



Stirling Stuff

Volume 64, No. 2

February 2020

Pastor's Letter

As I sit here and write this, there is snow on the ground, and the temperature has been in the low-to-mid 20s for the last two days. I'm mindful of the fact that a week ago on Saturday and Sunday, we had temperatures in the 60's. I always worry when things get warm in mid-winter since I have family that runs orchards and, if the sap begins to run up the trees and then there is another freeze, it can greatly deplete the crop during the coming year. Also, as I write this, we are grateful that the rains have come to Australia to help extinguish some of the many fires that have devastated that country. Unfortunately, with the rain came golf-size hail and birds falling out of the sky; and, this is just 24 hours after a 10-story-high massive dust storm ripped through the area. Last week the Washington Post declared the following:



The findings, released jointly by NASA and the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration, detail a troubling trajectory: 2019 was the second-hottest year on record, trailing only 2016. The past five years each rank among the five hottest since record-keeping began. And 19 of the hottest 20 years have occurred during the past two decades.

The earth's atmosphere is gravely injured, and we need to turn it around or our children, grandchildren, and great grandchildren will suffer greatly because of it. In fact, we are already suffering because of it with the likes of the weather I mentioned above. It is not just about survival; it is also about our being stewards of the earth that God entrusted to us. You won't find anything about climate change in the Bible, but you will find things like the following:

*The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and keep it.
(Genesis 2:15)*

Then God said, "Let us make man in our image, after our likeness. And let them have dominion over the fish of the sea and over the birds of the heavens and over the livestock and over all the earth and over every creeping thing that creeps on the earth. (Genesis 1:26)

*Whoever tends a fig tree will eat its fruit, and he who guards his master will be honored.
(Proverbs 27:18)*

Also see Proverbs 12:10, Revelation 11:18, Numbers 35:33, and Psalm 24:1 at: <https://www.patheos.com/blogs/christiancrier/2015/06/23/top-7-bible-verses-about-taking-care-of-the-earth/>

We are charged by God to take care of this planet that was entrusted to us, and we need to start doing a better job. A recent article said that 97% of climate research shows that climate change/global warming is real. Scientists took the 3% of research that has been said to show climate change is not real, replicated the research, and found the following:

Every single one of those analyses had an error – in their assumptions, methodology, or analysis – that, when corrected, brought their results into line with the scientific consensus.

<https://qz.com/1069298/the-3-of-scientific-papers-that-deny-climate-change-are-all-flawed/>

As Christians, we need to start being better stewards of the planet entrusted to us. Please do all you can to help. There is much we can do from recycling to advocacy to awareness to where we give our money.



May God give us the courage to speak up and speak out in all the ways we can.

See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for February

February 2, 2020 **Service in Meyersville**

- *Fourth Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Sacrament of Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection – Fruit Cocktail*
Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15;
I Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12
Rev. Aspinall Preaching

February 9, 2020

- *Fifth Sunday after Epiphany*
Isaiah 58:1-12; Psalm 112:1-10;
I Corinthians 2:1-16; Matthew 5:13-20
Piety at The Edges

February 16, 2020

- *Sixth Sunday after Epiphany*
Deuteronomy 30:15-20; Psalm 119:1-8;
I Corinthians 3:1-9; Matthew 5:21-37
Travnicek Memorial Ringers
Life Has A Way of Confusing Us

Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings,
followed by Fellowship Hour in Pollard Hall.
Child Care is provided in the Nursery.

February 23, 2020

- *Transfiguration of the Lord Sunday*
Exodus 24:12-18; Psalm 2;
2 Peter 1:16-21; Matthew 17:1-9
Finding Asylum

February 26, 2020

Service in Stirling

- *Ash Wednesday*
- *Sacrament of Communion*
- *Service of Ashes*
Joel 2:1-2, 12-17; Psalm 51:1-17;
2 Corinthians 5:20b-6:10;
Matthew 6:1-6, 16-21
Ashes Are Easy to Come By

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.

FLHiP Gathering

On **Sunday, February 2nd**, following our worship service at Meyersville, there will be a potluck brunch and program led by Rev. Jeanne Radak, our Presbytery leader, to begin to discern our way forward after the information-gathering we have done. We hope many of you will be there to lend your voices to the discussion. It is important that everyone be a part of this process.

**Per-Capita Apportionment****- Rev. Peters**

If you have not made your per-capita payment (\$39) for 2020, please do so. Our church is benefitting from it with the services of our Presbytery leader guiding us in our FLHiP process, as we are not having to pay her to do this because of per-capita. We have benefitted over the years from the leadership and support of Presbytery. When we do not pay our per-capita share, we are also robbing Presbytery of money because they have to send the full amount we owe to Synod and General Assembly. So, please do your part and send \$39 for each church member in your household.

