



Stirling Stuff

Volume 61, No. 11

December 2017

Pastor's Letter

Once again we descend into the holiday season. How will we fare this year? Will we arrive at the manger on Christmas Eve/Day tired and ragged, wanting to crawl into a hole and sleep for several months? Or, will we arrive at the manger with eyes glistening with expectation and hearts overflowing with wonder? We have that choice, but we need to decide now so that we can use the season of Advent to prepare ourselves.



Advent is for Christmas like the season of Lent is for Holy Week and Easter. They both give us time to prepare so we don't get there too fast and miss the true celebration. We need Advent to keep our heads on straight and focused on the reason for the season. Advent is not about the so-called war on Christmas and saying "Merry Christmas" to everyone we meet. Advent is about remembering whose birth we celebrate and why we celebrate that birth. Advent is about seeing the darkness around us and within us and realizing how much we need the good news of the birth of Emmanuel, God with us.

Our world is experiencing a very dark time right now. We can't turn on the news today without hearing a half-hour about wars, murder, mass killings; bad things happening to women, Blacks, immigrants; and, the list goes on. We need our heads on straight this Christmas. We need to experience everything that Christmas can and does mean for us.



So, I want to encourage you to observe a purposeful Advent. As most of you know, I am very much a believer in the season of Advent and its importance concerning our whole celebration of Christmas. That is the reason why we won't sing Christmas Carols in worship until the final song on the Third Sunday of Advent.

I will have a simple [Advent devotion guide](#) available for you to use for yourself or your family. You may pick it up after worship. Please join me in the practice of setting aside time to read scripture, reflect, and pray to God.

May God touch all of our hearts during this Advent season.

See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for December

December 3, 2017

- *First Sunday of Advent, Heritage Sunday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Meyersville Presbyterian Church will join us*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*

Advent Readings

Isaiah 64:1-9; Psalm 80:1-7, 17-19;

1 Corinthians 1:3-9; Mark 13:24-37

St. Andrew's Day Readings

Isaiah 49:1-2; Philippians 1:3-11; John 1:35-42

Who Are You Looking For?

December 10, 2017

- *Second Sunday of Advent*
Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 85:1-2, 8-13;
2 Peter 3:8-15a; Mark 1:1-8
Why Bother?

December 17, 2017

- *Third Sunday of Advent*
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11; Psalm 126; Luke 1:47-55;
1 Thessalonians 5:16-24; John 1:6-8, 19-28
Looking For the Light

*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 23, 2017 Saturday, 5:00 p.m.

- *Blue Christmas Service*
Isaiah 40:1-11; Psalm 121;
Romans 8:31-35, 37-39;
Matthew 1:18-25, 2:16-18
When the Darkness Descends

December 24, 2017 10:00 a.m.

- *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
- *Meyersville Presbyterian Church will join us*
2 Samuel 7:1-11, 16; Psalm 89:1-4, 19-26;
Romans 16:25-27; Luke 1:26-38
Christmas Pageant: A View From A Field

December 24, 2017 8:00 p.m.

- *Christmas Eve Family Service*
Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Are You Short One Angel?

December 31, 2017

- *Baptism of the Lord Sunday*
- *Renewal of Baptism Service*
Genesis 1:1-5; Psalm 29;
Acts 19:1-7; Mark 1:4-11
Being New Age People

**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 monthly Coffee Klatch will be on **Sat., December 3rd, 9:00 a.m.**, at the Stirling House Diner. We talk about whatever is on your mind. Come join the fellowship and conversation.



2018 Church Offering Envelopes

The 2018 Church Offering Envelopes will be available to be picked up in Pollard Hall or the Church office during December.



Annual Congregational Election Meeting

At the Annual Congregational Election Meeting on October 29th, the following members were elected/re-elected to serve terms as church officers effective February 2018:

Elder:

Class of 2020: Edward Gerecht

Deacons:

Class of 2019: Janet Parziale

Class of 2020: Jenny Chang
Joyce Koenig
Israel Sierra



Rev. Peters and the congregation expressed their thanks and appreciation to Joyce Koenig, Susan Gerecht, and Katherine Ihringer for their service as Church officers as their current terms come to an end.

Thanksgiving Turkey/Ham Donations

Thanks to your generous donations, Rev. Peters delivered 12 turkeys and 1 ham to the Market Street Mission in Morristown for Thanksgiving. In addition, Tom Parziale delivered a turkey to a local family. Your overwhelming support of this program provided meals to many who are in need. Thank you!



The Concert Series in Stirling

Our next concert will be on **Sunday, December 10th, at 2:00 p.m.**, when we will present classical pianist, Nicholas Hrynyk, the 2016 winner of the New York State MTNA-Steinway Young Artist Piano Competition. He has performed at Carnegie Hall, Lincoln Center's School of American Ballet, National Opera Center, New York Fashion Week, Chautauqua Music Festival, Skaneateles Music Festival, and the Moulin d'Ande Cultural Center in France.

