



Stirling Stuff

Volume 64, No. 4

April 2020

Pastor's Letter



Palm Sunday – Maundy Thursday – Good Friday – Easter Sunday

In his book, *A Letter of Consolation*, the late Roman Catholic priest, Henri J. Nouwen, shares the letter he wrote to his father after Henri's mother died. It starts out as follows.

Next Monday it will be half a year since mother died. It will be Holy Week and both of us will be preparing ourselves to celebrate Easter. How will this Easter be for us? You will be in the parish church of our little Dutch town listening to the story of Christ's resurrection. I will read that same story to monks and guests in a Trappist monastery in upstate New York. Both of us will look at the Easter candle, symbol of the risen Christ, and think not only of him, but also of her... But I'm sure that we both shall think about last's year's Easter when she was still with us. We shall both remember how she loved this great feast and how she decorated the house with flowers and the dinner table with purple and yellow ribbons.

This year Easter is going to be very different. With the numbers for the coronavirus still rising, it is highly unlikely we will be back in our church for Easter. It will not be the same. With social distancing and quarantines, Easter may feel more like Good Friday than Easter. Because of that, I encourage you to prepare for Easter this year by remembering past years when you had flowers and nicely decorated tables holding a fantastic feast to celebrate the feast of the resurrection. Perhaps you could even decorate in the same manner as you remember.

On Easter we look back to the resurrection of Jesus to find hope and joy for the present and future. I suggest that we do the same this year. On Easter we shout the ancient greeting, *He is risen!* -- words filled with the promise of hope for all of God's people, words that this year will remind us that Covid-19 does not have the last word. We will celebrate Easter online as we worship together. The walls may feel like they are closing in on you, but let yourself remember that Christ busted those walls out when he rose from the dead! Thanks be to God who gives us the victory!

See you in Church...online!

Tom



CHRIST THE **LORD**
IS **RISEN TODAY!**

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for April

April 5, 2020

- *Palm/Passion Sunday*
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29;
Philippians 2:5-11; Matthew 21:1-11
*Dramatic Reading of the Passion According
to the Gospel of Matthew*

April 9, 2020

- *Maundy Thursday*
- **Service at 7:30 p.m. Live Streaming Online**
Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19;
I Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35

April 10, 2020

- *Good Friday*
- **Service at 7:30 p.m. Live Streaming Online**
Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22;
Hebrews 10:16-25; John 18:1-19:42



April 12, 2020

- *Day of Resurrection/Easter*
Acts 10:34-43; Psalm 118:1-2, 14-24;
Colossians 3:1-4; Matthew 28:1-10

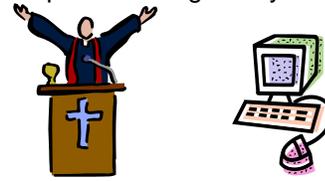
April 19, 2020

- *Second Sunday of Easter*
Acts 2:14a, 22-32; Psalm 16;
I Peter 1:3-9; John 20:19-31

April 26, 2020

- *Third Sunday of Easter*
Acts 36-41; Psalm 116:1-4, 12-19;
I Peter 1:17-23; Luke 24:13-35

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.



** You will notice that I have not included sermon titles this month. With worship services online and all that is going on with the pandemic, I'm not sure what I will be preaching on each week. Rev. Aspinall and I are talking about doing some creative services while we are online. I hope you will join us as we worship online in the coming weeks!



Session Meeting

- Rev. Peters

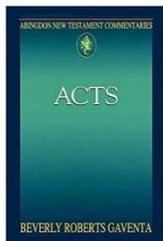
Session will meet online on **Thursday, April 2nd, at 7:30 p.m.** I have purchased a Zoom video conferencing app, and we will be meeting via Zoom. I will send you a link when we get closer to the date.

How to View the Worship Service Online

- Janet Parziale

The church website, www.fpcstirling.org, has been updated to include two links on the front page that will take you to the Live Streaming and Video Archives page. The first link is immediately following the "Welcome!" header (** Live Streaming and Videos **). The second link can be found in a lavender colored box below the slideshow of pictures. Click on either of these two links. On the Live Streaming and Video Archives page, you can click the "Live Streaming" link beside the picture of Rev. Peters. The links below, listed by date, have the video recording of the live stream. The videos will be available for you to view later if you are not able to view the live streamed version. If you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at janetparziale@comcast.net or call 908-647-2212, and I will do my best to help you.



Adult Bible Study**- Rev. Peters**

Bible Study will continue on Thursdays at 10:30 a.m. online. Even if you have not attended before, you are welcome to join us in the study of the Book of Acts. We are using the book *Acts* by Beverly Gaventa, but I read portions that I think are important and we discuss them. You may access the Bible Study through the following invitation. Paste the address of the "Join Zoom Meeting" address in your web browser and then paste the Password if or when asked for.

Join Zoom Meeting: <https://zoom.us/j/955212010?pwd=czB0UUpBaWFuSmdJSnVCYlZqQXBzUT09>

Meeting ID: 955 212 010

Password: 202121

I look forward to this new venture in Bible Study! I hope you all are well and doing all you can to be safe.

