



Pastor's Letter

To clap or not to clap.....that is the question.

Recently, there have been several discussions regarding applauding in church after Tatiana, or the handbells, or someone else plays or sings. The question that has been asked is, "Is this an appropriate response in worship?" We know that people enjoy the talents of those who play an instrument or sing in worship, but is applause an appropriate way to express it?

To answer this question, we have to understand what is happening when Tatiana plays the piano, or the bells play, or someone is presenting some other kind of offering. That last word is the key... *offering*. Music, or any talent contributed during a worship service, is an offering to God. For those presenting it, it should be understood as an offering of thanksgiving to God for the talent, time, and energy they have been given. For those who are listening, it should be understood as our being able to share in that offering by listening. Any kind of offering of talent should not be understood as something given to us that we should acknowledge with applause, nor should comment be made on the caliber of the performance by applause for some and not for others.

All of this is to explain why there should not be applause when any kind of talent is offered by adults in worship. We do believe, however, that since children do not understand this idea of an offering, we can continue to applaud when children do their pageants, etc. This serves to build their self-esteem and to encourage them so that, when they do get older, they will continue to offer their talents with the full understanding of it being their offering to God.

Does this mean that we should not show appreciation for the musical and dramatic offerings shared in worship? No! It is very appropriate to say "Thank you" to someone for what they have offered. This can be done after the service, or during coffee hour, or even by a letter or e-mail. It might help to keep the perspective of the offering if we phrase our comments as "Thank you for letting me share in your offering of music. It was beautiful." rather than saying, "Thank you for your performance." Some may say this is splitting hairs, but it is important to keep our minds focused on *who* worship is for. As I tell the confirmation classes, God is the spectator in worship; we all are the actors of the drama. The congregation participates by being there, by singing the hymns, by sharing in the prayers, by sharing musical offerings, etc. We do it for God, not for ourselves; although, I will admit that we derive many benefits from participating in worship.

I hope you will share your thoughts with me about this, even if you disagree.

See you in Church!

Tom

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Worship Services and Scripture Passages for November

Nov. 1, 2009

- *All Saints' Day*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Service of Remembrance for those who have died during the past year*
Isaiah 25: 6-9; Psalm 24;
Revelation 21:1-6a; John 11:32-44

Nov. 8, 2009

- *Thirty-Second Sunday in Ordinary Time*
Ruth 3:1-5, 4:13-17; Psalm 127;
Hebrews 9:24-28; Mark 12:38-44

Nov. 15, 2009

- *Thirty-Third Sunday in Ordinary Time*
1 Samuel 1:4-20; 1 Samuel 2:1-10;
Hebrews 10:11-25; Mark 13:1-8

Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings, followed by Coffee Hour fellowship in Pollard Hall.

Child Care is provided in the Nursery.

Children join their families in church for worship and then leave for Christian Education classes after the Children's Talk.

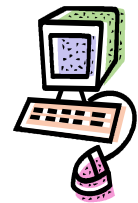
Nov. 22, 2009

- *Christ the King Sunday*
- *Thanksgiving Sunday*
2nd Samuel 23:1-7; Psalm 132:1-18;
Revelation 1:4b-8; John 18:33-37

Nov. 29, 2009

- *First Sunday of Advent*
- *Heritage Sunday*
Wear your plaid!
Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10;
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36

Rev. Tom's sermons are posted on the church website. Visit: www.fpcstirling.org, click on: "Pastor's Note," then click on "Sermons."



Blood Drive

Our Annual Fall Blood Drive will be held on Monday, **November 2nd, from 3:00 – 8:30 p.m.**, in Pollard Hall. Please plan to donate blood if you can, and help us meet our goal of 25 pints. Volunteers are also needed to serve as greeters that day. A sign-up sheet is posted in Pollard Hall.

Interfaith Hospitality Network

Our last hosting date for this year will be Thursday, **November 12th, 5:00 p.m., through Friday at 7:00 a.m.** Volunteers are needed for supplying dinner items, hosting dinner, and sleeping overnight at the Shrine. A sign-up sheet is posted on the Deacons' Board in Pollard Hall. This is one of our longest-running mission projects—20 years! Be a part of it! Contact Phyllis Clemson or Chris Scott if you have any questions.

