



Stirling Stuff

Volume 59, No. 1

January 2015

Pastor's Letter

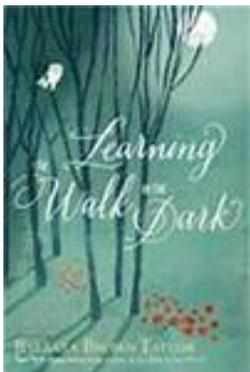
As you read this, the shortest day of the year is behind us, and the days are starting to get longer. We just came through the season of the light of Christ coming into the darkness of the world. On January 6th, we will be remembering the visit of the Magi following the light of the star on Epiphany. (We will celebrate Epiphany on Sunday, January 4th.) In many ways, we demonize darkness. Darkness is bad and light is good. The truth is, we need darkness – we need time to rest and reflect. Darkness challenges us and gives us space for introspection.



I bring all of this up because I will be beginning a new book study in January that will help us to understand how darkness can be seen as beneficial to our spiritual journey. Rev. Dr. Barbara Brown Taylor, a top-level preacher whom I've heard a number of times at Chautauqua, wrote a book entitled, *Learning to Walk In the Dark*. Dr. Taylor writes on the inside cover of her book:

The problem is this: when, despite all of my best efforts, the lights have gone off in my life, plunging me into the kind of darkness that turns my knees to water, I have not died. The monsters have not dragged me out of bed and taken me back to their lair. Instead, I have learned things in the dark that I could never have learned in the light, things that have saved my life over and over again, so that there is really only one logical conclusion. I need darkness as much as I need light.

I hope you will consider joining us for this special class. Let's journey together to learn things we cannot learn in the light. We are still deciding on which night to meet – Tuesdays or Thursdays, at 7:30 p.m. If we meet on Tuesdays, the dates will be: 1/20, 2/10, 3/10, 4/14, 5/12. If we meet on Thursdays, the dates will be: 1/22, 2/26, 3/26, 4/23, 5/21. Please sign up on the Christian Education bulletin board in Pollard Hall. The book is \$25 and can be ordered from amazon.com. If you would like me to order a copy for you, please say so by writing by your name, "buy a book." I look forward to taking this journey with you.



See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for January

January 4, 2015

- Epiphany Sunday
- Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Non-Perishable Food Collection
Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
What Gift Do We Bring?

January 11, 2015

- Baptism of the Lord Sunday
- Renewal of Baptism
Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29;
Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
The Creative Genius of God

*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 18, 2015

- Ordinary 2B
1 Samuel 3:1-20; Psalm 139:1-6, 13-18;
1 Corinthians 6:12-20; John 1:43-51
Fighting Cynicism

January 25, 2015

- Ordinary 3B
Jonah 3:1-5, 10; Psalm 62:5-12;
1 Corinthians 7:29-31; Mark 1:14-20
Should We Consider Being Evangelical?

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.



Thank You

- Rev. Peters

I want to say a big **thank you** to Tom Parziale and the Buildings & Grounds Committee for their hard work in getting the roof project done and working on the completion of other things that have to be done now. It has been a difficult several months with all that has been involved with this project.

Pastor's Coffee Klatch

The next Coffee Klatch will be on **Sat., Jan. 3rd, 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.



Per Capita Apportionment



This year the Per Capita amount we are assessed **per member is \$33**. For several years now we have paid less than half of this amount. This money enables the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its Councils (Presbytery and Synod) to do their work. The Presbytery is required to send the total money owed; therefore, when we do not pay our full amount, we are hurting our presbytery because they have to make up the difference. Please help out by paying the \$33 for each member of your family who is a member of the church. The Per Capita envelope can be found in the front of your offering envelopes box. Thank you.

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 25th**, following morning worship. The purposes of this meeting are to hear and receive the annual reports of the committees of the congregation and of groups sponsored by the church; to elect a financial secretary for a term of one year; to elect members of the 2015 Nominating Committee; and, to affirm the 2015 church budget. Please plan to attend this important event in the life of our Church as we look back over the past year and ahead to 2015.