**The Concert Series in Stirling**

On **Sunday, March 8th**, at **2:00 p.m.**, we welcomed two cabaret/Broadway singers, Christine Hjorth and Amanda Patanella, along with their piano accompanist. Their beautiful music was enjoyed by everyone attending.

Upcoming concerts are on hold for now; please watch for more information as the current situation changes.

Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Season of Lent - "Atmosphere Table"**

Rev. Peters and the Worship Committee had planned a Lenten Worship Series on the theme, "Untying the Knots." Each Sunday, an item representing that week's sermon was to be added to the table. Here is how the table looked on our last Sunday in the sanctuary, March 15th.

Please continue to join us for worship as we go through the Season of Lent and beyond. The directions for using the link for our Online Worship Services can be found on page 2 of this newsletter.



Deacons' Corner**- Janet Parziale****Mission of the Month - March & April - One Great Hour of Sharing**

Mission of the Month for March and April is **One Great Hour of Sharing**. A gift to One Great Hour of Sharing enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, providing food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed. **Since we are not currently meeting at the church, feel free to send your donation for this mission giving to the church office (158 Central Ave, Stirling, NJ 07980).** Remember to include your name and/or your envelope number if you would like your donation to be recorded. Thank you in advance for supporting this special mission program.

**Need Help? Or Want to Chat?**

During this time of staying at home, it is easy to begin missing that human connection. If you are in need of help getting groceries or just want to talk to someone, please feel free to call a Deacon (listed in this issue) or Rev. Peters. We are ready to help in any way we can. If you know of someone who needs assistance, please reach out to one of us, even if it's just for an ear to listen.

Know Someone Who Needs a Card?

Each week during the *Prayers of the People*, folks in the congregation lift up names of fellow members, friends, and family who need our prayers for joys and concerns. Many have attested to the power of prayer in helping to give strength to all those involved. A Deacon notes names of members mentioned and sends cards to let them know they're being thought of and they're in the prayers of the congregation to get well, share joyful wishes, or express sympathy.



During this time when we are not meeting together, if you know of a member who is in need of our thoughts or prayers, please let Janet Parziale know so that a card can be sent. Janet can be reached at janetparziale@comcast.net or 908-647-2212.

A Special Thank You

Recently the Deacons published a plea for help in obtaining some forks. We had noticed our supply was running low. Not long after our plea, two bags of forks and knives, rolled up in a paper napkin and tied with a string, were found on our kitchen counter. Then, another bag of flatware was also left on the counter. Many thanks to the individuals for this wonderful response. We now have a good supply for future use. Thank you for your support in helping us replenish our supply.



2020 Board of Deacons and Session Responsibilities

<u>Deacon Responsibilities</u>	
Moderator	<i>Carolyn Malfatone</i>
Recording Secretary	<i>Susan Gerecht</i>
Corresponding Secretary	<i>Janet Parziale</i>
Treasurer	<i>Elsie Turqman</i>
Stirling Stuff "Deacons Corner"	<i>Janet Parziale</i>
Kitchen Supplies	<i>Joanne Sama</i>
Flowers	<i>Israel Sierra, Jr.</i>
Mission & Outreach	<i>Rev. Tom Peters</i>
Paraments	<i>Dawn Mackay & Susan Gerecht</i>
Nominating Committee	<i>Janet Parziale</i>
Reception Coordinators	<i>Carolyn Malfatone</i>

<u>Session Responsibilities</u>	
Clerk of Session	<i>Susan Brodziak</i>
Recording Clerk	<i>Susan Brodziak</i>
President of Trustees	<i>Ed Gerecht</i>
Worship	<i>Joyce Koenig</i>
Nominating	<i>Yvonne Fletcher</i>
Finance	<i>Sandy Mackay</i>
Personnel	<i>Ed Gerecht</i>
Christian Education	<i>Rev. Peters</i>
Facilities & Property	<i>Bill Hopcraft</i>
Presbytery	



Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Janet Parziale



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is Friday, April 3rd. I have been in contact with the Bridges organization and, while they are in need of as many lunches as we can provide, we all want to ensure that they are prepared and delivered in a manner that is safe for everyone. I will provide the lunches for April 3rd, and we'll monitor the coronavirus status as our May 1st commitment gets closer.

Family Promise of Morris County

- Jan Somers

On Tuesday, March 10th, we hosted the families at Trinity House in Stirling. Unfortunately, I was sick and unable to fulfill my responsibilities. Thank you to Tom Parziale for taking the lead and coordinating all of our volunteers and Janet Parziale for taking my spot as a host that evening. Also, a big thank you to everyone who donated food (Evelyn, Kim, Janet, and our super chef, Lore), to Israel who hosted, and to Lore and Joyce who stayed overnight with our guests. All of your help is greatly appreciated!



I have been receiving regular messages from Family Promise of Morris County regarding their ongoing efforts to house those in need while keeping the families, staff, and volunteers safe.

