



Stirling Stuff

Volume 58, No.3

March 2014

Pastor's Letter

I'm sure we are glad to see March arrive, as it means we are closer to Spring – the season of warming skies, growing flowers, and budding trees. Of course, we may have to dig through ice in order to plant our bulbs; it feels like we may see the piles of snow and ice for a while yet.

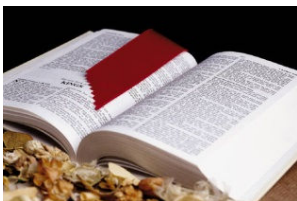
Another sign of winter turning into spring is the arrival of the season of Lent, then going into Holy Week and the great festival of the Day of Resurrection. We move from the cold drabness of ashes and our sin to the warmth and joy of the love of God found in the resurrection of Jesus, the Christ. This journey reminds us of who we are and who God is. Last Sunday at our *Lord's Prayer* brunch after church, I talked about how the fourth petition of the prayer, "Forgive us our sins as we forgive those who sin against us," reminds us that we do not have any ground to stand on to ask God for anything. We only have God's grace, and that is what Lent is all about.



Generally, during the season of Lent, I do a series of sermons on a theme. In a meeting with the Worship Committee, we talked about the differences between the four gospels in the New Testament. We decided it would be good to do a series on the four gospels and what makes them unique. I will take a gospel each week and look at it in depth. On the fifth Sunday, I will take a quick look at three gospels that did not make it into the canon, but have come to light over the years. I will be talking about the Gospel of Thomas, the Gospel of Mary, and the Infancy Gospel of Thomas in order to give us a flavor of some of the many other writings that were circulating beginning in the second century, but may have had an oral tradition beginning in the late first century.

What I hope to share with you is that each gospel was written with a purpose in mind, and the gospel was framed around that purpose. The stories that were told in each of the gospels were chosen for a reason, and I want to share that reason with you as a means of better understanding the message of each gospel. I will be speaking about the canonical gospels in the order in which it is believed they were written.

I have titled the series, *Visions of the Good News*. I hope you will join us during this journey through the gospel accounts of Jesus.



See you in Church!

Tom

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for March

March 2, 2014

- *Transfiguration Sunday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9
Sometimes God Says, "Shut Up!"

March 5, 2014

- *Ash Wednesday*
- *Service of Ashes – **7:30 p.m.***
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17;
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10; Matthew 6:1-6, 16-18
Ashes Keep Us From Slipping

March 9, 2014

- *First Sunday in Lent*
Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32;
Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11
Visions of the Good News
1. *Mark, The Wartime Gospel*
Assorted passages from Mark

*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.*



March 16, 2014

- *Second Sunday in Lent*
Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121;
Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; Matthew 17:1-9
Visions of the Good News
2. *Matthew, The Jewish Gospel*
Assorted passages from Matthew

March 23, 2014

- *Third Sunday in Lent*
Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95;
Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42
Visions of the Good News
3. *John, A Spiritual Gospel*
Assorted passages from John

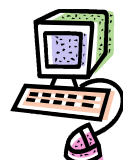
March 30, 2014

- *Fourth Sunday in Lent*
I Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23;
Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
Visions of the Good News
4. *Luke, the Gentile Gospel*
Assorted passages from Luke

**The scripture readings included above are
provided for your own weekly Bible reading.
The readings during the Lenten series,
"Visions of the Good News," will be
from the Gospel of the day.**

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.



Service of Ordination and Installation

The Service of Ordination and Installation was celebrated on Sunday, Feb. 2nd. Lynn Blakeslee and Kai Ihringer were ordained and installed as Elders; Terry Griner was ordained and installed as a Deacon; Lore Pateman was installed as an Elder; and, Shaylyn Gallagan and Israel Sierra, Jr. were installed as Deacons.

Per Capita Apportionment - Reminder

This year the Per Capita assessment per member is **\$32.22**. These funds are used by the Presbyterian Church (USA), Presbytery, and Synod to do their work. Please use the Per Capita envelope in the front of your offering envelopes box to help the church in meeting this requirement. Thank you.



Pastor's Coffee Klatch



The next Coffee Klatch will be on Sat., March 1st, 9:00 a.m., at the Stirling House Diner.

If you have a question, just want to talk, or have a friend you want to introduce to our church, plan to join Rev. Peters at the Diner. Since he will not be doing any counseling, if you come and someone else is sitting with him, pull up a chair and join them.