Nicholas holds Bachelor's and Master's degrees in Piano Performance from the Eastman School of Music and Indiana University, as well as an Advanced Certificate in Music Education from New York University Steinhardt. His mentors include Deirdre O'Donohue, Arnaldo Cohen, and Natalya Antonova.



Recent highlights include the release of "Love Unspoken," a studio album of duos for violin and piano, and an appointment at New York University as staff pianist for the spring of 2018.

The program will include: Souvenir de Puerto Rico by Louis Moreau Gottschalk, Scherzo No. 1 by Frederic Chopin, Appassionata Sonata by Ludwig Van Beethoven, Sonata No. 3 by Johannes Brahms, The Christmas Waltz, Embraceable You, and Stravinsky Etude No. 4.

The concerts are free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception follows the concert, during which guests may meet the performer. Refreshments will be served. We hope you will invite your family and friends and join us.

Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman



Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters

Our **Bible Study of the Gospel of Luke** continues on **Thursday mornings from 10:30 a.m. – noon**. We invite you to join us in our study of Rev. Dr. Fred Craddock’s book, **Luke**.

Christmas Pageant, December 24th

The congregations of Meyersville and Stirling will once again join together to present a Christmas pageant. This year’s pageant, *A View From A Field*, was put together by Rev. Aspinall. It will be performed at our church during morning worship on Sunday, December 24th. Be thinking about helping out by doing a part; we may be calling on you.



Fourth Sunday Focus, December 31st

- 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. Since the fourth Sunday in December is Christmas Eve and a busy morning at the church, our next “Fourth Sunday Focus” gathering will be on the **Fifth Sunday, Dec. 31st** in the meeting room. We start around **8:45 a.m.** and end by about 9:45 a.m., but join us whenever you can.



Our October and November topic was Protests. We debated the practice of NFL players kneeling during the National Anthem and other recent protests, discussed the pros and cons of these actions, and talked about the right we have to protest in this country while those in many other places cannot.

Our topic on Dec. 31st will be: *New Year’s Resolutions and changes we’d like to make/see happen in the new year.*
If you have a topic you’d like to discuss, contact Tom Parziale.

Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

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|--|---------|---------------|-----------------|---------------|
| <u>Liturgists for December:</u> | Dec. 3 | Jan Somers | Dec. 24 (10 am) | Ed Gerecht |
| | Dec. 10 | Evelyn Smith | Dec. 24 (8 pm) | Madeline Hahl |
| | Dec. 17 | Israel Sierra | Dec. 31 | Tom Parziale |



If you would like to serve as Liturgist during worship, please sign up on the sheet in Pollard Hall or speak to Jan Somers.

Non-Perishable Food Collection, December 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.



First Sunday of Advent, December 3rd

December 3rd is the first Sunday of Advent, and we will begin a special program that will continue for the four Sundays in the season of Advent. Members of the congregation will be invited to participate in readings and lighting the Advent candles. Please plan to join us as we begin our journey to Christmas.

**Heritage Sunday, December 3rd**

On **December 3rd**, we will also be celebrating Heritage Sunday. Once again, bagpiper Dave Palladino will play the tune Richard Streeton composed for our church, "Stirling on the Hill." Rev. Peters will be leading a Scottish service, including the procession of a beadle by our Clerk of Session, Lynn Blakeslee.

Following the service, the Worship Committee will host a special fellowship hour with lots of Scottish treats and invites anyone who enjoys baking to bring their favorite Scottish goodies to share. Some of the treats we are planning are scones, shortbread, and, of course, a fine pot of tea!



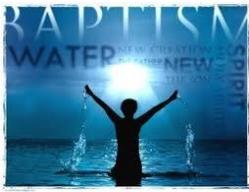
Please plan to join us and invite neighbors and friends to this festive service as we celebrate our church's Scottish heritage, and remember to **wear or bring a piece of plaid.**

Blue Christmas Service, December 23rd, 5:00 p.m.

Once again Rev. Peters will be leading a **Blue Christmas Service** this year, on **Saturday, December 23rd, at 5:00 p.m.** This service is for people who are having trouble feeling the joy of the Christmas season. This service is for people who have lost a loved one, even a beloved pet. This service is for people who have difficult memories of past Christmases that always make themselves felt at this time. This service is for people who are experiencing health issues that are getting them down or are experiencing a bout of depression. If you or someone you know is feeling this way, I invite you and them to come to this service which is designed so that the Christmas story may speak to you in your sadness or grief.

**Christmas Eve Candlelight Service**

On Sunday, December 24th, our Christmas Eve Family Service will be held 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.