Abraham's Table

At 3:00 pm on Sunday, **November 15th**, we will have the opportunity to gather with members of other churches and with Turkish Muslims to dialogue about hospitality. We will discuss hospitality with implications for today's society. How can it help build a better society? How can it help foster inter-religious dialogue? There will be homemade food prepared by our Turkish brothers and sisters.



The event will be held at the parish house of All Saints Episcopal Church in Millington. Please **RSVP** by phone at 908-647-0067 or by e-mail at allstsmill@hotmail.com. We hope to have a number of people turn out for this event.

Christian Education**Third Tuesday Adult Study**

Have you ever wondered how the lectionary came about? Do you know what the lectionary is? Why are the banners and paraments different colors, and do they mean anything? What is the church year or liturgical year? How does it affect me? Maybe you've asked these questions, or maybe you've never wondered about them. But, in our church they all have a meaning and purpose.

On Tuesday, **November 17th, at 7:30 p.m.**, we will gather to talk about the church year and it's meaning for us. The following Sunday, the 22nd, is *Christ the King Sunday*, the last Sunday in the church year, and it's a good time to reflect on what the church year is all about. Please join us on the 17th for this adult study session. There will be participant information posted on the board for several Sundays prior to the class. I hope to see you.

Kirkin' of the Tartan

At our Heritage Sunday service, **November 29th**, we will once again be celebrating the Scottish heritage of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. Our denomination is descended from the Kirk (Church) of Scotland. Once again we will follow the *Scottish Book of Common Order* for the service outline that day. At the end of the service, there will be a ceremony called the Kirkin' of the Tartan. This ceremony comes out of Scottish history when it was against the law to wear a tartan, and they held special secret services to bless the tartans.

We would like everyone to wear plaid, preferably one connected to your family.

The Scottish chiefs accepted other families into their clans. For instance, the Peters were accepted by Clan MacGregor. These families were called *septs*. You can find out if your family name is a sept under a clan by going to the website: www.scottishwebcamslive.com/clans.htm. If you don't have any item of clothing in your tartan, just bring a piece of plaid in your tartan to hold in your hand during the ceremony.

Deacon's Corner**- Ellen Eastty**

With the start up of the fall schedule, the Deacons are keeping up with things---mainly the sign-ups for worship and coffee hour help. Thank you to those who has been participating, and we hope you will continue to do so.



A special thank you to Rosie Andrus who has been supplying the loaf of bread that Rev. Peters breaks at the Communion Table each month when the Sacrament of Holy Communion is served. Her efficiency and effort is most appreciated.

P.S. Someone made a delicious vegetable dish with cucumbers at one of our pot luck dinners. I would love to have the recipe--please??

Mission**- Jean Hoffman****Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**

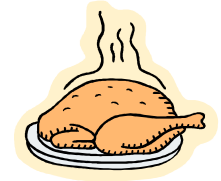
Our next commitment for preparing lunches is Friday, **November 6th**. We have enough supplies on hand to make these lunches except for fresh fruit for an additional 12 people.

Looking ahead: Our December date is Friday, the 11th.

**Turkeys/Hams**

Many supermarkets will once again be offering free turkeys/hams during the holiday season. If you will not need your turkey/ham, please consider donating it to the needy. As in the past, they will be delivered to the Market Street Mission.

Our collection date is Sunday, November 22nd.

**Winter Clothing Collection**

The Somerset Food Bank is requesting that we concentrate on collecting winter coats and jackets for women and children. If you have items to donate, please place them on the pew inside Pollard Hall **by the end of October**. Other warm clothing items will also be accepted and sent to a non-profit organization in Elizabeth.

**Website Update**

Starting in September, Chrissie Parziale took over the role of webmaster for the Church. Please take a moment to visit our new site (www.fpcstirling.org), and check out some of the new features. One highlight is a new sermon posting method. The scripture readings and sermons are now being recorded during worship and posted on the website as MP3 files. You may download these to your computer, iPod, or other MP3 player to listen on the go! Another highlight is the interactive Google Calendar. You can even download events to your own personal calendar. Please check out our new website today!

