



Stirling Stuff

Volume 67, No. 1

January 2023

Dear Church Family,

We have just come through the hustle and bustle of one of the busiest seasons of our year. The church has been telling the story of the birth of Jesus, and our families have been busy with preparations and celebrations. We all get caught up in expectations of perfect pageantry, performances, and presents. We have no training in acting and not much musical ability, yet we want to attend and participate in the concerts, pageants, and shows of the season. I think we just want to be part of a great story. Church attendance and commitment over the Christmas season indicates that our congregation wants to be part of it, too. We want the story of God coming into the world to mean something to us, to touch us, to change our lives.

Though the story of Christmas is almost over for this year, the story of God coming into the world is not, by any means, over. The story continues in Scripture through the New Testament; it continues through the church year with Epiphany and Lent and Easter and Pentecost; and it continues by the Holy Spirit's work in the world through history and today. The continuing story of God's activity in the world may not be as sentimentally appealing as the Christmas story; it may not require costumes, but the church is not finished telling about the love of God and not finished showing the presence of God, and God is certainly not finished with this world of ours.

Be part of the story at church; be part of the story of Emmanuel – God in the world.

Yours in Christ,

Barbara

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

Feeding Those Who Hunger



Thank You

Dear FPC Church Family,

Thank you so much for your very generous Christmas gift. I am not sure yet what I will spend it on – maybe toward a post-retirement adventure! I appreciate your thoughtfulness and kindness and the effort it takes to get the word out, accumulate the funds for the gift, and still keep it a surprise. Again, my thanks.

With love, Barbara



Upcoming Worship Schedule

- Rev. Aspinall



During the month of January, we will worship in Stirling. Wearing face masks is optional, but we will continue 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 church, please call upon a Deacon or fellow church member; we are happy to help. Notices of the worship location 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!

Stewardship**2023 Offering Envelopes**

The **2023 offering envelopes** are available at the church; please look for your name on the envelope box.

**Per-Capita Apportionment**

Our 2023 per-capita apportionment to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly is **\$43.50 per active member**. This represents our share of the administrative costs of the Presbytery and the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. The Session is asking the congregation to consider paying the per capita for your family. In this way, you enable our church to use all pledge money for our church's operating expenses, church programs, and mission commitments. **If you are a member and do not contribute to the church financially, the *per capita* charge for you and your household comes out of our annual budget.** The *Per Capita* envelope can be found in the front of your offering envelopes box.

**Annual Reports - Due January 13th**

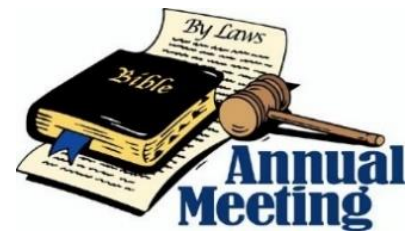
Reminder: Annual reports for all church committees/groups are due to the church office by no later than January 13th so they can be assembled and distributed in time for the Annual Congregational Meeting scheduled for January 29th. **Please send them as a Word document so they can be inserted into the report.**

Reports still needed:

Pastor's Report	Memorial Garden
Nominating	Concert Series
Board of Deacons	Voucher Fund
Bridges Outreach	Audit Report
Worship	Treasurer
Facilities, Grounds, & Property	Financial Reports

Annual Congregational Meeting - January 29th

In accordance with the bylaws of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling, the Session has called a meeting of the congregation following morning worship on **Sunday, January 29th**, in Pollard Hall. The purposes of this meeting are:



1. to receive the 2022 reports of Pastor, Committees, and Church groups
2. to elect the 2023 financial secretary
3. to elect the 2023 nominating committee
4. to review and receive the 2023 budget
5. to elect Elders and Deacons

Please plan to attend this important event in the life of our Church as we look back at 2022 and ahead to 2023.

Concert Series Returns

On **Sunday, January 22nd, at 2:00 p.m.**, our concert series is returning after a three-year Covid hiatus. The concert series, renamed The Rev. Dr. Thomas T. Peters Concert Series, is very excited to welcome pianist, Ms. Kewen Qi, making her debut in Stirling.



Kewen (Kelly) Qi graduated from NYU Steinhardt School double majoring in piano performance and data science. Exploring the music of different eras with passion and a desire for authenticity, she has been praised for her interpretations of Romantic Music as well as her rich sound palette. While at NYU, she was a student of Eduardus Halim, the Sasha Gorodnitzki Chair in Piano Studies. Although Ms. Qi is still exploring the possibilities for herself in the music industry as a performer, she is also interested in data analytics in music, performing, music production, and computer music algorithms. She has been featured with the NYU Baroque Ensemble and various woodwind and string repertoires. Her chamber repertoire ranges from Baroque to 21st-century contemporary music.

