



Stirling Stuff

Volume 62, No. 11

December 2018

Pastor's Letter

I looked at the calendar on my cell phone recently and noticed that the names of the holidays are on a green background. I was then shocked to see that according to my Google calendar, *Black Friday*, the day after Thanksgiving, is considered a holiday right up there with Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter. It says a lot about our country when we make a major commercial shopping day into a holiday.

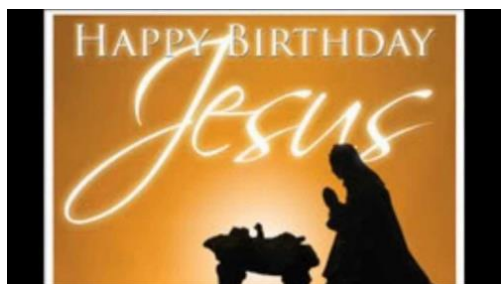


What does it mean for us when we place the buying of gifts alongside the gift of the Son of God? Have we lost a sense of the true meaning of Thanksgiving, Christmas, and Easter? That is a big question, and it begs us to consider it. That is why we have the season of Advent. The season of Advent gives us the space and time to get our heads screwed on right so that we might understand *Black Friday* has nothing to do with Christmas. Listen to that wonderful old Advent hymn, *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*:

*Come, Thou long expected Jesus
Born to set Thy people free;
From our fears and sins release us,
Let us find our rest in Thee.
Israel's strength and consolation,
Hope of all the earth Thou art;
Dear desire of every nation,
Joy of every longing heart.*

*Born Thy people to deliver,
Born a child and yet a King,
Born to reign in us forever,
Now Thy gracious kingdom bring.
By Thine own eternal Spirit
Rule in all our hearts alone;
By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.*

*By Thine all sufficient merit,
Raise us to Thy glorious throne.*



We find our rest, our strength, our consolation in the birth of Christ. Hope for the future, joy for every longing heart cannot be imparted by anything made by humans. This Advent, I hope you will take some time to reflect on what the birth of Christ means for you. Perhaps you might use some of the Advent carols, as well

as Christmas carols, to meditate on to remind you of why Christmas is truly a holiday to be celebrated. You might also celebrate Advent by inviting a friend, a neighbor, or even a stranger to come and worship with us.

Don't forget that Advent starts on December 2nd, and we will once again also be celebrating Heritage Sunday on that day. We hope everyone will celebrate by wearing something with plaid on it.

See you in Church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for December

December 2, 2018

Service in Stirling

- *First Sunday of Advent*
- *Heritage Sunday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
Jeremiah 33:14-16; Psalm 25:1-10;
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13; Luke 21:25-36
Seeing the Kingdom In the Dark

December 9, 2018

- *Second Sunday of Advent*
Malachi 3:1-4; Luke 1:68-79
Philippians 1:3-11; Luke 3:1-6
Who's In Charge?

December 16, 2018

- *Third Sunday of Advent*
- *Travnicek Memorial Ringers will be playing*
Zephaniah 3:14-20; Isaiah 12:2-6;
Philippians 4:4-7; Luke 3:7-18
What Choice Do We Have?

Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings,
followed by Fellowship Hour in Pollard Hall.
Child Care is provided in the Nursery.



December 23, 2018

Service in Meyersville

- *Fourth Sunday of Advent*
10:00 a.m.: Christmas Pageant at Meyersville Presbyterian Church
Micah 5:2-5a; Luke 1:46-55; Psalm 80:1-7;
Hebrews 10:5-10; Luke 1:39-45

5:00 p.m.: Blue Christmas Service in Stirling

Micah 5:2-5a; Romans 8:31-39;
Luke 2:1-8
The Longest Night

December 24, 2018

- *Christmas Eve Service*
Isaiah 9:2-7; Psalm 96:1-13;
Titus 2:11-14; Luke 2:1-20
Mary, Did You Know?

December 30, 2018

- *First Sunday after Christmas*
Samuel 2:18-20, 26; Psalm 148;
Colossians 3:12-17; Luke 2:41-52
Growing Pains

Rev. Peters' sermons and the scripture readings are posted on the church website.

Visit: www.fpcstirling.org, click on:

"Sermon Archive," then select the sermon and/or scripture reading date you would like.



Pastor's Coffee Klatch

The monthly Coffee Klatch will be on **Saturday, December 1st, 9:00 a.m.**, at the Stirling House Diner. We talk about whatever is on your mind. Come join the fellowship and conversation.