Baptism of the Lord Sunday, December 31st

On **Sunday, December 31st**, we will celebrate the Baptism of the Lord Sunday. The service will include a renewal of our own baptism. Everyone is invited to **wear something blue** to symbolize the water of our baptism.

Looking Ahead

On **Sunday, January 7th**, we will celebrate **Epiphany Sunday**, also known as Three Kings Day. Please plan to join us for this service, which will be held at Meyersville Presbyterian Church that morning.



Deacons Corner

- Carolyn Malfatone

Mission of the Month

Our *Mission of the Month for December* is the **Market Street Mission in Morristown**. The donations will be used to feed those who could use a hot meal in the cold months ahead. There are envelopes in the pew racks for this purpose; just note: "Mission of the Month" on your check. Please give generously to this collection and the food it will provide.



Christmas Poinsettia Orders

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for the Advent and Christmas season. **Please complete the order form on page 7 of this newsletter. The deadline to order is Tuesday, December 12th.**



Church Decorating, December 9th



The Deacons and the Worship Committee will be decorating the sanctuary on **Saturday, December 9th, at 10:00 a.m.** Everyone is invited to join us and help prepare the sanctuary for our Advent and Christmas celebrations.

Community Carol Sing, December 17th, 6:30 p.m.



Invite your neighbors and friends and join us in singing Christmas carols by candlelight on the front lawn of the church on **Sunday, December 17th at 6:30 p.m.** 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.



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 Tuesday, December 12th

Price: \$16.00 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)

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: Tuesday, December 12th



Fellowship Hour

Please remember to sign up in Pollard Hall to host Fellowship Hour some Sunday after worship. If you have questions or would like help hosting, please speak to Carolyn or any Deacon. If you would prefer to sponsor a Fellowship Hour and have someone else host it, please sign up for that option. Thank you.

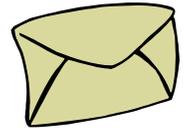
Church Flowers

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.



Deacons' Fund

Please use the green Deacons' Fund envelopes for donations to help the Deacons with their Mission work. They are available in the pew racks or in the church office and may be placed in the offering plate. **Remember to put your name on the envelope so you can receive credit for your donation.** Thank you!



Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, December 8th, 9:30 a.m.**, in Pollard Hall. We are always in need of small bottles of water and cartons of juice; snacks of cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels, etc.; and plastic spoons. Cash donations are also appreciated to 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.

Upcoming date: **January 5th**

Community Food Bank of New Jersey

- Kai Ihringer

On Sat., November 18th, our 14 volunteers worked at the Community Food Bank of NJ in Hillside. It was a wonderful way to help fulfill our church's mission, "Feeding Those Who Hunger," while also involving others from the community. Our group was enthusiastic and energetic, and we worked hard while enjoying the comradery of our fellow volunteers.



Our group included congregation members from Stirling and Meyersville, members of the Long Hill Mom's Group, and friends.

The members of the Long Hill Mom's Group, which meets at our church, enjoyed the experience, and they are looking forward to participating again.

Please watch for our 2018 dates, and sign up to join us for this wonderful experience.



Pictured here, from left to right:

Alycia Ross (LHMG), Bill McCoy (MPC), Rosanne McCoy (MPC), Sandy Mackay, Doug Smith (MPC), Janet Parziale, Rev. Peters, Kristen King (LHMG), Tom Parziale, Katherine Opalka (LHMG), Kai Ihringer, Daria Jankura (friend of FPC), Katherine Ihringer, and Lisa Butler (LHMG).

Family Promise of Morris County

- Jan Somers

Thank you to everyone who helped with hosting Family Promise clients in November at Trinity House in Stirling. We didn't have anyone who could stay overnight, but we were able to get someone from the Shrine to fill in.



2018 will be our 29th year of participation in this program. Although it has been difficult for the past few years to find enough volunteers to help, Session has voted to continue our involvement because it is such a vital program and truly helps families through difficult times in their lives. However, that means we need people to help out on our assigned hosting dates.

I recently attended the coordinator's meeting during which the 2018 hosting dates and meals were decided. **Our hosting dates are: Thurs., January 11th; Wed., March 28th; Thurs., December 6th. Our first date, January 11th, is quickly approaching.** Please look for the sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall and help out in any way you can. If you have questions, please speak to Rev. Peters or me during Fellowship Hour.

I recently received the following message from Family Promise of Morris County to our congregation:

Nov. 22, 2017

Your commitment promotes a culture of giving - bringing your neighbors to a place of self-sufficiency and security. And for that, we thank you.

Sincerely,

Stephen W. Hammond
Executive Director

Joann Bjornson, LSW
Board President

On-Going Fund Raiser: Shop-Rite Gift Cards

- Madeline Hahl, Coordinator

During the holidays, when we have more guests and attend more events, keep in mind Shop-Rite Gift Cards, our on-going fund raiser which helps support the church financially. Use them yourself or give them as gifts.



