



Stirling Stuff

Volume 58, No. 11

December 2014

Pastor's Letter

The following is from the 14th Century theologian and mystic, Meister Eckhart:

We are all meant to be mothers of God. What good is it to me if this eternal birth of the divine son takes place unceasingly but does not take place within myself? And what good is it to me if Mary is full of grace and I am not?

What good is it to me for the creator to give birth to a son if I do not also give birth to the creator in my time and in my culture?

Then, then, is the fullness of time: When the Son of God is begotten in us.

It is so easy to think that Christmas is about us. God sent God's Son for us, personally. I am not saying that God didn't send the Son for us, but God sent the son for everyone else as well – even those who don't know the story. God sent the Son for those who follow a different story.

What Eckhart does though, is remind us that Christmas, while being a blessing for us, is also a responsibility. We cannot let "God with us" be literally just about us, but we must show Christ to others. We must give birth to "The Word" in our lives for others. We must put on the garb of Christ at company and family Christmas parties. We must give birth to Christ in the life of someone who is lonely or hurting. We must give birth to Christ in the life of someone who is hungry by feeding them not just with food, but with hope and peace.

Perhaps you know someone who can use help this Advent/Christmas season. Make it your mission to give birth to Christ to them. If you do this, I would love to hear what you did.

Let's not just adore the baby in the manger; let's give birth to him in our world. Don't forget you can also invite others to the various services we will be having in our church. You will find them listed in this newsletter.

Peace,

Tom



The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for December

December 7, 2014

- *Second Sunday of Advent*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 6-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
Do We Believe in Mercy?

December 14, 2014

- *Third Sunday of Advent*
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126;
I Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 6:1-8, 19-28
Do You Have a Yearning Spirit?

*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.*



December 21, 2014

- *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
10:00 a.m. – Youth Pageant
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Luke 1:47-55;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
- 4:00 p.m. – Blue Christmas Service
When Fear Takes Hold

December 24, 2014

- 8:00 p.m. - Christmas Eve Service
Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Do You Get It?

December 28, 2014

- *First Sunday After Christmas*
Isaiah 61:10-62:3; Psalm 148;
Galatians 4:4-7; Luke 2:22-40
Keeping the Old, New

**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.



Pastor's Coffee Klatch

The next Coffee Klatch will be on **Sat., Dec. 6th, 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.



Sanctuary Cleaning Day

- Jan Somers

As we get ready to decorate for the season of Advent, we are having a **Sanctuary Cleaning Day, Sat., Dec. 6th, 10:00 a.m.** There is plenty to be done, so please join us even for a little while and offer whatever help you can. Bring rags/dust cloths, furniture polish, Swiffer-type mops, window cleaner, etc. For more information, contact Jan Somers.

Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Christmas Pageant

This year's Christmas Pageant, which was written by Brooke Kupferman, will be presented by our church youth on **Sunday, Dec. 21st**, during morning worship. The Sunday rehearsal schedule is as follows:

Nov. 30, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Dec. 7, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Dec. 14, 10:00 to 11:00 a.m.

Dec. 21, 9:00 to 10:00 a.m., followed by the presentation during worship

Adult Education

- Debra Sprague

Soup Lunch and Discussion

Mark your calendars for **Sunday, January 18th**, for a soup lunch following worship, as we host another in our Adult Ed lunch discussions (topic to be announced). Watch for more information in the January Stirling Stuff.

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.



Our next "Fourth Sunday Focus" gathering will be on **Dec. 28th** in Pollard Hall. We start around **8:45 a.m.** and end by about 9:45 a.m., but join us whenever you can. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, please contact Tom Parziale.

Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

Heritage Sunday

On **Nov. 30th**, the church will be celebrating Heritage Sunday, when we honor our Scottish history with a "Kirkin' of the Tartan" service (translation: Church blessing of the tartan). Once again, we will have a guest bagpiper, Dave Paladino, who will play the tune Richard Streeton composed for our church entitled, "Stirling on the Hill."



Following our worship service, there will be a special coffee hour with lots of Scottish goodies to enjoy. The Worship Committee invites anyone who enjoys baking to bring their favorite Scottish goodies to share. Of course, a fine pot of tea



will also be served! Please plan to join us for this festive service as we celebrate our church's Scottish heritage, and remember to wear a wee bit of plaid.

First Sunday of Advent

Nov. 30th is also the first Sunday of Advent, and we will begin a special program that will continue for the four Sundays leading up to Christmas Eve. Come and celebrate the wonderful Season of Advent.

**Liturgists for December**

The Liturgists for our December morning worship services will be:

Dec. 7	Susan Gerecht	Dec. 21	Youth/Rev. Peters
Dec. 14	Jan Somers	Dec. 28	Susan Gerecht

Non-Perishable Food Collection, Dec. 7th

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.

**Blue Christmas**

On **Sunday, Dec. 21st at 4:00 p.m.** we will offer our Blue Christmas Service. This service is for those who are having trouble with grief, sadness, or loneliness this holiday season. If you know of someone going through these emotions, please invite them to this service, or bring them to the service with you. It is a service that claims the Christmas story and promise for people going through difficult times.

Mission Committee

- Madeline Hahl

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator

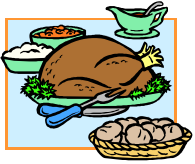


Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, Dec. 5th, 9:30 a.m.**, in Pollard Hall. We are in need of small cartons of juice, snacks of pudding, cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels, etc., fruit cups, and plastic spoons. Of course, cash donations are always appreciated and help with the purchase of bread and lunch meat. You can drop items off in Pollard Hall on Sunday mornings, or give cash donations to Madeline or Jean. Thank you!