**Family Promise of Morris County**

Our final 2018 responsibility for hosting Family Promise clients is from **5:00 p.m. on Thursday, Dec. 6th, through 7:00 a.m. on Friday, Dec. 7th, at Trinity House in Stirling.** We are serving a dinner of meatloaf, salad, vegetables, and dessert.

Please sign up in Pollard Hall to help out by providing food, hosting dinner, or staying overnight. Contact Rev. Peters if you have questions.

2019 Church Offering Envelopes

The 2019 Church Offering Envelopes will be available to be picked up in Pollard Hall or the Church office during the month of December.

**Annual Congregational Election Meeting**

At the Annual Congregational Election Meeting on October 28th, the following members were elected/re-elected to serve terms as church officers effective February 2018:

Elders:

Class of 2021: Yvonne Fletcher
Sandy Mackay
Joyce Koenig

Deacons:

Class of 2021: Susan Gerech



Rev. Peters and the congregation expressed thanks and appreciation to Carolyn Malfatone and Paul Wermuth as their current terms come to an end.

**Travnicek Memorial Ringers**

Our handbell choir will be playing Gloria during morning worship on **Sunday, December 16th.** Please join us to enjoy this beautiful music.

The Concert Series in Stirling

On **Sunday, December 9th, at 2:00 p.m.**, we will welcome Classical and Jazz Pianist, Gabriel Plotkin. Mr. Plotkin is a multi-instrumentalist from the Bronx, NY. His program will include Aleksandr Scriabin's "Album Leaf" and "Prelude," Ravel's "Menuet sur le nom d'Haydn," Chick Corea's "Children's Song," and several of the Bach "Inventions." Several standards from "The Great American Songbook" will be performed and a "Christmas Singalong" will conclude the performance.



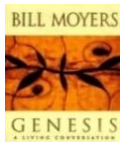
The concert is free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception follows the concert, during which guests may meet the performer. Refreshments will be served. We hope you will invite your family and friends, and join us for beautiful music played in our sanctuary. If you would like to help with the concert series, please contact Rev. Peters, Howard Kupferman, or Debra Sprague.

Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman

Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters



We are continuing our Bible Study on Thursday mornings from 10:30 AM to 12 Noon. We are slowly making our way through the book of Genesis using the book, *Genesis*, by Bill Moyers. It is a study that takes us into many different discussions, which we enjoy. We'd love to have you join us. The coffee pot is always on!

Christmas Pageant, December 23rd

On **Sunday, December 23rd**, our Christmas pageant will be held at the **Meyersville Presbyterian Church** during morning worship. The pageant is entitled ***A Picture of Christmas***. It contains mostly reading parts and some actors to form a tableau. The actors do not have speaking parts. We still need actors and readers; if you can help out, please talk to Rev. Peters.



Fourth Sunday Focus, December 30th

- Tom Parziale

Fourth Sundays give us an opportunity to connect with other members of our church family in a relaxed atmosphere: a pot of tea, a Box o'Joe, Munchkins . . . and conversation. **Since we will be worshiping in Meyersville on December 23rd, our next gathering will be on the fifth Sunday, December 30th, in the meeting room.** We start around **8:45 a.m.** and end by about 9:45 a.m., but join us whenever you can. If you've never participated or haven't attended for a while, why not join us on the 30th; we always have lively discussions on a wide variety of topics. **If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, contact Tom Parziale.**



Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

Liturgists for December:

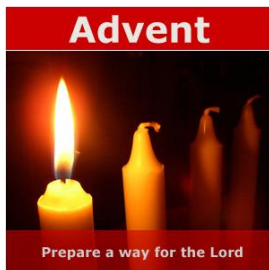
Dec. 2	Jan Somers	Dec. 23	at Meyersville
Dec. 9	Tom Parziale	Dec. 30	Janet Parziale
Dec. 16	Edward Chang		



If you would like to serve as Liturgist during worship, please sign up on the sheet in Pollard Hall or speak to Jan Somers.

Non-Perishable Food Collection, December 2nd

On the first Sunday of each month, we collect donations of non-perishable food during the worship service. While we are receiving the Lord's Supper, we also want to provide for others. The food is donated to the township food pantry at St. Vincent Church. We continue to collect non-perishable food in the baskets located in the church entry-ways during the rest of the month.



First Sunday of Advent, December 2nd

December 2nd is the first Sunday of Advent, and we will begin a special worship program that will continue for the four Sundays in the season of Advent. Members and friends of the congregation will be invited to participate in readings and lighting the Advent candles. Please plan to join us as we begin our journey to Christmas.