“While the government has directed all residents to stay at home until further notice to help stop the spread of COVID-19, what if you don't have a home to find shelter in? We are getting families housed at an extraordinary pace as landlords seek to fill empty units with tenants.”

Memorial Garden**- Tom Parziale**

The Memorial Garden Committee (Lynn Blakeslee, Rev. Peters, and I) met by phone recently to discuss several items. The rededication of the Memorial Garden previously scheduled to occur on Mother's Day, May 10th, has been rescheduled to Father's Day, June 21st.

Church Website & Facebook Page

To keep up-to-date with what's happening at our Church, make it a point to check in regularly on the Church website, www.fpcstirling.org, and Facebook page, https://www.facebook.com/fpcStirling/?ref=aymt_homepage_panel. They are good sources for church news, the Church calendar, Stirling Stuff, upcoming events/programs, Pastor's sermons, Scripture readings, Church history, and more.

Church Archives**- Jan Somers**

Please continue to forward news clippings, bulletins, programs, pictures, or other memorabilia regarding any member of our church family so our archives can be kept up-to-date. **Please be sure items are dated and, if possible, the names of church members and/or families are highlighted.**

Please hold any items you have and bring them when we are back meeting in the sanctuary.

These Days

"To nurture the daily practice of prayer and the reading of Scripture, there is solid help in the pages of 'These Days.' The devotions wrestle faithfully with the doubts, joys, and challenges of the Christian life."



If you would like to have a copy mailed to you during this difficult time, please contact the church office, 908-647-1033.

**Upcoming Graduations****- Jan Somers**

While we don't yet know how the current school year will proceed, please send me the names and specifics regarding graduates in your families so they can be recognized for their achievements at the appropriate time.

Earth Day 2020 – April 22nd**- Jan Somers**

In 2020, Earth Day celebrates 50 years! This year's theme is "Climate Action." Climate change represents the biggest challenge to humanity's future and the systems that make our world habitable," said Kathleen Rogers, Earth Day Network President.

"2020 has to be the year of transformative change that seizes the positive action underway and makes it bigger and bolder worldwide," she said. "Together, we can unite to build a movement that is inclusive, ambitious, and impossible to ignore."

Everyone is invited to join in helping to achieve the goal of planting 7.8 billion trees—one for every person on the planet in 2020. Trees help combat climate change. Trees help us breathe clean air. Trees help communities.

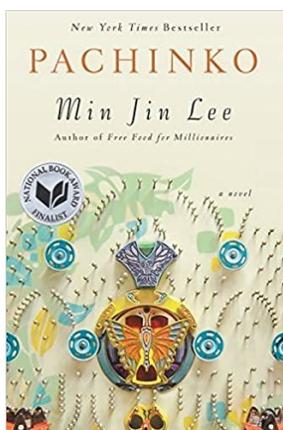


When it comes to the Earth, there is no time to waste.

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

The Book Club met via Zoom on March 24th and discussed "**Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail,**" a memoir by Cheryl Strayed. It worked out pretty well - a couple of technical glitches, but ok.

The next selection is *Pachinko*, a novel by Min Jin Lee. Since the libraries are closed, we can read by whatever means possible: download audio or text from the library, buy a used copy on Amazon, get a Kindle version, whatever you can get your hands on. Happy reading! If you can't get hold of any version of the book, contact Rev. Aspinall. **We plan to discuss it on May 12th - either by Zoom or in the church parlor, depending on the situation. Everyone is welcome to join us.**



Pachinko is a national obsession of Japan, a dizzying cross between pinball and a slot machine, wherein small metal balls drop randomly amid a maze of brass pins. The urge to play can quickly become an addiction, and of course the game is a perfect metaphor for the ricochet whims of fate. Owning pachinko parlors becomes a way for the clan depicted in the novel to climb out of poverty — but destiny cannot be manipulated so easily.

We are tracing a family dynasty over a sprawl of seven decades. Lee bangs and buffets and pinballs her characters through life, love, and sorrow, somehow making her vast, ambitious narrative seem intimate.

In the early 1900s, teenaged Sunja, the adored daughter of a crippled fisherman, falls for a wealthy stranger at the seashore near her home in Korea. He promises her the world, but when she discovers she is pregnant—and that her lover is married--she refuses to be bought. Instead, she accepts an offer of marriage from a gentle, sickly minister passing through on his

way to Japan. But her decision to abandon her home, and to reject her son's powerful father, sets off a dramatic saga that will echo down through the generations.

Richly told and profoundly moving, Pachinko is a story of love, sacrifice, ambition, and loyalty. From bustling street markets to the halls of Japan's finest universities to the pachinko parlors of the criminal underworld, Lee's complex and passionate characters--strong, stubborn women, devoted sisters and sons, fathers shaken by moral crisis--survive and thrive against the indifferent arc of history.

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 food 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
- ✓ 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 Yvonne Fletcher.

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
May issue of *Stirling Stuff* to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by **April 23rd**. Thank you!

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of

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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?