**Stirling Stuff Changes**

As I'm sure you've noticed, Stirling Stuff has a new look. Effective with this issue, Stirling Stuff will be e-mailed to everyone except those who do not have access to a computer. They will continue to receive it by regular mail delivery. The format change will enable it to be converted more easily into a document that can also be posted on our website. If you received your copy in the mail and would like to have it e-mailed or get it from the church website, please contact the church office.

Prayer Concerns

Please continue to keep these members, friends, and loved ones in your prayers:

Mildred Hurlock
 Virginia Norcia (*Lynn Blakeslee*)
 Jean (*Ray Adamus*)
 Ann Heffran (*Rosie Andrus*)
 The People of Darfur
 Kamae Church
 Coalition Troops in Iraq and Afghanistan
 Nanette (*Madeline Hahl's sister*)
 Mike (*Ed Gerecht*)
 Rita (*Ed Gerecht*)
 Katie Morone (*Gary Jolliffe's granddaughter*)
 Bonnie Miller (*Sue & Edna Saunders*)
 Mary Walker
 Virginia & Anthony Marotte (*Carolyn Malfatone*)

Georgeine Lorentzen
 Diane (*Phyllis Clemson*)
 John Sprague (*Debra Sprague*)
 Frank Schreck (*Rosie Andrus*)
 Jacob George (*Lynn Blakeslee*)
 Louise (*The Albers*)
 Gail (*The Albers*)
 Gerard Sigtermans (*Jan Somers*)
 John Koskulics (*Jan Somers*)
 Madeline Hahl
 Tatiana Akhounzianova
 Amy (*Debra Sprague*)
 Candice Lotterhas (*Mariann Powell*)



*Should you be admitted to the hospital,
 please have someone contact the church office
 so that Rev. Peters may visit.*

***Happy Anniversary!***

Ellen & Bob Easty	12
Sue & Phil Brodziak	15
Barbara & Tom Peters	18
Mariann & Mark Powell	28

Natalie Brown	1
Brendan Higgins	1
Ryan Higgins	1
Cliff Young	2
Susan Gerecht	9
Gary Joliffe	10
Michael Nugent	15

Happy Birthday!

Tom Parziale	17
Lesley Beechner	18
Georgeine Lorentzen	19
Rosie Andrus	20
Kate Coultas	23
Lore Pateman	26
Cheyenne Carbone	27

Ongoing Mission Programs**Mile of Pennies**

Change (and more) collected during Coffee Hour supports scholarships for Kenyan students. We're into our third year/mile! Total: \$147.74 Please help us reach our goal

Food Pantry

Items may be left in baskets marked "Food Pantry Donations."

Toiletries

Full-sized bars of soap, and "courtesy" sizes of shampoo, conditioner, soap, and shower caps are donated to various causes. Place on the table outside Pollard Hall.

Sneaker Project

Place used pairs of sneakers (any size) on the pew inside Pollard Hall. To date, we have collected **108** pairs, which are sent to the Somerset Food Bank.

Eyeglasses, Sunglasses, Cell Phones

Place used glasses and cell phones on the table outside Pollard Hall.

Ongoing Mission Programs (cont'd)**Yarn & Cotton Material**

Yarn is used to make lap robes for wounded veterans; any color is acceptable. Fabric (with the exception of wool and stretchables) of about 1/2 yard is used to make small bears for children, totes for wheelchair patients, etc. Place on pew inside Pollard Hall.

Ongoing Fundraiser**Grocery Store Gift Cards**

- ✓ No additional cost to you to use
- ✓ Church earns 5%
- ✓ Denominations available:
 - **ShopRite** in \$20/\$50/\$100
 - **Pathmark** in \$25/\$50/\$100

Gift cards are available each week during coffee hour, or call Jean Hoffman (908) 756-1075.

Please e-mail submissions for the December issue of Stirling Stuff to: jsomers17@hotmail.com by November 19th. Thank you!

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of the

First Presbyterian Church

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