Heritage Sunday, December 2nd

On December 2nd, our church will also be celebrating **Heritage Sunday**. Once again, bagpiper Dave Palladino will play the tune Richard Streeton composed for our church, "Stirling on the Hill." Rev. Peters will be leading a Scottish service, including the procession of a beadle by our Clerk of Session, Lynn Blakeslee.



Following the service, the Worship Committee will host a special fellowship hour with lots of Scottish treats and invites anyone who enjoys baking to bring their favorite Scottish goodies to share. Some of the treats we are planning are scones, shortbread, and, of course, a fine pot of tea!

Please plan to join us and invite neighbors and friends to this festive service as we celebrate our church's Scottish heritage, and remember to **wear or bring a piece of plaid**.



Blue Christmas Service, December 23rd



The Blue Christmas, or Longest Night Service, which will be held on **Sunday, December 23rd, at 5:00 p.m.**, is for those who are having a difficult time getting into the Spirit of the Christmas season. When you have lost someone, or lost a job, or lost your health, it can be difficult to deal with all of the joy, lights, singing, and family gatherings of Christmas. On top of that, you may feel guilty that you feel this way. Perhaps you used to love the Christmas season, but now it is difficult.

The Blue Christmas Service is designed to help people who are feeling blue to hear the Christmas proclamation in a way that speaks to their feelings. If you are one of those people, come and let the Christmas story speak to what you are feeling. Perhaps you know of someone who is having a difficult time this Christmas season; invite them to come to this service; or, better yet, pick them up and come with them so they know they have a friend who understands what they are experiencing.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, December 24th

On Monday, December 24th, our Christmas Eve Family Service will be held at 8:00 p.m. We hope you will join us for this beautiful service of candles and carols as we await the birth of Christ.

**Looking Ahead**

On Sunday, January 6th, we will celebrate **Epiphany Sunday**, also known as Three Kings Day. Please plan to join us for this special service.

Deacons' Corner**- Janet Parziale****Mission of the Month: California Wildfires Relief**

During the month of December, there will be a special offering collected for the **victims of the California Wildfires**. The donations collected will go towards helping the many families who have lost everything in the recent fires. If you would like to help support the relief efforts, please use the special **Mission of the Month offering envelopes** that can be found in the pew racks. Any help you can provide will be greatly appreciated.

Annual Church Decorating, December 8th

Mark your calendar! The annual Christmas decorating of the church will be on **Saturday, December 8th at 9 am**. Everyone is invited to join in a wonderful time of fellowship as we put up the tree, hang the lights and ornaments, and decorate the pews and windows. Please come and help with this event and have some fun.

Christmas Carol Sing Update - Cancelled

Due to the poor attendance in recent years, the annual **Community Carol Sing hosted by our church has been cancelled**. The Deacons are hoping to bring it back next year.

Annual Meyersville Tree Lighting, December 2nd

If you still want to enjoy some Christmas music festivities, consider attending the **Meyersville Tree Lighting** at the **Meyersville Circle (by the Meyersville Presbyterian Church)** on **Sunday, December 2nd, at 5:00 pm**. This event is sponsored by the Meyersville Tree Lighting Committee. The circle is blocked off and folks enjoy snacks, listen to music through a sound system, and watch the tree lighting ceremony. Central Middle School band students will play some holiday selections, and Santa and his elves will arrive for a visit with the children. There is also a fireworks display. Then, the celebration continues inside the Meyersville Presbyterian Church with carol singing and music from the WHRHS chorus. For more information, go to: http://longhillnj.gov/Meyersville_Tree_Lighting_2018_Flyer.pdf



Fellowship Hour

Fellowship Hour is a very special time of fellowship following each weekly worship service. It is a wonderful time to share stories of the week and catch up with each other after our busy work weeks. Please consider helping with this important part of our church life by signing up to host one yourself or with a partner or simply donating money to be used to provide some delicious goodies for the morning. If you wish to donate money, please give it to a Deacon or place it in the offering pew in an envelope marked "Fellowship Hour."



What is involved in hosting one? The coffee, tea bags, sugar, plates, napkins, and cups are all available in the kitchen. You can bring milk for coffee/tea (usually about a quart), juice (or simply use water), and some goodies (baked goods, fruit, pretzels, and popcorn are some examples) to set out on the table. If you need help setting up the coffee and tea, please feel free to ask any Deacon or other member of the congregation. Your Fellowship Hour can be as simple or as elaborate as you want. They are fun to do and thoroughly appreciated by everyone.

