people who thought differently. We saw this in the campaigning before the election and in the comments after the election, in the talks of the fiscal cliff, and in the shootings in Aurora, CO and Newtown, CT. If we are to survive as a nation of decent people, we have to turn this around. The way to begin is to remember our baptism. But, we must also remember that it is not just about us-- all of God's children are God's beloved. As I said on Christmas Eve, God's gift of love only becomes evident in the relationships we establish with others. God started it on that first Christmas; may we have the wisdom and the will to continue it in 2013 and beyond.

I pray that 2013 will be a year filled with blessings for all of God's children.

See you in church!

Tom



Worship Services and Scripture Passages for January

January 6, 2013

- *Epiphany*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
Be Careful Who You Give Your Gifts To

January 13, 2013

- *Baptism of the Lord Sunday*
- *Renewal of Baptism Service*
Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29;
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
Realignment

*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.*



January 20, 2013

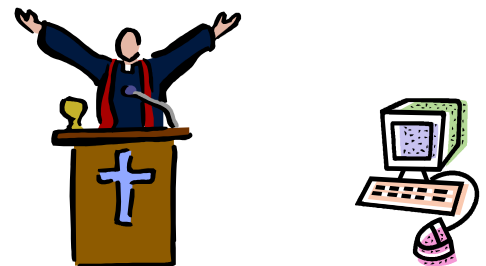
- *Second Sunday after Epiphany*
Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10;
1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
Guest Minister

January 27, 2013

- *Third Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Annual Meeting Sunday*
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21
The Truth; It's In There

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 Meeting of the Congregation and Corporation of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling to be held in Pollard Hall on **Sunday, January 27th**, at 11:00 a.m. The purposes of this meeting are to hear and receive the annual reports of the congregation and to elect a treasurer, financial secretary, and one Elder. 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 2013.

2013 Church Offering Envelopes

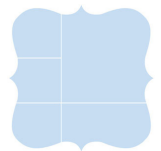
If you have not yet picked up your 2013 Church Offering Envelopes, the boxes are labeled and are available in Pollard Hall or the church office. Thank you!

Christian Education Committee**- Lore Pateman****Christmas Pageant**

This year's pageant was presented by our Church School students on December 23rd during morning worship. Many thanks to Beth Badilla for directing and to everyone who participated in this wonderful program.

Soup Lunch & Scrapbooking - Postponed

Our Pot Luck Soup Lunch and Scrapbooking event has been **postponed until February**. Please watch the church bulletins and February newsletter for more information. We are still collecting old Christian Education pictures, so it's not too late to include them.

**Game Night****- Debra Sprague**

We had a Game Night on Friday, Dec. 28th. We shared pizza, games, and warm fellowship on a cold winter night, and it was a lot of fun. We'd love to host another Game Night; please let the committee know what night would be good for you.

Adult Education**- Rev. Peters****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 27th**. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.

**Family Promise of Morris County****- Phyllis Clemson, Chris Scott**

Our next responsibility for *Family Promise* at the Shrine of St. Joseph is **Tues., January 8th**. A sign-up sheet is posted in Pollard Hall. Please help with this important on-going mission of our church — as we begin our 24th year of participation.

Looking ahead to future 2013 dates: Friday, Feb. 8th – Saturday Noon, Feb. 9th
Tuesday, November 19th

Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Non-Perishable Food Collection, Jan. 6th**

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.

Thank You to the Sanctuary Decorating Crew

Our thanks to all the volunteers who participated in decorating the sanctuary on Sat., Dec. 15th. 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, and it was definitely a fun time for all!

Deacons Corner**- Katherine Ihringer****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.

Worship/Fellowship Hour Help

We need people to sign up for Liturgist, usher, and coffee hour for the upcoming weeks. Remember that Fellowship Hour does not have to be fancy. All you need is coffee, tea, juice, and cookies. Fellowship Hour is an excellent way for everybody to talk after church, and it tends to have more people if there is food.

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, Jan. 11th, 9:30 a.m.**, in Pollard Hall. 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: **Feb. 8th, March 8th**

CROP Walk**- Debra Sprague**

Our church was well represented at the annual CROP walk held in New Providence in October. The confirmands, their sponsors, and others joined with members of Meyersville Presbyterian Church. Thank you to everyone who walked and/or supported this much-needed program.

Here is a picture of our group:

Front row, seated: Julia Minaian, Nicole Honegger, Katherine Ihringer, Brooke Kupferman, Kai Ihringer, and Elaine Giordano

Back row, standing: Debra Sprague, Rev. Tom Peters, Chris Scott, Ed Gerecht, Jenna Leski, Ian Blakeslee, Lukas Ihringer, Mariella Zijdel, and Shaylyn Gallagan

**Food Bank Volunteer Day****- Kai Ihringer**

Thank you to everyone (16 volunteers) who participated in our efforts at the NJ Community Food Bank in Hillside on Saturday, December 1st. All of your hard work and efforts were greatly appreciated by the food bank staff. We worked hard, enjoyed each other's company, and accomplished quite a lot!

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

We have many new books, so please take a look at the "Book Table" in the hallway outside Pollard Hall. To date, we have raised more than \$115, which benefits the Church Roof Loan. For more information, please speak to Ellen Easty or Jean Hoffman.

Winter Retreat**- Chrissie Parziale**

The Kitchell Memorial Church (East Hanover) has invited our congregation to join them for their winter retreat for the fourth 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.

The retreat will be on **Saturday, February 9th, at Johnsonburg**. We will have access to the cozy fireplace in the dining hall throughout the day! The retreat fee is between \$20 –\$31, depending on which meals you decide to attend. Registration forms will be available in January. 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.

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; Pop-Top Can Tabs**- 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. 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.



Ronald McDonald House collects pop-top can tabs and earns money from recycling centers based upon weight. It's an easy way to support RMH and make a difference for families and children. If you would like to support this project, please put the tabs in the same collection canister.

Thank you for supporting these programs.

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
- ✓ 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
February issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by January 24th. Thank you!*

Why not invite a friend to church?



Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

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