



Stirling Stuff

Volume 66, No. 9

October 2022



Dear Church Family,

Shortly before his death in January of 2009, poet and novelist, John Updike, wrote a poem called “Fine Point.” There is a lot in this poem, but it is partly about thinking back to the ups and downs of both his own journey of faith from Sunday School and Christmas pageants and on through adulthood and old age and approaching death, as well as the journey of faith of God’s people as reflected in the Bible. Considering the breadth of his topic, Updike managed to do this with very few words. The poem demonstrates various superficial changes in attitude and depth of interest while, at the same time, an underlying deep faith and commitment and trust. Both Updike and all of God’s people are sometimes interested, sometimes bored; but, in church, believing, trusting, praying, trying to figure it all out. Updike concluded with just a few words from Psalm 23 that indicated for him, a dying man, his hope.

Fine Point, December 22, 2008

Why go to Sunday school, though surlily,
and not believe a bit of what was taught?
The desert shepherds in their scratchy robes
undoubtedly existed, and Israel’s defeats—
the Temple in its sacredness destroyed
by Babylon and Rome. Yet Jews kept faith
and passed the prayers, the crabbed rites,
from table to table as Christians mocked.

We mocked, but took. The timbrel creed of praise
gives spirit to the daily; blood tinges lips.
The tongue reposes in papyrus pleas,
saying, *Surely*—magnificent, that “surely”—
*goodness and mercy shall follow me all
the days of my life, my life, forever.*

All of us have our days, months, even years of uncertainty and boredom. Sometimes the rites do indeed seem “crabbed.” But this does not mean we stop going to worship, stop reading the Bible, stop singing, stop praying. It is those very things which will sustain us through the dry patches and as we pass through the valleys. After all, for Psalm 23 to have been a source of hope for Updike, he had to have heard it, read it, studied it, memorized it.



SURELY GOODNESS AND
MERCY SHALL FOLLOW ME
ALL THE DAYS OF MY LIFE;
AND I WILL DWELL IN
THE HOUSE OF THE LORD
FOREVER.

PSALM 23:6 (NKJV)

A lively, mature Christian faith rarely comes to us when we are in the middle of something else. Rather, it comes through hearing the Word, thinking about it, praying, studying, acting on it. If you have not been active in the life of your church in a while, I encourage you to let God help you through the dry patch. Come to worship; participate in the community of the trying-to-be-faithful people; come be part of the body of Christ. Discover or rediscover the magnificent “surely.”

Yours in Christ,

Barbara

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling Feeding Those Who Hunger

Special Congregational Meeting



The Session has called for a Special Meeting of the congregation to be held jointly with the Meyersville congregation on Sunday, October 30, 2022, 11:00 a.m., immediately following morning worship in Meyersville. The purpose of this meeting is to report to the congregation the results of the work of the FPC Discernment Team with the Presbytery's Church Development Committee and the Committee on Ministry. Please plan to attend this meeting.

Upcoming Worship Schedule

- Rev. Aspinall

During the month of October, we will worship in Meyersville.

Wearing face masks is optional, but we will continue social distancing and signing-in for purposes of contact tracing, if needed. Our online services will also continue each week and are accessible through a link delivered by email and 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.



If you need a ride to either church, please feel free to call upon a Deacon or fellow church member; we are happy to help. Reminder--at Meyersville, there is an elevator to use instead of walking up the front steps to the sanctuary.

Notices of these dates will be posted on the church doors so, if there is confusion, there will be time to dash to the other church and just be a few minutes late. Latecomers are always welcome!

Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Our local Food Pantry, Twelve Baskets, has been housed at our church since June and will return to All Saints' starting in November. Jointly sponsored by our church, All Saints', Meyersville, and LHT Cert, the food pantry has been serving guests two Saturday mornings per month. Shelf stable food as well as meat, dairy products, eggs, and fresh produce are available for food insecure families in our area.



Volunteer help is needed to set up tables, put the food out, and then pack it up afterwards. Help is also needed for picking up food from the distribution center in Hillside. There is plenty to do, and the volunteer opportunities are well organized. **Please contact Lynn Blakeslee or Barbara Aspinall if you would like to contribute an hour or two of your time.**

If you or someone you know is in need of food or other non-grocery items, please call the food bank office at 908-647-0067 (Ext. 4) and leave a confidential message.