Invite your family and friends to enjoy beautiful music in our sanctuary. As always, admission is free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception will follow the concert during which attendees may meet the performer. For more information, go to www.fpcstirling.org or call the First Presbyterian Church office at 908-647-1033.

Deacons' Corner

- Janet Parziale

Mission of the Month - January and February - Souper Bowl of Caring

2023-- it's that time again. The 57th NFL Super Bowl championship game will be played on Sunday, February 12th. It will be an exciting time for football fans. It is also time for the annual Souper Bowl of Caring activity which occurs across the United States. The **Souper Bowl of Caring will be our January and February Mission of the Month.**



Some history: 1990 in South Carolina 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 people. This movement has gathered money and food for those in need each year since then.

You can include your gift in the weekly offering or send it directly to the church or Elsie Turqman. Please note that it is for "Mission of the Month," and remember to include your name and/or envelope number if you would like your donation to be recorded.

Last year we collected \$355, which was used to purchase much-needed goods for the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry, currently housed at All Saints Episcopal Church in Millington. Please consider donating to this worthy cause. Remember, the money we collect is donated to local organizations. The Deacons will decide shortly who the recipient will be this year.

Christmas Cheer Appreciated!



This year the Deacons continued their special Christmas card writing project. Eleven ladies of the church brought Christmas cheer to several congregation members, letting them know we are thinking of them during this Christmas season. Beautiful holiday tins, donated by Toni Hopcraft, were filled with homemade Christmas cookies and chocolates,

Tom and Janet Parziale delivered the cards and goodies, along with a small poinsettia. The recipients were very grateful; some even had happy tears in their eyes. Three packets of cards were sent to long-distance church friends. The Deacons thank all the ladies who were involved in writing the cards. Their efforts and kind messages in the cards were greatly appreciated.



Here are pictures of Tom sharing in the Christmas cheer with Lynn Rosol and Lorna and Art Fletcher

Tom with Doug Garno and Jean Hoffman



A Big Thanks and Help Needed!

A special thank you to everyone who helped the Deacons decorate the church for this wonderful Christmas season. Deacons Carolyn Malfatone, Sue Gerech, Marie Darby, and Janet Parziale were expertly assisted by Tom Parziale, Ed Gerech, and Joyce Koenig. Everyone had a fun time setting up and trimming the tree, hanging the wreaths, and decorating the pews and windowsills.



On Sunday, January 8th, the Deacons will be meeting following morning worship to **take down the Christmas Tree and put away the ornaments, lights, pew decorations, and the candle poles.** If you are available, the Deacons would appreciate any help you can provide. Thank you!

Another Note of Thanks



Thank you to everyone who ordered the poinsettias that decorated our sanctuary this Christmas season. Also, thanks to Carolyn Malfatone for picking them up from *The Great Swamp Greenhouse* and setting them up for everyone to enjoy. They were especially beautiful this year!

A Wish from the Board of Deacons

Over this holiday season, some of us traveled, some stayed home, and some visited with family and friends. The Deacons wish everyone a healthy and happy New Year in 2023. Remember, we will be worshipping at Stirling during January. We hope you can join us!



Mark Your Calendars!



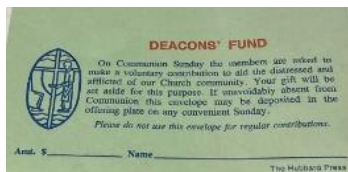
During January, the Deacons will be hosting two special fellowship hours following morning worship that you will want to attend. On **January 15th**, **we will be thanking Paulette Irlander** for her eighteen years of service as our church secretary. She began working at FPC in 2004. Later, in 2013 she joined the Meyersville Presbyterian Church as their church secretary. Paulette retired at the end of December from both positions.

On **January 22nd**, **we will celebrate the life of long-time member BJ (Barbara) Cardinali with a memorial service during morning worship, followed by a special fellowship hour.** Many of you may remember BJ served as our church secretary for many years, and she was a long-time member of our church choir and the Travnicek Memorial Ringers, our handbell choir. BJ donated the handbells to the church in memory of her mom, June Travnicek. Today, they continue to make beautiful music. We hope you will be able to attend the service and the special reception (provided by BJ's family) afterwards as we remember BJ.



Mark your calendars with these special dates. We hope to see you there!

Deacons' Fund Needs 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. Please check the pew rack for that little green envelope, fill it up, and place it in the offering plate or send your donation directly to the church office or Elsie Turqman. Many, many thanks in advance for your help in replenishing our Deacons' Fund!

Flowers to Beautify Our Sanctuary



Would you consider providing a bunch or two of flowers to be used during a worship service in Stirling in January? 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 are interested in providing flowers in January, please call the church office (908-647-1033) and leave the information (your name, the date you want, and who the flowers are in honor/memory of). Thank you very much for helping beautify our sanctuary!