Brunch and Lord's Prayer Discussion

On Sunday, Feb. 16th, the Worship and Christian Education Committees hosted a brunch which focused on the Lord's Prayer. Rev. Peters led the discussion of the five petitions of the Lord's Prayer. The comfort of doing things the same way, along with the uncertainty and dislike of change, were shared. The instructions in the Gospels of Matthew and Luke regarding how to pray were noted. Multiple versions of the current Lord's Prayer were reviewed, including the King James version of the Bible which is about 400 years old, and is what we, at FPCS, use in worship today.



There was a healthy exchange of thoughts and viewpoints on whether the current version of the Lord's Prayer should stay in place during our services or whether other versions should be introduced. Some felt that things should remain unchanged, others suggested that we should be open to interjecting an alternate version at times, and some suggested a replacement of the version we currently use on a regular basis. The diversity of thought within the group of attendees was noteworthy, and we were pleased to have attendees that spanned a solid cross-sampling of the age groups of the congregation.

At the end of the session, Rev. Peters shared a prayer he had composed that is aligned to the five petitions of the Lord's Prayer, and he asked attendees to take on a homework assignment of writing their version of the prayer. Signed or anonymous versions shared with Rev. Peters will be appreciated.

The themes of the five petitions of the Lord's Prayer are:

1. The personal and transcendent nature of God and God's sacredness.
2. Wish for God's kingdom now and help for us to work towards that.
3. To ask for basic needs for others and ourselves for the present.
4. Recognition that we are sinners in need of God's mercy and to ask God's help forgiving others.
5. To recognize that God does not tempt us and to ask for God's help to get through the trials of life.

The petitions end with the Doxology.

Christian Education Committee**- Lore Pateman****"Souper Bowl of Caring" Collection****- Tom Parziale, Lore Pateman**

The Souper Bowl collection by the youth of our congregation on Sunday, Feb. 3rd, raised **\$257**; 100% of the money collected through **Souper Bowl of Caring** goes directly to local charities.

The youth decided to split the donation 50-50 between:

- **The Market Street Mission, Morristown**
- **Community Foodbank of NJ, Hillside**



Thank you to all who contributed! It is wonderful that our congregation is so generous and such great role models for our young people.

To learn more about **Souper Bowl of Caring**, go to: <http://www.souperbowl.org/resources/>

* The "scoreboard" of the overall collection in 2014 continues to show progress and has now exceeded 2013:

2014 - \$7,562,122

2013 - \$7,524,754

In addition to being proud to participate in such an important mission, it is also nice to receive thanks and hear about the ways in which the funds are used. Following is a letter we received from the Market Street Mission:

The Market Street Mission is honored to accept your Souper Bowl collection of \$128.50 on 2/7/14. Please thank your Sunday School youth as well.

Your gift transforms the hearts and lives of homeless and hungry people who come to the Mission this year. With eyes full of tears, they often can't find words to express their gratitude for the help they are offered here.

While you may not see the men, women and children you're helping, your support is making an impact in countless lives.

Every meal. Every night of safe shelter. Every hour of class or Bible study. Because of you, hurting people find help – and feel eternally grateful for the tremendous gift you've given them: the chance for a new beginning.

God bless you for your prayers, your generosity and your compassion for people in our community who are hungry and homeless.

Gratefully!

G. David Scott, Executive Director

Adult Education

- Debra Sprague

Joint-Church Lenten Sunday Soup Supper and Study Series

Please mark your calendar, and plan to join us for the sixth year of our joint church **Lenten Sunday Soup Supper and Study Series!** Again this year, we will join with our sisters and brothers from Meyersville Presbyterian Church and Trinity United Church in Warren for this joint Lenten program. The topic of this year's program is ***Forgiveness***.