Food items: baby food, applesauce, shelf-stable milk, cold cereal, crackers, chips, coffee, dried herbs and spices, canola oil, olive oil

Non-food items: toiletries, diapers, baby wipes, paper towels, toilet paper, household cleaners

There is a more complete list of needed items on the table in the narthex.

Stewardship

Weekly Contributions



Whether you worship in person or on-line, please try to keep your pledges current. Financial commitments still need to be met. Expenses for maintaining the buildings and grounds, paying our staff, or keeping up with our mission support are ongoing. You can send your weekly offering/pledge (in your offering envelope) to the church office or directly to Elsie Turqman.

Handbell Choir

The joint-church handbell ringers will begin rehearsals on Sunday, October 2nd, following morning worship in Meyersville. If you are interested in playing handbells, please join us. You do not need any prior experience or have to read music. Why not give it a try?



Church Historic Site Plaque

During the Long Hill Township Council meeting on September 14th, our church received a plaque identifying the building that is the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling as a Long Hill Township historic site. Fred Hunt of the Long Hill Township Historic Preservation Advisory Committee researched our building using our archives and other documents and



worked with Joyce Koenig and Rev. Aspinall to complete the application for this designation. Sam Cornish, Township Historian, presented the plaque to Joyce Koenig. It will be mounted outside the entrance to our sanctuary.



Deacons' Corner

- Janet Parziale

Mission of the Month - October

The Deacons are once again working with the Church World Service (CWS) and their "Blanket Sunday" program for our October Mission of the Month. In 2021, congregational gifts provided over 183,000 CWS Blankets and Kits to families impacted by hurricanes, tornadoes, flooding, and other crises (including homelessness and poverty). They are hoping to do the same this year. You can show God's love and provide hope to your neighbors by making a donation.



The blankets have been used in many ways – to help families who have been driven from their homes due to hurricanes, tornados, or other disasters, to keep homeless persons warm, to carry personal belongings, and to cover a window broken in a storm to keep the cold air out. These woolen blankets are water-resistant and flame-retardant. They are extremely durable and warm and great for frigid temperatures or other extreme weather conditions.

During October, we will be collecting \$10 per blanket. Please place your donation in the offering plate or send it directly to the church or Elsie Turqman. Please note "Mission of the Month," and remember to include your name and/or your envelope number if you would like your donation to be recorded. We hope you will share in this worthy endeavor.

Upcoming Mission of the Month - November

Looking ahead to November, our **Mission of the Month will be focused on the Market Street Mission in Morristown**. Each Thanksgiving for many years, members and friends of our church have stepped up and donated their free turkeys to Market Street Mission to help in their effort to provide a delicious Thanksgiving dinner to many homeless individuals. Since 1889, the Mission has been a refuge for those facing poverty, homelessness, and addiction. Currently, they provide 250 meals each day to those in immediate need. Besides providing much needed meals, this organization also provides recovery programs and vocational training to those



rebuilding their lives, community counseling services, and “regularly scheduled meetings and services that give people a solid foundation for stable lives.” This year we will again support the Market Street Mission in two ways:

- If you are eligible for a free turkey from the supermarket and do not plan to use it, please consider donating it. **Tom Parziale will be at the church from 10-11 a.m. on Saturday, November 19th, to collect the turkeys.** He will then deliver them to Morristown. **Please keep the turkeys frozen.**
- A special monetary gift will be collected throughout the month of November. This will help the Mission care for an individual’s immediate needs today and their long-term needs for a stable and independent tomorrow. Please place your donation in the offering plate or send it directly to the church or Elsie Turqman. Please note “Mission of the Month,” and remember to include your name and/or your envelope number if you would like your donation to be recorded. We hope you will support this worthy endeavor.