The 2019 sign-up sheets are posted in Pollard Hall; please take a look at the dates and sign-up for a Sunday.

Visiting Nurse

Joyce Koenig has volunteered to be a Visiting Nurse for members of our church. She will be making visitations on her own and with Rev. Peters and is also available to answer your health-related questions.

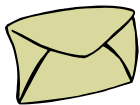


Church Flowers

Please sign up on the Flower Chart in Pollard Hall if you would like to place flowers on the chancel for Sunday morning worship in honor or memory of someone. Allow enough lead time to have them ordered for the date you would like. The cost is \$30, and cash or checks (made payable to: Flowers on the Ridge) should be given to Israel Sierra. When you sign up on the flower chart, please be specific, i.e. *in memory/honor, given by*, and print clearly.



Deacons' Fund



Please use the green Deacons' Fund envelopes for donations to help the Deacons with their Mission work. They are available in the pew racks or in the church office and may be placed in the offering plate. **Remember to put your name on the envelope so you can receive credit for your donation.**

Water Available During Worship

There is a pitcher of water and cups available in the Church narthex in case you need a drink during worship. Please feel free to help yourself or signal an Usher to bring it to you.



Christmas Poinsettias Order Form

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of poinsettias to decorate the sanctuary for the Christmas season. Please use the order form below or the forms available in the Sunday bulletin to place your order, and specify if you are ordering in memory or honor of someone special in your life.



The deadline to order is Monday, December 10th

Price: \$ 17.50 each

Colors: Red, White, or Pink

<u>What Color</u>	<u>How Many</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
_____	_____	_____
TOTALS	_____	_____

Purchased in MEMORY / HONOR of:
(Please circle one)

Given By: _____
Please print clearly

Please check one: To be picked up following Christmas Eve worship: _____ To be donated: _____

Please submit your order and payment to Israel Sierra, to the church office, or place in the offering plate.

Make checks payable to: **Flowers on the Ridge** and note: **Christmas Poinsettia** on your check.

Deadline to order: Monday, December 10th

Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman



Our final 2018 commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, December 7th, 9:30 a.m.**, in Pollard Hall. We are always in need of small bottles of water and cartons of juice; snacks of cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels, etc.; and plastic spoons. Cash donations are also appreciated to help with the purchase of bread and lunch meat. You can drop items off in Pollard Hall on Sunday mornings, or give cash donations to Jean or Yvonne. If you'd like to help with this program, please speak to Jean or Yvonne.

Upcoming 2019 dates: March 8th, April 5th, and May 3rd

Due to the possibility of inclement weather, we will not be meeting to prepare lunches in January and February.

Community Food Bank

- Kai Ihringer

We had a very productive and enjoyable time at the Community Food Bank on Nov. 17th, as we packaged enough pasta to serve almost 1,300 family meals! It was a wonderful experience of helping fulfill our church's mission, "Feeding Those Who Hunger." A very big thank you to all of our volunteers!



We have tentatively chosen the following Saturdays for our **2019 food bank trips: May 18th and Nov. 16th**. Please mark these dates on your calendars.

Pictured here is our team of volunteers, including church members and some of Katherine Ihringer's friends from her WHRHS class of 2013:

Rev. Peters, Katherine Ihringer, Tom Parziale, Kai Ihringer, Ed & Susan Gerech, Juliana Engler, Rob Scheiderman, Daria Jankura, Grace Nielsen
Food Bank Liaison, David

Warm Winter Clothing Collection

Thank you to everyone who donated warm clothing to the Mental Health Association during the past several weeks. Thanks to your generosity, Jean Hoffman's daughter, Joyce Benz, delivered several bags of donations to the association.



Thanksgiving Turkey/Ham Donations

Members of our congregation donated 5 turkeys on Sunday, November 18th. Four were taken to the Market Street Mission and one was donated to a local family. Thank you to everyone who participated in this much needed program.



CROP Walk 2018

- Debra Sprague

I received the following message from the coordinator for the New Providence CROP Walk:

"This year we raised \$6,939 for the Crop Walk and expect a few more donations to come in that will put us over \$7,000. Donations will continue to be accepted until 12/01/18. Thank you for your church's participation in raising these funds for the world hunger program. Remember, 25% of the amount raised comes right back to our local charity which feeds the homeless at St. John's Soup Kitchen in Newark."