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.



Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

January Lectionary Readings

January 1 - First Sunday after Christmas

Isaiah 63:7-9; Psalm 148; Hebrews 2:10-18; Matthew 2:13-23

January 8 - Baptism of the Lord

Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29; Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17

January 15 - Second Sunday After Epiphany

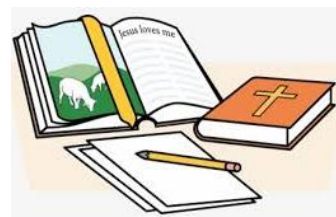
Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11; 1 Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42

January 22 - Third Sunday After Epiphany

Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9; 1 Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23

January 29 - Fourth Sunday After Epiphany

Micah 6:1-8; Psalm 15; 1 Corinthians 1:18-31; Matthew 5:1-12



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 January, we will be worshipping in STIRLING; recordings will be done in MEYERSVILLE.** 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!**

Advent Worship Services

During Advent, we enjoyed the beautiful music of our joint-church handbell choirs. Our thanks to those who filled in at the last minute.



On Christmas Eve, we had two special visitors:

an old man named Simeon and a prophet named Anna, two folks who were the first people outside of Bethlehem to recognize the significance of the Christ child.

(Ruud Zijdel & Barbara Aspinall)



Facilities, Grounds, & Property

- Tom Parziale

We are happy to report that our church sign is back after being off-site for a few weeks while Dale Monetti refurbished it. A big thank you to Dale for volunteering to give it a much-needed facelift. Regency Landscaping installed two new posts and the sign is now proudly back on display.

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.

Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Our local Food Pantry, Twelve Baskets, is housed at All Saints' in Millington. Jointly sponsored by our church, All Saints', Meyersville, and LHT CERT, the food pantry has been serving guests on the first and third Saturday mornings of each 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.** For more information on this program, go to: <http://www.allsaintsmillington.org/outreach.html>

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: diapers, baby wipes, paper towels, toilet paper, household cleaners, soap, toothbrushes, toothpaste, shampoo, conditioner

There is a more complete list of needed items on the table in the narthex. These items can be picked up for a good price at Dollar stores.

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.

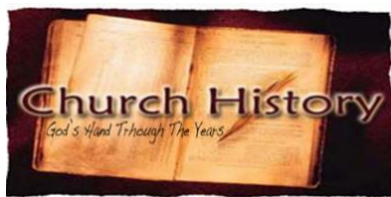
Thank you for your continued support of this program!

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

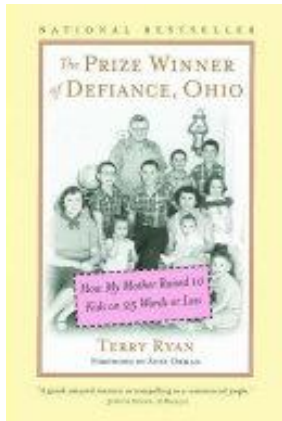
- Jan Somers



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 Book Club

Our February selection is ***"The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio"*** by Terry Ryan. The group will meet via Zoom on Wednesday, February 8th, 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.



The Prize Winner of Defiance, Ohio is based on the true story of housewife Evelyn Ryan, who helped support her husband, Kelly, and their 10 children by winning jingle-writing contests. Kelly failed to support his family, in part due to apparent alcoholism and low self-esteem. He dreamed of being a singer, but lost his singing voice in a car accident, and was often cruel and abusive.

Evelyn wins a large freezer, ice buckets, a washer, and dryer set, a trip to New York City, sleds, boots, a pony, a palm tree, a window, a sports car, a shopping spree in her local grocery store, ice crushers, a camera, dance shoes, a boat motor, pogo sticks, a case of dog food, and a lifetime supply of bird seed. Kelly, who feels like his role as provider for the family is being threatened, criticizes Evelyn, and damages the prizes she wins. Their children side with her. Kelly gets angry at Evelyn, and accidentally knocks her over while she is carrying 12 full glass bottles of milk, causing her to nearly sever a ligament. Evelyn is able to talk him down after each incident, and, temporarily at least, he treats her better. As time passes, the older children start moving out for college and participating in sport career, lessening some burdens to the family.

Evelyn is largely isolated because of the hours she has to spend caring for the children and the lack of local intellectual equals. However, she is contacted by a group of other contest-entering mid-western housewives and befriends them. Ultimately, Evelyn discovers that Kelly had secretly taken out a second mortgage on their house and never made payments on it, leaving the family subject to certain foreclosure. The children pray for their mother's miraculous victory in a contest sponsored by Dr Pepper. She wins and pays the mortgage on the house.

Ongoing Mission Programs:

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

Please e-mail submissions for the February 2023 issue of Stirling Stuff to: jsomers17@hotmail.com by January 19th. 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

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Why not invite a friend to church!



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.