Update on our “Twelve Baskets Food Pantry” Collection

During the months of July and August, our **congregation donated \$140 for our Mission of the Month to the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry.** The Twelve Baskets Food Pantry has been housed at our church since June with support from members of Meyersville Presbyterian Church, All Saints Episcopal Church, and CERT. For more information about this wonderful program, go to: <http://www.allsaintsmillington.org/outreach.html>. This gift from our church will certainly help provide some special grocery items for those who are struggling to put food on their table. **Thank you very much** to everyone who donated generously to this special mission program.



Flowers to Beautify Our Sanctuary



Would you consider providing a bunch or two of flowers to be used during a recorded worship service in October? The flowers can come from your garden, or you can pick from a beautiful selection at ShopRite in their flower department.

Deacon Kim Ridgway (908-458-0333) loves to make arrangements and could help you with that if you call her ahead. Kim (or another Deacon) will take care of arranging them into one or two vases. If you need greens to fill out your arrangement, there are beautiful ferns along the side of the church by the Memorial Garden walkway.

If you are interested in providing flowers in October, please call the church office (908-647-1033) and give Paulette the information (your name and who the flowers are in honor/memory of). Thank you very much in advance for helping beautify our sanctuary with wonders of nature!

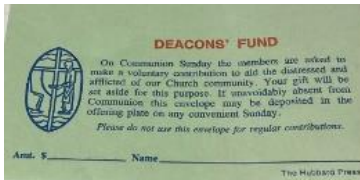
Know Someone Who Needs a Card?

We know what the power of prayer can do in helping give strength to all those involved. If you know of someone who is in need of our 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.



Deacons’ Fund Needs Your Help!

Folks, we need your help! Because we are only in our church every other month, the Deacons' Fund is desperately low. Prior to Covid, the Deacons' Fund was supported by the contributions and offerings so generously given by you in the little green envelopes found in the church pews. In recent years, this fund has been used to purchase the name plaques on the memoriam boards in Pollard Hall, candles and oil for the sanctuary, stamps for cards to the congregation, provisions for the Bridges Lunch program, and the occasional purchase of special items like the cable for the remote TV used in Pollard Hall. It is also used to support some of the mission projects of the Deacons.



Every dollar is greatly appreciated and always put to good use. If you are able, please check the pew rack for that little green envelope and fill it up and place it in the offering plate or send your donation directly to Elsie Turqman. Many, many thanks in advance for your help in replenishing our Deacons' Fund!

Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

World Communion Sunday



On October 2nd, we will celebrate World Communion Sunday in Meyersville. This is the day when we share the Lord's Supper with our sisters and brothers around the world. Plan to attend this special service where we will share bread from different countries. Please join us.

October Lectionary Readings

October 2 – 17th Sunday after Pentecost

Habakkuk 1:1-4, 2:1-4; Psalm 37:1-9; 2 Timothy 1:1-14; Luke 17:5-10

October 9 – 18th Sunday after Pentecost

2 Kings 5:1-3, 7-15c; Psalm 111; 2 Timothy 2:8-15; Luke 17:11-19

October 16 – 19th Sunday after Pentecost

Genesis 32:22-31; Psalm 121; 2 Timothy 3:14-4:5; Luke 18:1-8

October 23 - 20th Sunday after Pentecost

Jeremiah 14:7-10, 19-22; Psalm 84:1-7; 2 Timothy 4:6-8, 16-18; Luke 18:9-14

October 30 – 21st Sunday after Pentecost

Isaiah 1:10-18; Psalm 32:1-7; 2 Thessalonians 1:1-4, 11-12; Luke 19:1-19



Liturgists Needed for Worship Services



We need Liturgists each week to do readings for both the in-person and on-line worship services. **For the month of OCTOBER, we will be worshipping in MEYERSVILLE; recordings will be done in STIRLING.** Recordings are typically done on Thursday early evenings (other arrangements can be made, if needed).

To sign up, please contact Jan Somers. If Jan contacts you about reading, **please let her know as soon as possible if/when you will be available.** Rev. Aspinall will send you a copy of your readings and confirm the location and time for the on-line recording. **Thank you!**

Reformation Sunday, October 30th



Reformation Sunday is the day when Presbyterians celebrate the tradition that grounds their faith. It is always the last Sunday in October, marking the occasion in 1517 when Martin Luther posted his 95 theses on the church door in Wittenberg, Germany. Martin Luther contributed to major theological reform by translating the Bible into vernacular German, which allowed people to hear and read the gospel of Jesus Christ in their own language.

