



Stirling Stuff

Volume 60, No. 1

January 2016

Pastor's Letter



Last night was the winter solstice and it marked the shortest day of the year. From now until June 21st, the days will get longer and then the days will begin to get shorter again. We don't know what time of the year Jesus was born, but the popular theory for placing it on December 25th is that the celebration was combined with the pagan holiday *Sol Invictus* (the unconquered sun) in 274 AD by the Roman emperor Aurelian. On the darkest day of the year, we celebrate the coming of the light of God into the world.

We live our lives in cycles of light and darkness, warm and cold (except for this year), life and death. As we begin a new year, I am mindful that churches also go through cycles. We have been through a difficult time with building concerns and diminishing numbers. Yet, at the last Session meeting Paul Wermuth spoke of the fact that he feels the church has turned a corner and we are on the upswing. You will read more about all of this in my annual report letter.

I always feel like entering a new year is like the chalkboard (we all still remember what those are, don't we?) being erased and cleaned. It's another cycle in our lives and in the life of the church. At the turning of the year, there is the feeling we made it and we can look forward to good things ahead. With the light of God that has come into the world, we can go into the uncertain future with joy and courage.

As I close, I want to look back and say thank you to everyone for the wonderful celebration of my 25th anniversary as your pastor. I was touched by your warm words of my ministry among you. The gifts of the stoles were touching symbols of your placing the mantle of your love around me. I truly meant it when I said that you all have been a gift to me. Thank you again.

Happy New Year!

Tom



The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for January

January 3, 2016

- Christmas 2C
- Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Non-Perishable Food Collection
Jeremiah 31:7-14; Psalm 147:12-20;
Ephesians 1:3-14; John 1:10-18
Seeing With Spiritual Eyes

January 10, 2016

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

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.



January 17, 2016

- Second Sunday after Epiphany
- Martin Luther King, Jr. Sunday
Isaiah 62:1-5; Psalm 36:5-10;
1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
The Sacred Union

January 24, 2016

- Third Sunday after Epiphany
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21
Remembering

January 31, 2016

- Fourth Sunday after Epiphany
- Annual Meeting Sunday
Jeremiah 1:4-10; Psalm 71:1-6;
1 Corinthians 13:1-13; Luke 4:21-30
Putting Away Childish Things

**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., Jan. 2nd, 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 are available to be picked up in Pollard Hall.



Per Capita Apportionment



This year the Per Capita amount we are assessed **per member is \$34**. This money enables the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its Councils (Presbytery and Synod) to do their work. Please help out by paying the \$34 for everyone in 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 31st**, 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 2016 Nominating Committee; and, to affirm the 2016 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 2016.

Christmas Pageant

On Sunday, December 20th, our congregation joined with members of the Meyersville Presbyterian Church to present our annual Christmas pageant. Here are pictures from the pageant:



Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters

Our morning Bible study will continue on **Thursday, January 7th, at 10:30 a.m.** We will continue with our chapter on the gospels and then the letters of Paul. Please reflect on what book of the Bible you would like to study after we finish Marcus Borg's book, *Reading the Bible Again for the First Time*.

Fourth Sunday Focus, January 24th

- 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.



In December, our topic was *Accomplishments*. Our next "Fourth Sunday Focus" gathering will be on **January 24th** 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:

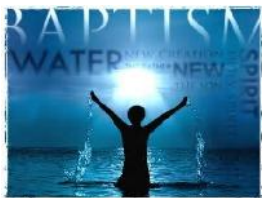
Jan 3	Ed Gerecht	Jan. 24	Bill Hopcraft
Jan. 10	Madeline Hahl	Jan. 31	Evelyn Smith
Jan. 17	Sue Gerecht		

Non-Perishable Food Collection, January 3rd

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)

Baptism of the Lord Sunday, January 10th

On **Sunday, Jan. 10th**, we will celebrate the Baptism of the Lord. The service will include a renewal of our own baptism. Please **bring a picture of your favorite water scene** (at the beach, a lake, a stream, a waterfall), a place where you feel most at ease, rested, renewed. It can be a snapshot, a magazine picture, a brochure. They will be posted on a board in Pollard Hall (they will be returned). Also, everyone is invited to **wear something blue** to symbolize the water of our baptism.

Rev. Peters' 25th Anniversary Celebration

On Sunday, December 6th, the Worship Committee hosted a luncheon to celebrate Rev. Peters' 25th anniversary as our minister. On behalf of the congregation, Lore Pateman presented Tom with a stole and a check, which he used to purchase a second stole. He also received the latest installment of his "Memory Book." Rene' Phelan has continued to work on this project that Ellen Eastty began; it is a beautiful 25-year journey through Tom's ministry at the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. Janet Parziale prepared a wonderful slide presentation of events from the past 25 years, and it was played during the luncheon.



Deacons Corner

- Katherine Ihringer

Community Carol Sing and Ring

The Deacons want to thank everyone who came to the Carol Sing and Ring. It was a huge success and a lot of fun. We appreciate those who brought delicious cookies for the reception afterwards.

As 2015 comes to a close, we can look back at all of the successes that our church has had. May 2016 be a wonderful year for all of you and our church!

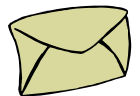


Thank You to Our Decorating Crew

Thank you to everyone who helped decorate for the Advent season. Our sanctuary and the luminaries looked beautiful!

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!



Worship/Fellowship Hour Help

We need people to sign up to usher and host Fellowship Hour in the upcoming weeks. Remember that Fellowship Hour does not have to be fancy. All you need is coffee, tea, juice, and cookies. If you would like to donate towards it and have someone else host, speak to one of the Deacons.

Church Flowers

Please 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.

Mission Programs

Family Promise of Morris County

- Phyllis Clemson & Jan Somers

Our first responsibility this year for hosting Family Promise at Trinity House in Stirling is **Tuesday, January 5th**. We will be serving a chicken dinner to our guests, 7 adults and 7 children. We still need donations of baked potatoes and desserts. Please sign-up in Pollard Hall or contact Phyllis or Jan if you can help out. Thank you!

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman, Coordinator



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, January 8th, 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: Feb. 12, March 11, April 8

Congratulations!

Sharon Alongi (Hopcraft) received her PhD in Microbiology from Mt. Sinai School of Medicine. She has accepted a post-graduate position at the University of North Carolina, Chapel Hill. Our congratulations to Sharon and her proud family.

Congratulations to Israel Sierra who received the honor of being named Long Hill Township's Volunteer of the Year.

Free Gentle Yoga Class - Meyersville Presbyterian Church



Roseanne McGraw, a certified yoga teacher for 15 years, is 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.



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 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
February issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by **January 21st**. 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?