It's easy to participate: purchase the cards for face value (\$20, \$50, \$100), and use them when you go to Shop-Rite. Any balance left on the card can be used at a later date; it never expires. Everyone buys groceries, toiletries, etc., so please consider supporting the church in this way. Gift Cards are available each Sunday during Fellowship Hour or by contacting Madeline. It's a simple way to help the church financially. Thank you!

Church Directory Update

Our church secretary, Paulette, is in the process of updating our church directory. If you would like to make changes/additions to your current listing or add your name if you are not already included in the directory, please **complete the form on pg. 11**, and place it in the offering plate on Sunday or return it to the church office. If you know of other changes that need to be made to the directory, please alert Paulette to them.



If you do not have a current directory, there is one available in the church office for you to look over.

Church Archives

Please remember to forward news clippings, bulletins, programs, pictures, or other memorabilia regarding any member of our church family to the church office so our archives can be kept up-to-date. There is a **Church Archives** mailbox outside the church offices for this purpose. There are a lot of items to put in the 2017 Archives binder. If you are interested in helping to keep the archives current, please speak to Rev. Peters or Jan Somers.

**Church Website**

Our Church website, www.fpcstirling.org, is a good 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 on the table in the Church narthex.





Church Directory Update

We are updating our church directory. Please make any changes/additions to your name, address, phone(s), or e-mail(s) information by completing the following form. Include **YOUR NAME AND ANY UPDATED INFORMATION**, and place the form in the collection plate or send it to the church office. Include any cell phone numbers with names, if would like them included. If you do not have a current directory, there is one available in the church office for you to look over. If there are no changes to your listing, you do not need to respond. Thank you.

Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

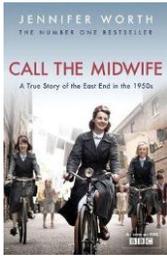
Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

The new church directory will be completed in January, so please forward your information asap.

Meyersville Presbyterian Church Book Club**- Jan Somers**

The Book Club is currently reading, "Call the Midwife: A Memoir of Birth, Joy, and Hard Times," by Jennifer Worth.



"Readers have fallen in love with this candid look at post-war London. In the 1950s, twenty-two-year-old Jenny Lee leaves her comfortable home to move into a convent and become a midwife in London's East End slums. While delivering babies all over the city, Jenny encounters a colorful cast of women—from the plucky, warm-hearted nuns with whom she lives, to the woman with twenty-four children who can't speak English, to the prostitutes of the city's seedier side.

*An unforgettable story of motherhood, the bravery of a community, and the strength of remarkable and inspiring women, **Call the Midwife** is the true story behind the beloved PBS series."*

The group will meet in the parlor at Meyersville on **Tuesday, January 9th, at 7:30 p.m.** to discuss this book. Everyone is welcome to join the group; additional copies are available from Rev. Aspinall or Jan Somers.

Free Gentle Yoga Class – Meyersville Presbyterian Church

Roseann McGraw, a certified yoga teacher, offers free yoga classes in the parlor at Meyersville Presbyterian Church on Tuesdays, from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. The classes are 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. The classes are 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 email Roseanne with questions or concerns: 908-508-1435, rosanne.mcgraw@gmail.com.

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 assist people on dialysis. There is a collection canister in the church office. Thank you.

**Community News/Items of Interest****- Jan Somers**

Please forward items you would like to have included in upcoming Stirling Stuff issues to Jan Somers, or place them in the "Stirling Stuff" mailbox outside the church offices. Thank you.

Ongoing Mission Programs

Road to Bridges

Change (and more) is collected during Fellowship Hour and supports the Road to Bridges program, providing 40 lunches per month to NJ/NY homeless.

Township Food Pantry

Non-perishable items can be left in baskets labeled "Food Pantry Donations" in the Church narthex and outside Pollard Hall.

Items collected for various causes; may be placed on the pew in Pollard Hall:

- ✓ Full-sized and "courtesy"-sized bars of soap, shampoo, conditioner, shower caps
- ✓ Cell phones, eyeglasses, sunglasses
- ✓ Fabric: about ½ yard minimum, to make small bears for children, totes for wheelchair patients, etc.
Yarn: to make lap robes for wounded veterans, afghans for battered women, and hats for newborns in hospitals

Ongoing Fundraisers

ShopRite Gift Cards

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
- ✓ Purchase cards at face value
- ✓ Church earns 5%
- ✓ Denominations available are:
\$20, \$50, \$100

Gift Cards are available each week during Fellowship Hour or by contacting Madeline Hahl.

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 21st. Thank you!

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

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Why not invite a friend to church?



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.