All Saints' Sunday, November 6th

On November 6th, we will celebrate **All Saints' Sunday**, a day when Christians give thanks for all the good people God has placed in their lives. If you would like to remember someone special in your life who has passed away in the past year, please **complete the form on page 13 of this newsletter.** You may place it in the offering plate, mail it to the church office, or **call the church office (908-647-1033) by Sunday,**

October 30th and leave a message with the information (person's name and relationship to you). As in the past, a candle will be lit as each name is read aloud during the service. Please join us for this meaningful service.



Building & Grounds

Church Sign Repair

Our church sign has deteriorated quite a bit, and much needed repairs are planned. Dale Monetti has once again volunteered to recondition/repair the sign. It will be removed in mid-October and brought to Dale's workshop. The work will take around 3 weeks. When the sign is returned to its current location, it will rest on new posts. The current posts, probably the originals, have served their time and need replacement.



- Tom Parziale

Church Grounds Upkeep

Some people have commented on the condition of the church property with the abundance of weeds and overgrown bushes. We have contracted with our landscaper to do a one-time, massive trimming and cleanup. We hope the work will be done soon. Thank you for your patience.

Mission Programs**Bridges Outreach Lunch Program****- Janet Parziale**

We continue to provide lunch bags to the Bridges Outreach organization for distribution to the homeless in Newark, Irvington, and NYC. Currently, one person is making sandwiches and one person is filling the brown bags. The children from the Montessori School often decorate the bags and write messages to the recipients. The sandwiches, drinks, and non-perishable goodies are delivered to Summit monthly.



We are always in need of small bottles of water or cartons of juice; snacks of cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels; and small fruit cups, 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 office to confirm that someone is there) or send monetary donations to Elsie Turqman.

Family Promise of Morris County**- Jan Somers**

Our church is scheduled to host the guests of Family Promise of Morris County during the week of October 23rd. This will be our final hosting responsibility for 2022. Due to Covid, the families continue to be housed in motels, and support churches are asked to provide gift cards for food, gas, and other necessities.

The program coordinators will be meeting in October to discuss current Covid conditions and decide how to proceed with the program in 2023.

Our "Mission of the Month" for June was designated for Family Promise and will be used to provide gift cards for the guests. Thank you for your continued support of this program. Families are appreciative of whatever we provide.

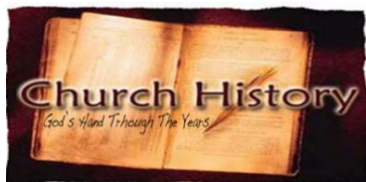
Thank you for being a part of our mission to end family homelessness!

Pop-Top Can Tabs**- Jan Somers**

Please continue to save pop-top can tabs, any size. **The can tabs are sold by weight to recycling centers, and the proceeds are donated to Ronald McDonald House Charities**—a nonprofit family and children's charity dedicated to supporting families with sick children in their time of need. You can give them to me any Sunday morning, leave them in the church office, or I can pick them up from you. Thank you for supporting of this program!

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 save 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 and put them in the "Archives" mailbox outside the church offices. Thank you.

Meyersville Presbyterian Church**Congratulations Rev. Aspinall!**

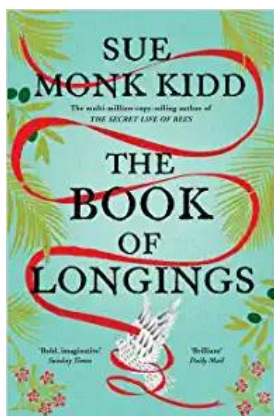
Following morning worship on Sunday, September 25th, a special fellowship hour was held celebrating Rev. Aspinall's 25th anniversary as Pastor at the Meyersville church. Loura Zijdel presented her with flowers and Kelly Roshto provided a special cake and other goodies.



We join with the Meyersville congregation in congratulating Rev. Aspinall on this wonderful milestone.