There is ***"No Future Without Forgiveness,"*** as Archbishop Desmond Tutu compellingly argues in his book with that title. **There is also no Christianity without forgiveness.** Forgiving others and humbly asking for forgiveness are central disciplines for all Christian believers. Lent is an appropriate time to deepen our understanding and practice of forgiveness. **Join us** as we focus on and examine both our ability to forgive and our own need for forgiveness. Here is the series schedule:

Date	Host	Leader	Session Title
March 9	MPC*	Rev. Tom Peters	<i>Prelude to Forgiveness: The First Step</i>
March 16	FPCS	Heather Valosin	<i>Honesty: Engaging the Inner Struggle</i>
March 23	TUC**	Rev. Barbara Aspinall	<i>Repentance: Getting a New Mind</i>
March 30	FPCS	Rev. Barbara Aspinall	<i>Forgiving: Embracing Freedom</i>
April 6	MPC*	Heather Valosin	<i>Beginning Again: Reconciliation and Restoration</i>

* Meyersville Presbyterian Church is located at 223 Hickory Tavern Road, Gillette (on the Meyersville Circle)

** Trinity United Church is located at 118 King George Road, Warren

Sessions are held on 5 Sundays in Lent, 5-7 p.m., at the "Host" church. We will gather for a soup supper at 5:00 p.m.; the education program will begin at 5:40-5:45 and conclude by 7:00 p.m. Child care is provided.

As you can see, we'll be hosting on March 16th and March 30th, which means that we will provide the **soup supper** and **child care**. We'll need soup makers for each of those two dates, as well as people to bring bread, beverages, and desserts.

There will be a sign-up sheet posted in Pollard Hall by March 2nd; please sign up to help on one or both dates. Of course, we hope that many will be able to join us for all of the sessions.

Feel free to invite friends! We are looking forward to a wonderful program!

Fourth Sunday Focus, March 23rd

- 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 **March 23rd**. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.



Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Non-Perishable Food Collection, March 2nd**

On the first Sunday of each month, we collect donations of non-perishable food during the worship service. While we are receiving the Lord's Supper, we also want to provide for others. The food is donated to the township food pantry at St. Vincent Church. We continue to collect non-perishable food in the baskets located in the church entry-ways during the rest of the month.

**Ash Wednesday**

We will begin our journey through the season of Lent with our Service of Ashes and the Sacrament of Communion on **Wed., March 5th, 7:30 p.m.** The congregation of the Meyersville Presbyterian Church will be joining us in Stirling for this service, and both Rev. Peters and Rev. Aspinall will be participating.

Mission Committee**- Madeline Hahl****Bridges Outreach Lunch Program****- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator**

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, March 7th, 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.

Upcoming Date: April 11th

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

Thank you to everyone who helped with our *Family Promise* hosting responsibility on February 27th at the Shrine of St. Joseph. Our church is in it's 25th year of participation in this mission program, which depends on the work of volunteers to continue to be successful.

"Road to Bridges" Program

Our newest Mission program is Road to Bridges. The *Bridges* organization provides meals for homeless people in New Jersey and New York. Our church provides 40 lunches per month, and donations to this program will help defray some of the costs of the project. We hope you will participate with your usual generosity by putting change (and more) in the collection cannister in Pollard Hall or the Church office. Thank you.

Blankets & Warm Clothing Collection**- Jean Hoffman**

Our congregation has responded with great generosity to requests for blankets and warm clothing during this unusually bitter winter. Area churches have opened their doors to the needy but lack sufficient resources to fulfill this need; therefore, your donations were particularly appreciated. We recently sent two sleeping bags, blankets, and several bags of warm clothing and sneakers to St. Joseph's Social Services in Elizabeth. Our thanks to all for supporting this project.

Buildings & Grounds**- Tom Parziale**

Roof Project - We are scheduled to meet with the Town Board on Feb 25th as one of the final steps before we receive the go ahead for the replacement of the flat roof.

Deacons Corner**- Katherine Ihringer**

We want everyone to know that there is a gluten-free option offered during communion. We do not want our gluten-free members or visitors to feel uncomfortable during communion. If you are gluten free, please take the bread on the cupcake tinfoil.

An issue that our church continues to face is that there are not enough signups for ushers, liturgists, and coffee hour. The same people are continuing to do these multiple times. Coffee hour does not have to be elaborate; a box of cookies, juice, and coffee is all that is needed! Please sign up for the upcoming weeks.

Deacons Fund

There are green envelopes in the pews for donations to the Deacons Fund. This fund supports their Mission work. 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.

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.

Church Archives/Memorabilia**- Jan Somers, Editor**

For many years, Ellen Eastty has worked tirelessly to keep our Church memorabilia records up-to-date. She first took on this project because the records had not been kept current for several years, and she did not want that history to be lost. Take a look at the tall bookcase in Pollard Hall -- the shelves of binders Ellen has compiled will give you an idea of how much time she has dedicated to this project.