Upcoming dates: Jan. 16, Feb. 6

Warm Clothing Collection

The cold weather is upon us, and we are looking to serve the homeless and needy. If you have blankets, jackets, coats, sweaters, or other warm clothing to donate, please place them on the bench in Pollard Hall. Men's wear will be donated to the *Bridges Outreach Program* and all other items, including children's clothing, will go to *St. Joseph's Social Services* in Elizabeth. Your donations are much appreciated.

Thanksgiving Turkey Donations

Thank you to everyone who participated in our turkey collection. Our thanks to Lynne & Bill Combs who delivered six turkeys to the Market Street Mission in Morristown for distribution to the needy. Your support of this program is very much appreciated.

Community Food Bank

- Kai Ihringer



Once again, we had the opportunity to help fulfill our church's mission of "Feeding Those Who Hunger." Thank you to all of those who worked at the Community Food Bank in Hillside on the morning of Sat., Nov. 22nd.

Pictured here is our team of volunteers, including two friends from the Meyersville Presbyterian Church. Standing from left: Rosanne McGraw, Kai Ihringer, Megan Gallagan, Tom Parziale, Deborah Ameen, Lynn Blakeslee, Luke Ihringer, Ed & Sue Gerech, and Alquan Joyner (Food Bank Co-Coordinator) Front with Banner: Shaylyn Gallagan, Amanda Gerech, Brooke Kupferman, and Katherine Ihringer

Family Promise of Morris County

- Phyllis Clemson & Jan Somers

Thank you to everyone who helped with our hosting responsibilities for *Family Promise* at the Shrine of St. Joseph on Nov. 21-22nd. Our evening, overnight, and morning hosts and those who made donations of money and food all contributed to making this a comfortable stay for the families in the program.

Our next responsibility is **Tues., Jan. 27th**. Please watch for more information and a sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall.

Deacons Corner

- Carolyn Malfatone

Christmas Poinsettias Orders

If you would like to place an order for Poinsettias to help decorate the sanctuary during Advent, **please complete the form on page 8, and return it to the church by Dec. 14th** with your payment. Thank you.

Community Carol Ring and Sing

On **Sunday, Dec. 14th, at 6:00 p.m.**, our church will once again be hosting the Community Carol Sing & Ring. We will sing Christmas carols by candlelight on the front lawn of the church, then the Travnicek Handbell choir will be ringing some Christmas songs in the sanctuary, and then we will gather in Pollard Hall for Christmas wassail, hot chocolate, cookies, and fellowship. Please plan to join us, and invite your family, friends, and neighbors. The Deacons would appreciate donations of cookies.



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. Thank you.

Emergency Clean-Up Buckets

During Fellowship Hour on Sunday, Nov. 23rd, everyone pitched in and assembled 10 Emergency Clean-Up Buckets with supplies that had been donated by the congregation or purchased by the Deacons. Shaylyn Gallagan will deliver the buckets to a drop-off location; from there, they will be shipped to a Church World Service site in Maryland. The buckets will then be sent out when they are needed to help following floods, hurricanes, tornadoes, and other disasters in the United States.



After Hurricane Sandy, buckets were sent to New Jersey to help us recover from the disaster. Thank you to everyone for donating supplies and for helping to assemble the buckets.

Deacons Fund



There are green envelopes in the pew racks for donations to the Deacons Fund. This fund helps support the Mission work of the Board of Deacons. Recently, it was used to purchase supplies for the Emergency Clean-Up Buckets.

Water Available During Worship

There is 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.



Church Communications

If you have things that need to be communicated to the church office, please take the initiative, and contact her directly. Send an email, make a call, or leave a note - they're all good ways to reach our office manager.



Church Website

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.

iGive.com

Make the holidays even more special for The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

Lots of people shop online, especially at this time of year.

If **you** plan to do any on-line shopping - or even if you only plan to LOOK online - please consider using the information and link in the following email. It doesn't cost you anything, all costs are paid for by the stores, and it might earn a few dollars for the church. (You can forward the link to others to use, too - we get credit for anyone who uses the link.) Our church can earn an **extra \$5** for every new member who tries the **iGive Button**, even if they don't end up making a purchase. **Share now** by forwarding this link, posting on Facebook, or even tweeting.

Here's the special link you must use: <http://iGive.com/welcome/warmwelcome.cfm?c=60807&m=717498>

It automatically makes sure that a portion of your on-line purchases at over 1,000 stores means a donation to the Church. Shopping = Giving year 'round. Use an iPad or iPhone? It's very easy to help - just visit iGive.com and start your shopping there.

Thanks for considering this!

These Days

"These Days has been the concrete expression of the church's witness to the love of Jesus Christ to the world for more than three decades."

Our Church has a subscription for multiple copies of this devotional booklet; it is available in the Church narthex.

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.



Christmas Poinsettias Order Form

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. Please use the order form below or the forms available in the Sunday bulletin to place your order, and specify if you are ordering in memory or honor of someone special in your life. The price is the same as last year: \$16.50 each.

The deadline to order is Sunday, December 14th

Price: \$16.50 each

Colors: Red, White, or Pink



<u>What Color</u>	<u>How many</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____

TOTALS _____

Purchased in MEMORY / HONOR of:
(Please circle one)

By: _____
Please print clearly

To be picked up following Christmas Eve worship: _____ **To be donated:** _____

Please submit your order and payment to Israel Sierra, to the church office, or place in the offering plate.

Make checks payable to: **Flowers on the Ridge** and note: Christmas Poinsettia on your check.

Deadline to order: **Sunday, December 14th**

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.

Eye-glasses, 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 Fundraisers**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: \$50, \$100
- ✓ Gift 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
January issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by **Dec. 21st**. Thank you!

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

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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.

Why not invite a friend to church?