**Meyersville Book Club**

The Book Club's current selection is "***The Book Of Longings***," a fiction novel written by Sue Monk Kidd. The group will meet via Zoom on Wednesday, November 2nd, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the book. Everyone is welcome to join the group; please contact Rev. Aspinall so she can send you the Zoom link. The book is available at local libraries in different formats.



In her fourth work of fiction, Sue Monk Kidd brings her acclaimed narrative gifts to imagine the story of a young woman named Ana. Raised in a wealthy family in Sepphoris with ties to the ruler of Galilee, she is rebellious and ambitious, a relentless seeker with a brilliant, curious mind and a daring spirit. She yearns for a pursuit worthy of her life but finds no outlet for her for her considerable talents. Defying the expectations placed on women, she engages in furtive scholarly pursuits and writes secret narratives about neglected and silenced women. When she meets the eighteen-year-old Jesus, each is drawn to and enriched by the other's spiritual and philosophical ideas. He becomes a floodgate for her intellect, but also the awakener of her heart.

Their marriage unfolds with love and conflict, humor and pathos in Nazareth, where Ana makes a home for Jesus, his brothers, James and Simon, and their mother, Mary. Here, Ana's pent-up longings intensify amid the turbulent resistance to the Roman occupation of Israel, partially led by her charismatic adopted brother, Judas. She is sustained by her indomitable Aunt Yaltha, who is searching for her long-lost daughter, as well as by other women, including her friend Tabitha, who is sold into slavery after she was raped, and Phasaelis, the shrewd wife of Herod Antipas.

Ana's impetuous streak occasionally invites danger. When one such foray forces her to flee Nazareth for her safety shortly before Jesus's public ministry begins, she makes her way with Yaltha to Alexander, where she eventually finds refuge and purpose in unexpected surroundings.

Grounded in meticulous historical research and written with reverential approach to Jesus's life that focuses on his humanity, it is an inspiring account of one woman's bold struggle to realize the passion and potential inside her, while living in a time, place, and culture devised to silence her.

Atlantic Visiting Nurse (formerly VNA)



RUMMAGE SALE

October 7 & 8
9:30am - 3:30pm

October 9
12:30 - 3:30pm

Far Hills Fairgrounds

DONATIONS ACCEPTED

September 10 - 27, 2022

10:00 am - 1:00 pm

Monday through Saturday



Atlantic
Visiting Nurse

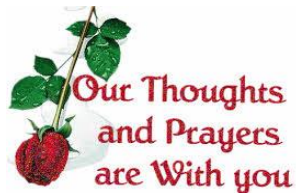
Congratulations Ali Peters!!



We are so proud to share the news that Ali Peters, daughter of the Reverends Tom and Barbara Peters, is now the Minister of the Southwest Unitarian Universalist Church in Royalton, Ohio. Ali, her husband Justin, and her dog Jess, relocated there from their home in Wisconsin where she last served as an assistant minister. Ali will be ordained on November 12th. Please keep Ali and her new church family in your thoughts and prayers as she takes this important step. Click this link to visit her church's website: <http://www.swuu.org/>. If you would like to view a recent service Ali led online, check out this link: <https://youtu.be/oLpE54dGtXc>. **Congratulations Ali!!**



In Remembrance



Long-time member Yvonne Fletcher passed away on September 19th. She had been ill with cancer for the past few months. Yvonne served as an Elder and a Deacon, helped with our annual fish and chips dinners and, most recently, as our grocery gift card fund raiser organizer. She was always willing to help with anything the church was doing. We will miss her beautiful welcoming, smiling self and her wonderful laugh.

There will be a memorial service at the church on Saturday, October 22nd, at 10:00 a.m., followed by a reception in Pollard Hall when you will be able to share your memories of Yvonne with her family. Please continue to keep Yvonne's husband, Art, and the rest of the Fletcher family in your prayers.



World Food Day, October 16th

- Jan Somers

This year's World Food Day theme is "**Safer food, better health.**" Safe food is essential to human health and well-being and is one of the most critical guarantors for good health. The benefits of safe food include improved nutrition and reduced absenteeism in schools and in the workplace. Foodborne diseases affect 1 in 10 people worldwide each year.