Travnicek Memorial Ringers

The Travnicek Memorial Ringers will be playing “Let There Be Peace on Earth” during morning worship on **Sunday, February 16th**. Plan to join us and enjoy the beautiful music of our handbell choir.

**The Concert Series in Stirling**

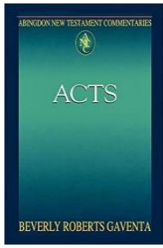
On **Sunday, February 9th**, at 2:00 p.m., we will welcome Soprano Nina Berman and Pianist Steven Beck. Nina Berman performed for us last year. She has focused on both early music and standard concert repertoire, singing roles by Gluck, Purcell, Monteverdi, Allegri, and Handel, with the Vancouver Early Music Festival, Ridotto Arts Organization, and others; and, she has sung as soloist with several New York area orchestras, most recently in the Brahms *Ein Deutsches Requiem* with the Chappaqua Symphony Orchestra. Additionally, Nina enjoys singing as a chorister, and has sung with the Bard Festival Chorale, the St. Bartholomew's Choir, the American Classical Orchestra Choir, the New York Oratorio Society, and sang as a founding member of Kent Tritle's Venture (NY).



American pianist Steven Beck is a graduate of the Juilliard School. He made his debut with the National Symphony Orchestra and has toured Japan as soloist with the New York Symphonic Ensemble. He has also appeared with the New Juilliard Ensemble, Sequitur, the Jupiter Symphony Chamber Players, and the Virginia Symphony.

The concert is free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception follows the concert, during which guests may meet the performers. Refreshments will be served. We hope you will invite your family and friends, and join us for beautiful music played in our sanctuary. If you would like to help with the concert series, please contact Rev. Peters or Howard Kupferman. For more information, go to www.fpcstirling.org.

Christian Education Committee



Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters

We are continuing our study of **Dr. Beverly Gaventa's book, Acts**. We often think of the Book of Acts as just stories about the beginning of the Christian Church. However, it is more about a movement struggling with what it means to believe in God and Jesus and how to be followers of Christ. It was a very intense time for the early Christian movement. Join us on **Thursdays from 10:30 - noon** for coffee, fellowship, and good open discussion.

Fourth Sunday Focus, February 23rd

- 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. We start around **8:45 a.m.** and end by about 9:45 a.m., but join us whenever you can. If you've never participated or haven't attended for a while, please join us on the 23rd; we always have lively discussions on a wide range of topics.



Topics in recent months have been: Our True Heroes, Smiles and Laughter, Competition, Friendship, Christmas Traditions, and 2020 Vision. **If there's a topic you'd like to discuss, contact Tom Parziale.**

Lenten Brunch Program - March 1st

Following morning worship on Sunday, March 1st, there will be a brunch and program entitled, *Lenten Practices*. So often we practice giving up something for Lent as a way to keep us mindful during the season. However, the questions for us are *what should we be mindful of* and *how can we be mindful?* Plan now to join us as we begin our Lenten journey and to reflect on how you can make it more meaningful for yourself.

Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

Liturgists for February:

Feb. 2	Meyersville	Feb. 16	Tom Parziale
Feb. 9	Janet Parziale	Feb. 23	Jan Somers



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 - February 2nd - at Meyersville

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.



The congregation at Meyersville Presbyterian Church has pledged to donate canned mixed fruit to the township food pantry. **Since we will be worshipping at Meyersville on February 2nd, please consider bringing this item (preferably the kind in juice and not syrup) to donate when we are there.** Thank you.



Ash Wednesday Service

On **Wednesday, February 26th**, we will begin our Lenten journey with the celebration of **Ash Wednesday**. The service will be held in Stirling at 7:30 p.m., with our friends from the Meyersville Presbyterian Church worshipping with us. Rev. Peters will begin his Lenten sermon series entitled *Untying the Knots*. The service will include the Sacrament of Holy Communion and the Service of Ashes. Please plan to join us to mark the beginning of your Lenten journey.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

On January 12th, we celebrated **Baptism of the Lord Sunday** with our annual *renewal of baptism service*. The congregation was invited to come forward to receive a renewal of their baptism from Rev. Peters. Then, they took a small shell out of a large shell centerpiece and wrote a word on it signifying what Baptism means to them. Thank you to Joyce Koenig for providing some of the shells she has collected on the beach at Assateague Island, VA.



Worship Service Reminder

Just a reminder: If you arrive after the worship service has begun, please do not enter the sanctuary during a prayer or reading. Kindly wait quietly until a hymn or other similar opportunity so that the service is not disrupted. Thank you.

Deacons' Corner

- Janet Parziale

Mission of the Month - February - Doctors Without Borders



During the month of February, we **will be collecting donations for Doctors Without Borders**. The mission of Doctors Without Borders is to provide impartial medical relief to the victims of war, disease, and natural or man-made disasters, without regard to race, religion, or political affiliation. If you would like more information about this organization, check out their website at <https://www.doctorswithoutborders.org/>. To help support this program, please use the special Mission of the Month offering envelopes that can be found in the pew racks. Remember to put your name and/or envelope number on it so you can receive credit for your donation.

FLHiP Brunch Thank You!

The Deacons want to thank everyone who helped with and/or brought a special dish to share at the FLHiP brunch on Sunday, January 26th. The brunch was well attended and, as usual, there was plenty of good food to enjoy.



The purpose of the meeting was to share the results of the demographics study, group interviews, and joint project done at Meyersville that examined each of our churches and church family. **On February 2nd, there will be a brunch in Meyersville following morning worship to begin joint discussions about the future of our two churches. Please plan to attend. If you can, bring a dish to share.** If you need a ride to Meyersville, please contact Janet and Tom Parziale or another church member.

Update On Bridges Collection



Our Mission of the Month for January was the Bridges Outreach Lunch Program we support. Many thanks to those who donated to this very worthy cause. To date, we have **collected \$130**, which will be used to purchase the bread, meat, snacks, fruit cups, and drinks for each lunch we prepare. If you did not get the opportunity to donate, feel free to give your donation directly to Elsie Turqman, or drop it in the offering plate using the Mission of the Month envelopes found the pews. Remember to mark the donation for Bridges and add your name if you would like to get credit for the donation. Thank you again for your support.

Fellowship Hour

Fellowship Hour is a very special time following each weekly worship service. It is an opportunity to share stories and catch up with each other after our busy weeks. **Please consider helping with this important part of our church life by signing up to host yourself or with a partner or simply donating money to be used to provide some delicious goodies for the morning.** If you wish to donate money, please give it to a Deacon or place it in the offering plate in an envelope marked "Fellowship Hour."

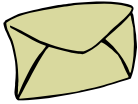


The coffee, tea, plates, napkins, and cups are all available in the kitchen. You just need to provide milk (usually a quart), juice (or simply water), and some goodies (cookies, fruit, pretzels, popcorn, etc.). If you need help setting up the coffee and tea, please feel free to ask any Deacon or other member of the congregation. Your Fellowship Hour can be as simple or as elaborate as you want. They are fun to do and thoroughly appreciated by everyone.

Need A Ride to Church?



If you ever find that you need a ride to church, either to Stirling or Meyersville, please feel free to call Janet Parziale (908-647-2212), another Deacon, or the church office (908-647-1033). We would be happy to make arrangements to pick you up! We never want the lack of transportation to keep you from joining us for worship or any church event.

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 or envelope # on it so you can receive credit for your donation.**

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.

**Visiting Nurse**

Joyce Koenig is our congregation's Visiting Nurse. She makes visitations on her own and with Rev. Peters and is always available to answer your health-related questions. Thank you, Joyce!

Water Available During Worship

There is always 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.

**Mission Programs****Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**

- Janet Parziale



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, February 7th, 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 Janet or Yvonne Fletcher. If you'd like to help with this program, please speak to Janet or Yvonne.

Upcoming dates: March 6, April 3, May 1

Souper Bowl of Caring

- Tom Parziale

It's that time again--the 54th NFL Super Bowl championship game will be played on Sunday, February 2, with the San Francisco 49ers playing the Kansas City Chiefs. It is an exciting time for football fans.

It is also time for the **annual Souper Bowl of Caring** activity, which occurs across the United States. Since we will be in Meyersville on February 2nd, **we will be taking our "soup pot" collection at the sanctuary exits following worship on Sunday, February 9th.**



Some history: in South Carolina in 1990, a simple prayer: "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" inspired a youth-led movement to help hungry and hurting people around the world. This movement has gathered money and food for those in need each year since then. Last year, the amount of food and monetary donations across the country totaled \$9,717,553.

This year's nationwide collection is underway ---- <https://souperbowl.org/welcome>

As in recent years, we will split the donations between Family Promise of Morris County and the Market Street Mission (Morristown). In 2019, we collected \$375 from the congregation. We also included \$350 received from the Playathon hosted in our sanctuary, making our total donation was \$725. Please consider donating to this worthy cause.

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, or you can just give them to Jan any Sunday morning. Thank you for your continued support of these programs.

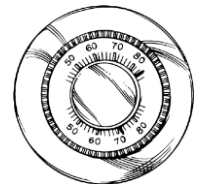


Buildings & Grounds

- Tom Parziale

Building Use Reminder

If you are using the facility for any reason, please remember to check that the thermostat is turned down when you leave. There are several thermostats around the building. Recently, some have been left "pumping heat" after meetings have ended. If you have questions, please speak to Tom Parziale.



Roof Repair Update



As you may have read in the annual report, we experienced storm damage to the office wing roof. Several tree branches pierced the roof. Our roofing contractor, Capitol Roofing, came out within a couple of days of us noticing some leaks in the child care room and deployed a temporary solution on November 30. As you may recall, the next day (December 1) we had heavy rains.

The neighbor who owned the "offending" tree had it professionally removed. The annual report states that we plan to address a long-term solution in 2020. I am pleased to report that the long-term solution was completed on January 18. Once again, Capitol Roofing was a great partner, completing the work just hours before we experienced a snow storm.

We can never predict the future but, in my view, on two recent occasions our contractor saved us from more substantial damage inside the building. In 2019, Capitol Roofing was our contractor for the Pollard Hall roof replacement. We have used them for other projects, including the office wing roof structure replacement a few years ago.

Church Security

As many of you know, the complex exterior doors remain locked during the week days when the Long Hill Montessori School is in session. Access to the building is controlled by the school and church offices who can "buzz" people in. Though much different than the decades ago when many of us attended school, this is standard practice in these times. The current process is somewhat similar to our local public schools.



As Rev. Peters mentioned during church recently, the Long Hill Township Police Department is now on site for the beginning of all worship services in town. At our church, a police vehicle has been in the driveway/parking lot for the past few Sundays, usually starting around 30-45 minutes before our services begins. Given the increased security problems at places of worship throughout the country, it is comforting that the safety of places of worship in our town has become the focus of our police department. Kudos to Chief Naga and the Long Hill Police for being proactive, reaching out to all worship facilities in town and providing an onsite, visible presence for them.

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.** There is a **Church Archives** mailbox outside the church offices for this purpose. Speak to Jan or Rev. Peters if you'd like to help keep the archives up-to-date.

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."
Copies are available in the Church narthex.



Meyersville Presbyterian Church News

Free Gentle Yoga Class

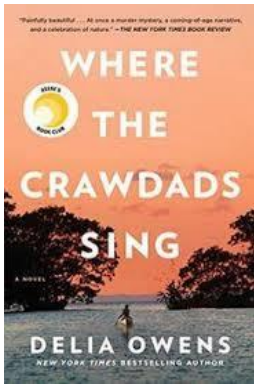
Roseann McGraw, a certified yoga teacher, offers free yoga classes in the parlor at Meyersville Presbyterian Church on Tuesdays, from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. The classes are on-going, so you can join any time.



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.

Meyersville Book Club

- Jan Somers



The Book Club's current selection is **"Where the Crawdads Sing,"** a novel by Delia Owens. The group will meet in the parlor at Meyersville on Tuesday, February 18th, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the book. Everyone is welcome to join the group.

The story follows two timelines that slowly intertwine. The first timeline describes the life and adventures of a young girl named Kya as she grows up isolated in the marsh of North Carolina from 1952–1969. The second timeline follows a murder investigation of Chase Andrews, a local celebrity of Barkley Cove, a fictional coastal town of North Carolina.

Our March selection is "Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail," a memoir by Cheryl Strayed.

Epiphany Pageant



On Epiphany Sunday, February 5th, we were treated to an Epiphany Pageant arranged by Rev. Aspinall. Imagine a movie producer and a screen writer getting together to write a feel-good, family, love story, arthouse, political, costume drama, horror, escape, disaster-that's-not-a-disaster, supernatural, musical, historical epic with animals and angels.

The play featured Ruud Zijdel and Rev. Aspinall, with a little help from Ed Gerech and Alison Peters, and everyone thoroughly enjoyed it!

**Congratulations!**

Congratulations to Micki and Ted Peck on their marriage, January 18, 2020. Our best wishes to the couple as they begin their new journey together.



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
- ✓ Questions? Contact Debra Sprague

Please e-mail submissions for the March issue of Stirling Stuff to:

jsomers17@hotmail.com

by February 20th. 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?

