



Stirling Stuff

Volume 59, No. 11

December 2015

Pastor's Letter

Recently, I've had several experiences that caused me to remember Michael Norton's words in the lecture we listened to in November about, "Does money buy happiness?" He talked about the fact that we get disappointed when we buy something but we can't get it right away. We want it now. He talked about how money buys us happiness when we can look forward to it, like a trip or an experience we plan for.

On November 18th, I went to the assisted living facility where I do two monthly services and, in the lobby, there was a 10-foot Christmas tree all decorated. I looked over to the receptionist and said, "It's too early." She just rolled her eyes and shook her head in agreement. Today, Barbara and I flew down to Knoxville, Tennessee to visit her mother for Thanksgiving. I was mindful of the thought that, yes, we get there fast, but it's a very tiring way to travel. It kind of feels like it's too fast.

I bring up these experiences because they reflect something about the nature and meaning of the season of Advent. I've said many times that Advent prevents us from getting to Christmas too fast. Advent gives us time to look forward to Christmas and, as we do, we reflect on what it means for us. Advent gives us time to think about what happened and why. Think of the build-up to that first Christmas. According to the story, Mary had been visited by an angel who told her she was going to give birth to the Messiah. She became pregnant and had to deal with telling Joseph that she was pregnant. She had a lot to think about during her pregnancy and the arduous 80-mile journey to Bethlehem. Was this really the Messiah she was expecting? What would Joseph do once the child was born? I'm sure there was much soul searching on the way to Bethlehem, not to mention the trip probably took 3-4 days. The story didn't just happen overnight, and there was a lot of reflection.



I hope you will take some time during Advent to ask yourself, *What do I believe about Christmas? What are my expectations of this Christmas?* Spend some time in silent reflection on these questions. Read the Christmas story in Matthew and Luke in chapters one and two. Let this Advent be a time to intentionally slow down the rush to Christmas, and prepare yourself spiritually for the announcement of the angel to the shepherds. Take your time getting to Bethlehem.

"Waiting is a period of learning.
The longer we wait, the more we
hear about him for whom we are
waiting."

Henri Nouwen

See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for December

December 6, 2015

- *Second Sunday of Advent*
 - *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
 - *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79;
Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
- The Voices of Advent***
2. John – A Voice in the Wilderness
Mark 1:1-8

December 13, 2015

- *Third Sunday of Advent*
Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6;
Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 1:7-18
- The Voices of Advent***
3. Joseph – A Simple Man of Faith
Matthew 1:18-25

*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.*

*Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings,
followed by Fellowship Hour in Pollard Hall.*



December 20, 2015 – Meyersville – 10:00 a.m.

- *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
Micah 5:2-5a; Psalm 80:1-7;
Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-55
- Christmas Pageant -
Meyersville Presbyterian Church***

4:00 p.m. – Blue Christmas Service - Stirling

December 24, 2015

- *Christmas Eve Service – 8:00 p.m.*
Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
- A Voice of Christmas***
**4. A Shepherd –
The Earthly Herald of Good Tidings**

December 27, 2015

- *First Sunday after Christmas*
1 Samuel 2:18-20; Psalm 148;
Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52
- Stealing Baby Jesus***

**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. 5th, 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.



2016 Church Offering Envelopes

The 2016 Church Offering Envelopes have been prepared and will be available to be picked up in Pollard Hall. Thank you!

Music Series

On **Sunday, December 6th, at 2:00 p.m.**, we will be hosting another concert in our sanctuary. The Mosaic Flute Duo, Natasha Loomis and Mitzy Nonaka, will be performing. Natasha Loomis recently appeared in France at the Zodiak Festival. She is currently pursuing a D.M.A. in flute performance at Rutgers University's Mason Gross School of the Arts. She is also a flute instructor at Montclair State University Preparatory Center for the Arts and 2nd flutist with the Adelphi Chamber Orchestra. Mitzy Nonaka enjoys a varied freelance career in New York. Originally from Brazil, she was primarily self-taught before beginning her undergraduate studies at SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music. She completed graduate work at both NYU and Rutgers University.

Accompanying the flutists will be Fumi Kuwajima, who began studying piano at the age of 4 in Japan. She received her Bachelor of Music degree in 2002 from Soai University, where she was chosen as one of three piano soloists for the commencement concert. Fumi performs regularly with Gary Schocker, world-renowned flutist and composer, and appears in his new CD, "Inside Out."



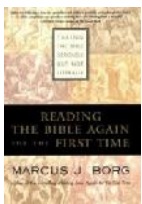
Please plan to join us for an afternoon of beautiful music. Admission is free; donations are welcome. A brief reception will follow the concert.

Christmas Pageant

This year we are doing our Christmas pageant with the Meyersville Presbyterian Church. The service of worship on **December 20th will be held at Meyersville at 10:00 a.m.** We hope you will join us for this wonderful service, which will include both youth and adults.

Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters

Our weekly Bible study will continue on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. on the book entitled, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*, by Marcus Borg. Please feel free to join the group, even if you did not attend previous sessions. The book can be ordered on amazon.com or barnesandnoble.com.

Fourth Sunday Focus, December 27th

- 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 **December 27th** 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

Liturgists for December:

Dec. 6	Madeline Hahl	Dec. 20	Worship at Meyersville Church
Dec. 13	Debra Sprague	Dec. 27	Jan Somers

Non-Perishable Food Collection, December 6th

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.



***Following is a list of items most needed at the food pantry:**

- | | |
|---|---|
| Spaghetti Sauce (large jar) | Breakfast food: Pancake mix, jelly, coffee, tea |
| White Rice: 2 or 5 pound bags | Jello Gelatin |
| Macaroni and Cheese | Canned Beans: Cannellini, Garbanzo |
| Canned vegetables: | Dry Beans: Black, Kidney, Pinto |
| corn, carrots, beets, mixed veggies, yams | Spaghetti (long pasta only) |

Blue Christmas Service



On **Sunday, December 20th at 4:00 p.m.** we will offer our Blue Christmas Service. This service is for those who are having trouble feeling joyous this Christmas. The service draws upon the Christmas story found in the Gospel of Matthew, which has an entirely different feeling than the story found in Luke. If you, or someone you know, are experiencing difficulties spiritually or emotionally this Christmas season, we invite you and them to join us for this comforting service.

Christmas Eve Service, 8:00 p.m.

After reviewing the results of our survey, Rev. Peters and the Worship Committee members have decided to keep the **Christmas Eve Service at 8:00 p.m.** We hope you will join us for this beautiful service of candles and carols as we await the birth of Christ.



Deacons Corner

- Carolyn Malfatone

Christmas Poinsettia Orders

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. **Please complete the order form on page 8 on this newsletter. The deadline is Monday, December 14th.**

Community Carol Sing and Ring



Please join us in singing Christmas carols by candlelight on the front lawn of the church on **Sunday, December 13th at 6:00 p.m.** Afterwards, come inside the sanctuary and enjoy the beautiful music of our Travnicek Memorial Ringers handbell choir. Then, warm up in Pollard Hall with Christmas wassail, hot chocolate, and cookies. If you would like to donate cookies, please bring them to morning worship that day or when you come to the carol sing.



Church Flowers

Please sign up on the Flower Chart in Pollard Hall if you would like to place flowers on the chancel for a 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.

Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, December 4th, 9:30 a.m.**, in Pollard Hall. We are in need of small cartons of juice; snacks of cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels, etc.; and, plastic spoons. 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 for your continued support of this very important and much appreciated program!

Upcoming Dates: Jan. 8, Feb. 12, March 11, April 8

Family Promise of Morris County

- Phyllis Clemson & Jan Somers

Our final 2015 responsibility for Family Promise was Friday evening, 11/20, through Saturday at noon. Many thanks to everyone who helped by hosting, providing food, making donations, staying overnight, or cooking breakfast. Your efforts were very much appreciated by the guests.

In 2016, our Church will begin the 26th year of supporting this program. Our hosting dates will be: January 5th, April 15th, and August 30th at Trinity House in Stirling. Please watch for a sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall later in December to help with our January 5th hosting. Thank you all again!

Thanksgiving Turkey Donations

Thank you to everyone who participated in our annual turkey collection. Thanks also to Lynne and Bill Combs, who delivered the donated turkeys to the Market Street Mission in Morristown for distribution. Your support of this program is very much appreciated.



Community Food Bank

- Kai Ihringer

We had a wonderful group of volunteers who spent Saturday morning, November 21st, at the Community Food Bank in Hillside. Everyone worked hard and enjoyed themselves while helping with this very important program. Here is our group:

**Free Gentle Yoga Class - Meyersville Presbyterian Church**

Roseanne McGraw, a certified yoga teacher for 15 years, will be teaching a free gentle yoga class in the Parlor at Meyersville Presbyterian Church on **Tuesdays from 9:00-10:00 a.m.** The class is on-going, so you can join at any time.

You will not be sitting or lying on the floor, so just bring yourself in comfortable clothes, and invite friends along. This class will be appropriate for all, the flexible as well as the tight. Injuries will be accommodated. Yoga is relaxing as well as good for general health; so, come give it a try.

Call or e-mail Rosanne with any questions or concerns: 908-508-1435, rosanne.mcgraw@gmail.com

Church Archives

Please remember to forward news clippings, bulletins, programs, or other memorabilia regarding any member of our church family to Rene' Phelan so she can keep our church archives up-to-date. There is a mailbox outside the church offices for this purpose. Thank you.

**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 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.

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; they are 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 in schools 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 deadline to order is Monday, December 14th

Price: \$16.00

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)

Given By: _____
Please print clearly

Please check one: 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: Monday, 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.

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.

Ongoing Fundraisers

ShopRite Gift Cards

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
 - ✓ Purchase cards at face value
 - ✓ Church earns 5%
 - ✓ Denominations available are:
ShopRite: \$20, \$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 December 17th. Thank you!

Why not invite a friend to church?