In 1979, the Food and Agriculture Organization of the United Nations designated October 16th **World Food Day**. It has been celebrated annually since 1981 as a day of action dedicated to tackling global hunger. Collective action across 150 countries is what makes World Food Day one of the most celebrated days of the UN calendar.



Be a part of the solution in your community and around the world because **when it comes to hunger, the only acceptable number is Zero.** **Supporting the Bridges Outreach Program, the Market Street Mission, the Community Food Bank in Hillside, and Twelve Baskets Food Pantry are good ways to help.**

A message to church members and friends,**- Jan Somers, Editor**

Next year I will celebrate 40 years as a member of First Presbyterian Church in Stirling. In 1983, the church was bustling, with members of all ages, and lots of opportunities to become involved in the life of the church. Unfortunately, those days are over for many churches. Over the years so many of our dear members and friends have passed away or moved away. Since young families are not involved the way they used to be, our congregation is aging, and our membership is dropping.

The Buildings and Grounds Committee report I received for this newsletter included mention of having received comments about the church grounds being overgrown and unkempt. The committee has since made arrangements to have the trimming and cleanup done by our landscaper. That reminded me of all the years we held clean-up days, and many church members and friends came with rakes, trimmers, shovels, brooms, etc. and helped spruce up the church grounds. It was a fun time of fellowship while accomplishing lots of work at no cost to the church.

This past summer our church attendance was dismal. The average attendance for the two congregations for 11 weeks, which included a baptism and a memorial service, was 18 people. One Sunday in Meyersville when we had a guest minister, the attendance was so low I apologized to the minister that there weren't more people there to hear his wonderful sermon. He grinned and graciously said, "It's summer." That shouldn't be an excuse. While there are all sorts of reasons why attendance is low in summer, we should make an effort to attend when we are in town and free from other obligations. I am not innocent in this having missed a few Sundays myself, mainly due to the extreme heat. And, now that we have been back to our regular worship schedule for a month, the attendance has not been all that great either.

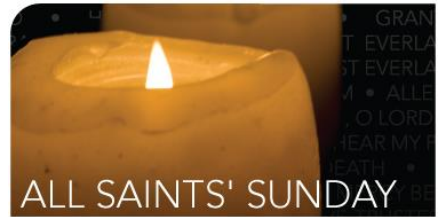
My point in writing this is a reminder that last year when our congregation met to decide how we want our church to proceed, e.g., search for a new minister and continue with our church ministry or investigate selling/renting the building and ending the ministry that is the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. Those attending overwhelming voted to continue.

With our active membership low, it is imperative that those who are still able be involved by attending worship, helping with worship duties, participating on committees, volunteering with our mission programs, and being involved in any way you can. Financial support is absolutely needed, especially since there are many jobs our members can no longer do themselves and, therefore, outside contractors must be hired.

I hope my words speak to you. I'm not trying to be critical just hoping to encourage everyone to think about what you personally can do to be more active and supportive of the life of our church. I believe this is the only way to ensure that the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling continues its ministry.

All Saints' Sunday, November 6th

On November 6th, we will celebrate All Saints' Sunday during morning worship in Stirling. If you would like to remember someone special in your life who has passed away in the past year, please **complete the following form and return it by October 30th**. As in the past, a candle will be lit as each name is read aloud during the service.



Please cut here and return the completed bottom section.

✂ _____ ✂ _____ ✂ _____ ✂ _____ ✂ _____

All Saints' Sunday, Nov. 6th

Please list anyone special you have lost during the past year and would like to have remembered during the service:



Your Name: _____

Person's Name: _____ Relationship to You: _____

Please print clearly

Please fill out this form and place it in the offering plate, send it to the church office, or email it to Paulette at secretary@fpcstirling.org by Sunday, October 30th.

Ongoing Mission Programs:

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program
 Family Promise of Morris County
 Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Please e-mail submissions for the
 November 2022 issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
 by October 20th. 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 Lynn Blakeslee.

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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baspinall223@aol.com
 Paulette Irlander, Office Manager
Secretary@fpcstirling.org
 Church Office: 908-647-1033
 Website: www.fpcstirling.org

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!

