



Stirling Stuff

Volume 65, No. 4

April 2021

Pastor's Message



Dear Church Family,

During the month of April, our lectionary gives us the great stories of Jesus' resurrection appearances – both the Easter morning ones and, also, all those times Jesus showed up after Easter Sunday. There is the long Emmaus road story, the breakfast on the beach story, Thomas, the “feed my sheep” story, the ascension stories. In all of them are words like “shock,” “disbelief,” and “astonishment” as the disciples try to fathom what has happened and how Jesus could possibly be dead and buried and yet alive standing in front of them. It is a story that inspires doubt. I would say that if you don't have serious doubts about the Easter story, you're just not paying attention.

While the four Gospels have many interesting variations in their account of Jesus' resurrection, they are absolutely consistent on one thing: no one believes the good news of Jesus' resurrection when they first hear it. That includes Jesus' own disciples, the ones who were closest to him and spent the most time with him. The disbelief actually *starts* with the disciples.

Luke tells us that the disciples dismissed the testimony of the women who had been to the empty tomb as an “idle tale.” This translation is a “nice” one. The Greek word that Luke uses – *leros* – is the root of our word *delirious*. So, in response to the testimony of the women, the disciples say they are plain out of their minds.

I think we can understand the disciples' reaction to the women's “*leros*.” The idea that a person who died has actually been raised pretty much upsets the natural order and causes you to lose confidence in nearly everything you thought you could count on. Two things, Benjamin Franklin once wrote to a friend, are certain in this world: death and taxes. Except, according to those women, not death.

So, no wonder the disciples doubt the women's testimony. Except it's not just their testimony they keep doubting. Peter ran to the tomb and confirmed at the very least that it was empty; two disciples on the road to Emmaus talked with Jesus and have returned to tell their tale; and, Jesus has even appeared among them and invited them to touch him, and still, Luke writes, “While in their joy they were disbelieving and still wondering....” They *still* don't believe. Yet they can be *both* joyful *and* disbelieving at the same time.

Doubt is not the opposite of faith. Doubt is probably a necessary ingredient to faith. Faith, by definition, is trust *in spite of* a lack of evidence. Faith is not knowledge. It is *acting as if* something is true even when you have no proof that it is.

This means that when we worship together as the “gathering of the faithful,” we’re not a group whose faith or knowledge is absolute or certain or bedrock. We’re people who have all kinds of questions and doubts but still find joy and wonder in this message of good news about new life. Or maybe who *want* to find joy and wonder, haven’t yet, but keep coming because of our hope.

So, doubt is probably a requirement of faith. It means you’re paying attention. The challenge is to live or even act like God’s promises are true. If it’s true that God raised Jesus from the dead; if it’s true that God promises to renew the whole creation and give us new life; if it’s true that nothing can separate us from the love of God; if it’s true that God will not turn God’s back on any of us but always reaches out to us in grace, mercy, and forgiveness... If *any* of this – let alone *all* of this – is true, then how might we live our lives differently? How might this faith – not knowledge, but trusting, courageous faith – change how we look at our relationships, our politics, our work, our resources, and our future?



And it takes a little time to let all this sink in, we’re in good company. Jesus’ first disciples struggled with this as well.

Yours in Christ,
Barbara

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Reminder: Easter Ham Donations – March 27th

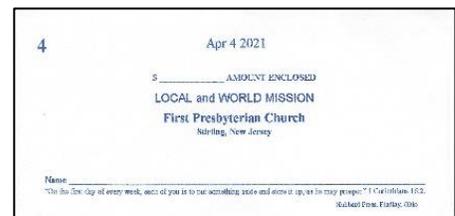
Once again, ShopRite is promoting free hams for the Easter holiday. As you sit down to enjoy your Easter meal, please remember those less fortunate. If you qualify for the free ham and will not be using it, please consider donating it. **Tom Parziale will be in the church parking lot from 10:00-11:00 a.m. on Saturday, March 27th, the day before Palm Sunday, to collect the hams.** He will deliver them to the Market Street Mission in Morristown as well as to a local family. Your support of this program is very much appreciated.



Weekly Contributions

Special Request from Elsie

When mailing your offering to the church or to Elsie Turqman, please also include your Church envelope that has your number on the outside. Elsie uses these envelopes in her record keeping. When no envelope is included, she makes up an envelope for the individual. Your help in this would be greatly appreciated. Thank you.



Join the Online Zoom Coffee Hour**- Janet Parziale**

Our Zoom coffee hours continue every **Sunday morning at 10:30 a.m.** (unless otherwise announced) jointly with our friends from Meyersville. For many, these visits online with one another have been fun, therapeutic, and a great way to catch up with one another.

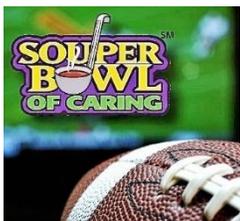
You do not need any special software to join in the fun; just click the link in the email provided each week to participate. You can join with video or just with audio, and you can use your phone, Kindle, tablet, or computer. If you need the link resent, please feel free to contact Janet Parziale at janetparziale@comcast.net or 908-647-2212.

Church Directory Update

Our church secretary, Paulette, is updating the Church Directory. If you have not already sent in any necessary changes/additions to your information as it is printed in the current directory, please send it ASAP. Contact the church office at 908-647-1033 or Secretary@fpcstirling.org.

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

During the months of **March and April**, we will be collecting donations for **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, food to the hungry, and empowerment to the poor and oppressed. Since we are not meeting at the church, please send your donation to the church office (158 Central Ave, Stirling, NJ 07980) or directly to Elsie Turqman. Remember to include your name and/or envelope number if you would like your donation to be recorded and note "Mission of the Month" on your envelope or check. Thank you in advance for supporting this important program.

**Update - Mission of the Month - February**

During the month of February, we held our annual Souper Bowl of Caring collection, and our church collected a record amount of \$390. As we have done for the past several years, the Deacons decided the money will be split between Family Promise of Morris County and Market Street Mission in Morristown. Thank you to everyone who donated generously to this special mission program.

**Welcome to our Newly Ordained Deacon**

We welcome new member, Kim Ridgway, to the Board of Deacons. Kim will lead Mission opportunities for our church and will also be our Reception Coordinator. She brings with her an enthusiasm in support of our church that is greatly appreciated and welcomed.

Thank you for Your Service

We thank Israel Sierra for his many years of service on the Board of Deacons as his term has ended. Israel has volunteered to continue ordering and picking up the beautiful flowers for our sanctuary. He works with *Flowers on the Ridge* in Basking Ridge and has been our leader in this position for many years.



We thank Kim for joining us, and we especially thank Israel for his dedication and willingness to serve as a Deacon over the past several years.

Flowers for Our Sanctuary

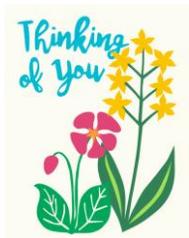
Rev. Aspinall will continue recording alternately at both churches. **If you would like to have flowers placed on the chancel for services recorded at Stirling**, please call the church office or Israel Sierra. **During April and May, services will be recorded at Stirling for Sundays, April 18th, 25th, May 9th and 23rd.** You may leave a message at the church with the specifics (your name, which Sunday service you would like them for, and who they are given in memory/honor of).



Recordings are done on Fridays, so the flowers need to be picked up by Israel on Thursdays.

Please place your order at least one week prior to the Thursday pick-up date to allow enough lead time to have them for the service you choose. The cost is still \$30; your check (made payable to: *Flowers on the Ridge*) can be sent to the church office. If you have any questions, please contact Janet Parziale.

Know Someone Who Needs a Card?

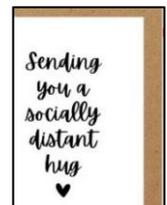


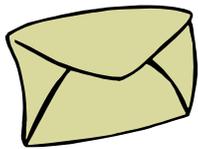
Each week, we remember members, friends, and family who need our prayers for joys and concerns. Many have attested to the power of prayer in helping to give strength to all those involved. A Deacon sends cards to let them know they're being thought of and they're in the prayers of the congregation to get well, share joyful wishes, or express sympathy.

If you know of someone 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.

Need Help? Want to Chat?

As this time of staying at home continues, it is easy to miss 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. 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.



Deacons' Fund

The Deacons Fund is used to help the Deacons do their Mission work. It is funded by donations given so generously by you in the little green envelopes found in the pew racks at church. Since we are not currently meeting for indoor services, you may send your donation directly to the church or to Elsie Turqman. Please note "Deacons' Fund" in the memo section of your check. Thank you very much!

Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Shared Services with Meyersville Presbyterian Church**

The Meyersville Presbyterian Church and the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling will continue to worship together. There will be an online service each week, accessible through a link delivered by email and also available on the church website, www.fpcstirling.org. The service can be viewed at any time. DVDs of the service are also available and may be requested through Janet Parziale.



There will be special observances of Holy Week on Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. **All of these services will be available online.**

Palm Sunday, March 28th

The service will be recorded at Stirling and palms will be used to decorate the chancel.

Maundy Thursday, April 1st

Part of our online Maundy Thursday service will be a pageant portraying Jesus and his disciples in the upper room on the night that Jesus was arrested.

In this picture, you can see our set, director, videographer, and one of our actors, Tom Parziale, portraying one of the disciples. Look for the link to this service in your email on April 1st and on the church website.

**Good Friday Vigil, April 2nd**

On Good Friday, April 2, we will be holding our **Good Friday Vigil** from noon to 6 pm. All are invited to sign up for a time slot to sit in our sanctuary to bear witness to Jesus' experience on that day. There will be suggested Bible readings and devotional material available, or you are welcome to sit quietly and enjoy the beauty and silence of our sanctuary.

Entrance into the sanctuary will be through the narthex doors from the outside. There will be instructions and hand-sanitizer on the table and masks will be required. Participants can sign up for a ½ hour or an hour; only one person (or one household) in the sanctuary at a time. If you would like to participate, please contact Carolyn Malfatone by email at cmalfatone@aol.com or by phone.

Good Friday Tenebrae Service, April 2nd

The Tenebrae worship service will be recorded at Stirling with candles being extinguished and lights dimmed after each Bible reading. Members of each congregation will be taking part in the service.

Easter Sunday – The Day of Resurrection, April 4th

There will be an early morning service at Kielblock Farm in Meyersville at 7:00 a.m. unless there is heavy rain.

Our morning worship service will be available online; however, weather permitting, we will also have an outdoor service in Stirling at 10:00 a.m. All Covid-19 guidelines will be followed. Please watch for information regarding that service as the date gets closer.

The Days of Holy Week - Their Significance

Palm Sunday: This is the day of Jesus' triumphant entry into Jerusalem on a donkey. He was greeted by enthusiastic crowds who shouted, "Hosanna!" and laid palm branches and their cloaks on the pavement before him. This was the traditional way to welcome a royal person to the city.

Maundy Thursday: On Maundy Thursday, we remember Jesus' Last Supper with his disciples, the evening when he washed his disciples' feet and commanded them to "Love one another as I have loved you." The word, "Maundy" comes from the Latin word for "command."

Good Friday: Good Friday is the day when we remember Jesus' death on the cross. We are told that he hung on the cross at Golgotha from noon to 3 and that the curtain in the temple that hid the Holy of Holies was torn from top to bottom. Even though it seems it should be called "Bad Friday" because of Jesus' suffering and death, it was a very good day for all Christians in that it marks the day of Jesus' death and the beginning of a new and different relationship with God.

Easter Sunday or Resurrection Day: This is the greatest day in the life of the world – the day God defeated death and Jesus rose victorious from his grave. His resurrection means that the eternal consequences of human sin are erased, and that we, as Jesus' brothers and sisters, are also welcome to life eternal. Truly a day for celebration!

Mission Programs**Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**

- Janet Parziale



The Bridges organization is still in need of as many lunches as we can provide. They are now asking that we bring them on Tuesdays and Thursdays. One person is making sandwiches and one person is filling the brown bags at separate locations. One day each month, one person takes the sandwiches and the brown bags prepared with non-perishable goodies and delivers them to Summit.

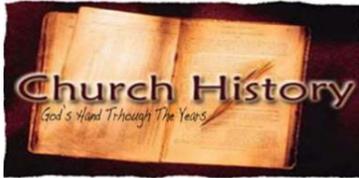
We are always in need of small bottles of water or cartons of juice; snacks of granola bars, cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels; and small fruit cups or applesauce, pudding, etc. Cash donations are also appreciated to help with the purchase of bread and lunch meat. You can drop items off in Pollard Hall (call the church office to confirm someone is there) or send cash donations to Elsie Turqman.

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, Stirling Stuff, Pastor's sermons, Scripture readings, Church history, and more.

Church Archives

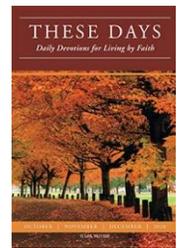
- Jan Somers



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.** Items can be mailed to the Church (labeled "Archives"), or you can save them until you are in the building. Thank you.

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 Christian life."



Our Church has a subscription for copies of this devotional booklet. If you would like a copy, please contact the church office, and it can be mailed to you.



Helping Out

- Jan Somers

Although many of us have received the Covid-19 vaccine, we all need to continue wearing a face mask. Elsie Turqman and Jan Somers are still available to sew fabric face masks in different sizes. If you or someone you know needs one, please contact Elsie or Jan.

Boy Scout Troop #59

Rev. Aspinnall

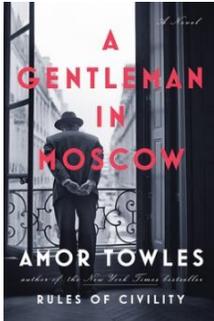


The Session is grateful to Boy Scout Troop 59 for their generous monetary gift to the church. Troop 59 was chartered in 1937 and has been meeting at the church for most of that time. The current leaders are Ed Gerecht, Scott Czarkowski, Matt Wagner, Dave Theocletus, Bob Walto, Neil Schmidt, Bill Hrotko, and Keven and Cathy Marshall.

The Troop's favorite activities are hiking, camping, and summer camp at Sabattis in the Adirondack mountains in New York State. The troop meets weekly at the church and is helpful with projects around the building. Most recently, they helped rearrange the Pastor's office! Their financial contribution to the work of the church will be most useful. Thanks again, Troop 59!

Meyersville Book Club**- Jan Somers**

The Book Club's current selection is "**A Gentleman in Moscow,**" a novel by Amor Towles. The group will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, April 27th, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the book. Everyone is welcome to join the group; please contact Rev. Aspinall so she will send you the Zoom link.



Amor Towles skillfully transports us to The Metropol, the famed Moscow hotel where movie stars and Russian royalty hobnob, Bolsheviks plot revolutions, intellectuals discuss the merits of contemporary Russian writers, spies spy, thieves thieve, and the danger of twentieth century Russia lurks outside its marbled walls. It's also where wealthy Count Alexander Rostov lives under house arrest for a poem deemed incendiary by the Bolsheviks and where he meets Nina. Nina is a precocious and wide-eyed young girl who holds the keys to the entire hotel, wonders what it means to be a princess, and will irrevocably change his life. Despite being confined to the hallway of the hotel, the Count lives an absorbing, adventure-filled existence, filled with capers, conspiracies, and culture. Alexander Rostov is a character for the ages--he is unflinchingly (and hilariously for readers) devoted to his station, even when forced to wait tables, play hide and seek with a young girl, or confront communism. Towles magnificently conjures the grandeur of the Russian hotel and the vibrancy of the characters that call it home.

Earth Day 2021 – April 22nd**- Jan Somers**

The theme for Earth Day 2021 is **Restore Our Earth**. When life around the globe returns to normal, **our world cannot return to business-as-usual**. Our global community has been shocked by the largest global crisis in a generation. COVID-19 has shown us the necessity of thinking ahead, but the next crises are already on their way. Climate change, species loss, pandemics, and massive natural disasters might define the future — unless we do something now. We have the solutions, both natural and technological... we just need the will.

There are many ways you can help. Go to EARTHDAY.ORG and find out how you can join over 1 billion participants around the world and take action on April 22nd.



2021 Session and Deacon Responsibilities

Board of Elders

Clerk of Session	Susan Brodziak
Recording Clerk	Susan Brodziak
Worship	Joyce Koenig
Nominating	TBD
Finance & Stewardship	Sandy Mackay
Personnel	Kai Ihringer
Christian Education	TBD
Facilities & Property	Lynn Blakeslee
Presbytery	Session Members Rotate



Board of Deacons

Moderator	Carolyn Malfatone
Recording Secretary	Susan Gerecht
Treasurer	Elsie Turqman
Corresponding Secretary	Janet Parziale
Flowers	Israel Sierra (volunteer non-Deacon)
Deacon's Corner (for Stirling Stuff)	Janet Parziale
Paraments	Dawn MacKay
Kitchen Supplies (for Coffee Hour)	Joanne Sama
Reception Coordinator	Kim Ridgway
Mission and Outreach	Kim Ridgway
Nominating Committee	Carolyn Malfatone

Ongoing Mission Programs:

Items collected for various causes:

- ✓ 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

**Please e-mail submissions for the
May issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by April 22nd. Thank you!**

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 from 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

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

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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 online church?