Session Meeting Highlights

- Madeline Hahl

Here is a short summary of key discussions from the December Session meeting:

- We have been given a grand piano for use in the sanctuary, and the funds to move it are in place.
- Session is considering an amendment to the by-laws to reduce the number of deacons and elders.
- The roof is finally in good shape; now the steeple work will begin.
- A joint session meeting with Meyersville Presbyterian Church resulted in several points of possible joint action. Here are a few; if you are interested in participating in any of them, please contact a member of Session:
 - joint worship services
 - share information in newsletters
 - joint youth activities
 - joint community involvement
 - joint fellowship events
 - Ecumenical Thanksgiving service

A copy of the Session minutes is available in the Church office.

Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Adult Education

- Debra Sprague

Soup Lunch and Discussion: Education to Feed "Those Who Hunger" ... for Justice

Plan to join us for lunch on **Sunday, January 18th**, following worship, as we discuss "**White Privilege?**" We've been hearing the term "White Privilege" a lot lately - what does it mean, and how prevalent IS "White Privilege?" If you haven't thought much about it, plan to come - you may be surprised! Sign up in Pollard Hall to bring soup/stew, bread, cheese, dessert. Folks from Meyersville and the community are being invited to join us for this discussion.





Joint Church Lenten Sunday Soup Supper and Study Series

Looking ahead - YES, we are planning another weekly series to be held for five Sundays, **Feb. 22nd to March 22nd**, from 5:00–7:00 p.m. Please watch for more information in February.

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 **Jan. 25th** 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 January:

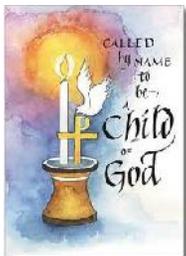
Jan. 4	Madeline Hahl	Jan. 18	Jan Somers
Jan. 11	Youth	Jan. 25	Susan Gerecht

Non-Perishable Food Collection, Jan. 4th

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.



Baptism of the Lord Sunday



On **Sunday, Jan. 11th**, we will celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. The service will include a renewal of our own baptism. Everyone is invited to bring pictures from their baptism or the baptism of children, grandchildren, or other family members. They will be mounted on a board in Pollard Hall.

Please bring your pictures on Sunday, January 4th or before church on the 11th. Pictures can be scanned – Janet Parziale can help with this. (Remember to label them so they can be returned.)

Mission Committee

- Madeline Hahl

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, Jan. 16th, 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 Date: Feb. 6th

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.

Family Promise of Morris County

- Phyllis Clemson & Jan Somers

We are starting our 26th year of participation in the Family Promise program, and our church is responsible for hosting **starting with dinner on Tues., Jan. 27th through the morning of Wed., Jan 28th**. Beginning this year, the program will be held at Trinity House, which is located at the corner of Long Hill Road and Central Ave. We will need two kinds of soup, as well as bread and desserts for dinner.

Please take a look at the sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall to see where you can help out, or speak to Phyllis or Jan.

Buildings & Grounds

- Tom Parziale

The ceilings, insulation, and rugs from the Choir Room and Child Care Room have been removed and discarded. The remaining structures have been treated. During the first quarter of 2015, we will replace the insulation, ceilings, and lighting. We will have the two rooms painted and new rugs installed; the hallway ceiling and walls will also be painted.

Deacons Corner

- Carolyn Malfatone

**Community Carol Ring and Sing**

On Sunday, Dec. 14th, our church hosted the Community Carol Sing & Ring. A group of 40+ members, family, friends, and neighbors sang Christmas carols by candlelight on the front lawn of the church, listened to the Travnicek Memorial Handbell Choir play several selections in the sanctuary, and then gathered in Pollard Hall for hot chocolate, wassail, delicious cookies, and fellowship.

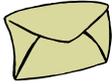
Thank you to everyone who helped make the evening so enjoyable for everyone.

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.

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.

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; 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.



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 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
February issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by Jan. 22nd. Thank you!**

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

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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?