Sadly, in November, Ellen and Bob moved out of the area. As a result, Ellen will no longer be able to do this work and has asked me to take over starting this year. Although I agreed, I want to ask if there is anyone else in our congregation who might be interested in this task.

Since Ellen has already done the hard part of "catching up," it does not require a lot of time to add each year. The binders include news articles/pictures, programs, bulletins, etc. that mention church members in some way. It can be a township event, a school award/graduation, scouting, special church services, etc. They are not photo albums or scrapbooks (no quotes or clip art needed). Rev. Peters and others help out by saving local papers, news clippings, bulletins, and other items to be included. They are collected in the "News Clippings" mailbox outside the church offices. They are then placed chronologically into sheet protectors and put into binders. It's really an easy job that can be done every few months. If you would like more information, please speak to me or give Ellen a call.

And a special thanks to Ellen for the amazing job she has done to bring the Church archives to where they are today!

**Community Events****Long Hill Twp. Library****- Phyllis Clemson**

The Library offers concerts on Sunday afternoons at 2:00 p.m. Here is the schedule of concerts for March and April:

- *March 9 Flute and Jazz Trio
- *March 16 Joe DeVico & his Big Band
- *March 23 Flute, Harp & Piano
- March 30 Songs We Remember (Long Hill Twp. talent Evelyn Giuta and Al Barouch)
- **April 6 Broadway Classics Sing-along
- *April 27 NJ Youth Symphony Concerto with Violin, Harp, Piano



- *Funded by Wharton Music Center
- **Funded by NJ Council for the Arts

These Days

Our Church has a subscription for multiple copies of the devotional booklet, *These Days*. The latest issue is available in the Church narthex.

Earth Hour 2014 – March 29th

Millions of people around the world **switch off their lights for Earth Hour at 8.30 p.m. p.m.** in their local times on the **last Saturday of March** each year. Make Earth Hour **an event to share** with your friends and family!

It's time to switch off the lights during Earth Hour!

About Earth Hour

Earth Hour is a global WWF (formerly known as World Wildlife Fund) climate change initiative. It is an event that aims to create awareness of people taking responsibility towards a sustainable future by turning the lights off.



Iconic buildings and landmarks from Europe to Asia to the Americas have stood in darkness during previous Earth Hours. Businesses, government organizations, communities, and political leaders all take part in Earth Hour. It's about giving people a voice on the planet's future and working together to create a sustainable low carbon future for planet earth.

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.

Fellowship



Note from the Editor: There will be a *Recipe Sharing Corner* in future Stirling Stuff issues, as space permits. If you would like to share a recipe, please be sure to submit it by the newsletter deadline.

Labels/Box Tops for Education; Pop-Top Can Tabs

- Jan Somers

Please continue to save Labels for Education, Box Tops for Education, and pop-top can tabs. The labels are used by parent organizations to earn educational and recreational items for students.



The can tabs are sold by weight to recycling centers, and the proceeds are donated to Ronald MacDonald House to help fund their programs for hospitalized children and their families. There is a collection canister in the church office. Thank you.



Ongoing Mission Programs**Road to Bridges**

Change (and more) collected during coffee hour supports Bridges Program, providing 40 lunches per month for NJ/NY homeless.

Township Food Pantry

Items can be left in baskets labeled "Food Pantry Donations" in the Church narthex and on the table outside of Pollard Hall.

Toiletries

Full-sized and "courtesy" sized bars of soap, shampoo, and 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 & Fabric

Yarn is used to make lap robes for wounded veterans, afghans for battered women, and hats for newborns in hospitals; 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 & Kings Gift Cards**

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
- ✓ Purchase cards at face value
- ✓ Church earns 5%
- ✓ Denominations available are:
 - ShopRite: \$20, \$50, \$100
 - Kings: \$25, \$50, \$100
- ✓ Cards are available each week during Fellowship Hour or by contacting Jean Hoffman

iGive

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

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

Why not invite a friend to church?

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

First Presbyterian Church

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Our Mission

Jesus said, "Feed My Sheep." This welcoming and caring family, empowered by the love of Christ, shares the grace and peace of God's blessings by serving those who are hungry in body or spirit.

First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger