



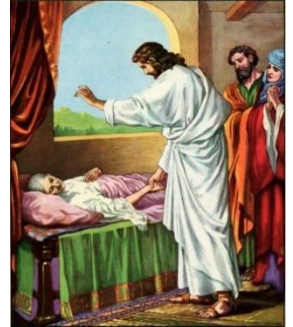
Stirling Stuff

Volume 65, No. 3

March 2021

Pastor's Message

As soon as they left the synagogue, they entered the house of Simon and Andrew, with James and John. Now Simon's mother-in-law was in bed with a fever, and they told him about her at once. He came and took her by the hand and lifted her up. Then the fever left her, and she began to serve them. Mark 1:29-31



Dear Church Family,

Matthew, Mark, and Luke all tell the story of Jesus healing Simon Peter's mother-in-law. In all three it is a short passage, and in all three we are told that after Jesus healed her of her fever, she got up and served them. I have always thought that this was a bit rough. Couldn't Peter and his wife let her rest a bit after her illness, help her out a little? Was it really necessary that she get up right away to serve them? Didn't she deserve a break?

Commentator Sarah Henrich, however, has some insight into the social world of Jesus' time and the meaning of illness and its costs:

"Illness bore a heavy social cost: not only would a person be unable to earn a living or contribute to the well-being of a household, but their ability to take their proper role in the community, to be honored as a valuable member of a household, town, or village, would be taken from them. Peter's mother-in-law is an excellent case in point. It was her calling and her honor to show hospitality to guests in her home. Cut off from that role by an illness cut her off from doing that which integrated her into her world. Who was she when no longer able to engage in her calling? Jesus restored her to her social world and brought her back to a life of value by freeing her from that fever. It is very important to see that healing is about restoration to community and restoration of a calling, a role, as well as restoration to life. For life without community and calling is bleak indeed."

So, Jesus' healing is not only for the purpose of freedom *from* illness, its freedom *for* something as well. We are healed for lives of purpose and meaning and service and generosity and more. And here I mean healing not only from literal illness but healing from the human condition of sin by the life and death and resurrection of Jesus. This is what we remember during this season of Lent.

So perhaps something to be thinking about this Lenten season is for what specific purpose you have been healed. What or who calls to you? Who needs you this week, this month? I expect you don't think about this too much when you just naturally respond to the need of a neighbor or a friend. You think only that you are helping a friend. But, indeed, it is more than that. When you respond with service, with generosity, with encouragement, with patience, you are actually responding to God's call. You have been freed to respond in this way by Christ's healing – whether that healing was of illness or despair or hopelessness or, more generally, of the eternal consequences of our human inclination to miss the mark, to sin.

Presbyterian theologian and preacher, Frederick Buechner: *"The place God calls you to is the place where your deep gladness and the world's deep hunger meet."*



In Christ, we have been healed. We have been freed from what ails us so that we can be free for a purpose both as individuals and as a church. May that freedom and that purpose bring joy to each of us, to those we help, and to our church community.

Yours in Christ,
Barbara

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

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.

If you have not attended, please try it on an upcoming Sunday morning. 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 send an email to Secretary@fpcstirling.org.



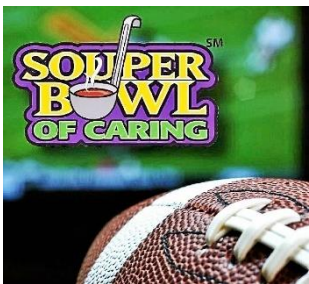
Deacons' Corner

- Janet Parziale

Mission of the Month - March - One Great Hour of Sharing

During the month of **March**, 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. Donations may be sent 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

Our February Mission of the Month focused on the **Souper Bowl of Caring**. Tom Parziale is happy to report that your donations totaled **\$390, our highest amount ever**. The Deacons will soon decide which local organizations will receive these funds.

From Alison Reese, Executive Director, Souper Bowl of Caring:

“Thank you for your ongoing support of hunger relief in your community!
Every dollar makes a difference in someone’s life.”

Flowers for Our Sanctuary

At our recent Worship Committee and Deacons meetings, we discussed plans for future worship services. Rev. Aspinall will be recording alternately at both churches. **If you would like to place flowers on the chancel in honor or memory of someone for services recorded at Stirling, please call the church office.** You may leave a message on the machine with the specifics (your name, the date you would like the flowers, and who they are given in memory/honor of). Allow enough lead time to have them ordered for the date you would like. Your check for \$30 (payable to: *Flowers on the Ridge*) should be sent to the church office. Israel Sierra will be notified to place the order and then will pick them up and deliver them to the church.



Please note that the worship services are recorded on Fridays, so the flowers need to be picked up on Thursdays. Services for March 7th and the 28th will be recorded in Stirling and those dates are already covered. As soon as the April dates are available, everyone will be notified to allow time to reserve a date if you want to order flowers. 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.

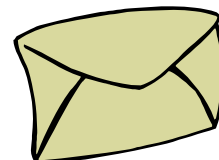


Need Help? Want to Chat?

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. DVD's of the service are also available and may be requested through Janet Parziale.



On Sunday, March 7th, there will be a live Zoom worship service at 10:00 a.m. that will include the Sacrament of the Lord's Supper. The Zoom link will be sent the day before. It will also be recorded for viewing at a later time.

Holy Week Services

The Worship Committee has been planning our Holy Week worship services. There will be special observances for Palm Sunday, Maundy Thursday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. All of these services will be available online. We also hope to have some form of additional worship services outdoors – which of course, is difficult to plan as we don't know now what the weather will be like a month from now. Please keep an eye out for announcements about a possible in-person outdoor Maundy Thursday evening communion service and an early Easter morning (7:00 am) worship service at Hillview Farm in Meyersville.

**Palm Sunday, March 28th**

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

Maundy Thursday, April 1st

The service will be recorded at Meyersville and will include a dramatic reading performed by members of both congregations.

Good Friday Vigil, April 2nd

Our Good Friday Vigil will be an opportunity to sit quietly in our beautiful sanctuary and bear witness to Jesus' Good Friday experience. This will be a chance to get away for a few minutes from the hustle of our lives to remember Jesus' Passion and his sacrifice on our behalf. Vigil participants will be welcome to sit, pray, read Scripture, or read devotional material that will be provided.

Entrance into the sanctuary should be through the narthex doors from the outside. There will be instructions and hand-sanitizer on the table in the narthex and masks will be required. The vigil is from noon to 6 p.m., and participants can sign up for a ½ hour or an hour. There will be 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 Worship, 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 asked to take part in the service.

Easter Sunday – The Day of Resurrection, April 4th

More information about Easter services will be provided in the April issue of Stirling Stuff.

The Days of Holy Week

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

Easter Ham Donations

Once again, ShopRite is promoting free hams for the Easter holiday. As you sit down to enjoy Easter with your family, 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.



Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Janet Parziale



The Bridges organization is still in need of as many lunches as we can provide. They are asking that we bring them any day (Mon-Thurs) convenient for us. 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.

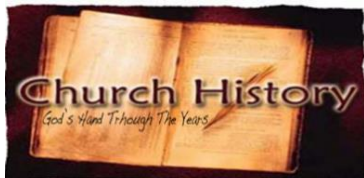
We are always in need of small bottles of water or cartons of juice; snacks of cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels; and small fruit cups or applesauce, pudding, etc. Cash donations are also appreciated to help with the purchase of bread and lunch meat. You can drop items off in Pollard Hall (call the church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

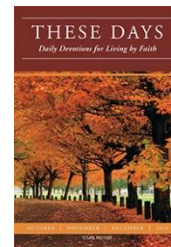


Please continue to forward news clippings, bulletins, programs, pictures, or other memorabilia regarding any member of our church family so our archives can be kept up to date. **Please be sure items are dated and, if possible, the names of church members and/or families are highlighted.** Items can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



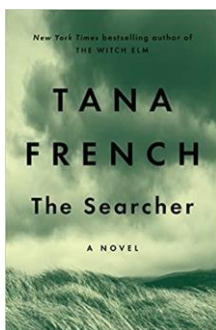
Helping Out

- Jan Somers

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.

Meyersville Book Club

- Jan Somers



The Book Club's current selection is **"The Searcher,"** a novel by Tana French. The group will meet via Zoom on Tuesday, March 23rd, 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.

Cal Hooper thought a fixer-upper in a bucolic Irish village would be the perfect escape. After twenty-five years in the Chicago police force and a bruising divorce, he just wants to build a new life in a pretty spot with a good pub where nothing much happens. But when a local kid whose brother has gone missing arm-twists him into investigating, Cal uncovers layers of darkness beneath his picturesque retreat and starts to realize that even small towns shelter dangerous secrets.

Earth Hour 2021

- Jan Somers

Earth Hour 2021 is Saturday, March 27th, from 8:30-9:30 p.m.

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) in 2007. It is observed around the world annually, encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to **turn off non-essential electric lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 pm, as a symbol of commitment to the planet.** The 2021 theme is "Climate Change to Save Earth."



Later this year, world leaders will sit together during major global conferences and set the environmental agenda for the next decade and beyond. They will make crucial political decisions on environmental conditions and sustainable development. These decisions will directly affect the future of humanity and our planet for the years to come.

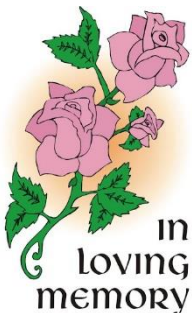
With everyone's support, Earth Hour 2021 could be the main attention that puts the environment at the center of international conversations. Together we can take responsibility and show the world leaders that the environment matters a lot for everyone. Therefore, immediate actions are needed to reverse the loss of the environment.

Plan to participate on Saturday, March 27th, by turning off all your electric lights from 8:30-9:30 p.m.



New Address

Best wishes to Lore and Rich Pateman, who have settled into their new home in Colorado. Their new address is: 1111 Button Rock Drive, Longmont, CO 80504



Thaddeus (Thad) Simms, our Church's former long-time organist and choir director, passed away on February 3rd. Please keep Thad's wife, Dorothy, daughter, Kelly, and other family members and friends in your prayers during this difficult time.



We have received word that (Agathe) Christine Krebs, former member of our congregation, passed away on January 24th. Rev. Aspinall will lead a family graveside service on March 18th. Please keep Christine's family and friends in your prayers during this difficult time.

Ongoing Mission Programs:

Items collected for various causes:

- ✓ Full-sized and "courtesy"-sized bars of soap, shampoo, conditioner, shower caps
- ✓ Fabric: about 1/2 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 April issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
 by **March 18th**. 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
Why not invite a friend to online church?

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.