Faith Lutheran Church (in New Providence) does 'hands-on' mission work each month at St. John's Soup Kitchen. About 15 people go there on the 2nd Saturday of every month (leave at 9; return by 1:30-2pm). They purchase the ingredients and then cook and serve a meal to 200+ people. They also look for people to bake desserts - those people don't accompany the group to cook and serve that day.

Labels/Box Tops for Education; Pop-Top Can Tabs

- Jan Somers



Please continue to save Labels for Education, Box Tops for Education, and pop-top can tabs. The labels are used by parent organizations in schools to earn educational and recreational items for students. The can tabs are sold by weight to recycling centers, and the proceeds are donated to assist people on dialysis. There is a collection canister in the church office.

**Facilities & Property Management**

- Tom Parziale



The Pollard Hall roof has continued to leak, and contractor inspection has shown substantial problems. We have engaged Capitol Roofing, which is the contractor who helped us solve our office wing roof situation a handful of years ago and the 2018 leak over the inside Sanctuary entrance from the main hallway.

The Building & Grounds and Property & Contracts Committees presented a proposal from Capitol Roofing for a new Pollard Hall roof at a special Session meeting on Sunday, November 4, and received approval from Session to proceed. Details regarding the scheduling of this work will be shared once they are available.

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.** There is a Church Archives mailbox outside the church offices for this purpose. If you are interested in helping to keep the archives current, please speak to Rev. Peters or Jan Somers.

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, the Church calendar, Stirling Stuff, upcoming events/programs, Pastor's sermons, Scripture readings, Church history, and more.

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 the Christian life."



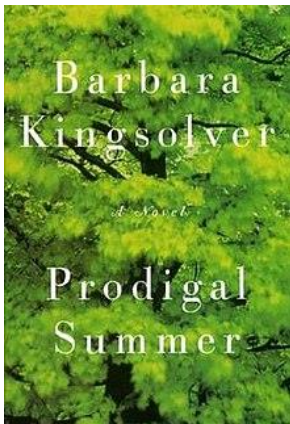
Our Church has a subscription for copies of this devotional booklet; they are available in the Church narthex.

Meyersville Presbyterian Church News

Book Club

- Jan Somers

The Book Club is currently reading, **Black Dog of Fate**, a memoir by Peter Balakian . **They will meet in the parlor at Meyersville on Tuesday, December 4th, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the book.** Everyone is welcome to join the group.



Copies of the group's next selection, **Prodigal Summer**, a novel by Barbara Kingsolver, will be distributed on December 4th.

"Barbara Kingsolver's fiction has achieved bestselling status in the US with surprisingly ambitious themes. In Prodigal Summer, she returns in a sense to her own back yard, although her marvelously subtle and compelling tale of a southern Appalachian farming community in tense interplay with the wilderness on its doorstep contains a deft parable of humankind's place in nature. The novel alternates between three stories whose links gradually emerge, in a tiny community of 600 people where, as one perplexed newcomer remarks: 'Everybody within 16 miles of here is uncle or cousin to you some ways.'"

From a mountain log cabin, Deanna Wolfe, a 47-year-old biologist with a "hillbilly accent" and a serious education, scours National Forest land for poachers while keeping fond tabs on the coyotes new to her territory. Lusa Landowski, a newly-widowed city-born entomologist, clings to an epiphany of her husband. The elderly Garnett Walker toils to revive the American chestnut tree, made extinct by loggers and fungal blight."

Free Gentle Yoga Class

Roseann McGraw, a certified yoga teacher, offers free yoga classes in the parlor at Meyersville Presbyterian Church on Tuesdays, from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. The classes are on-going, so you can join at any time.



You will not be sitting or lying on the floor, so just bring yourself in comfortable clothes, and invite friends along. The classes are appropriate for all, the flexible as well as the tight. Injuries will be accommodated. Yoga is relaxing, as well as good for general health; so, come give it a try.

Call or email Roseanne with questions or concerns: 908-508-1435, rosanne.mcgraw@gmail.com.

Boy Scouts of America, Troop 59

- Ed Gerecht

Our Boy Scout Troop is holding its **First Annual Luminary Sale Fundraiser:**

Selling: 1 set of 10 Luminaries for \$10
Set includes: 10 bags, votive candles, and sand
Dates: Dec 1st and 2nd
Time: 9:00 a.m. – 3:00 p.m.
Location: Valley Mall, Gillette, by *Jos A Bank*

Please support Boy Scout Troop 59!



Ongoing Mission Programs

Road to Bridges

Change (and more) is collected during Fellowship Hour and supports the Road to Bridges program, providing 40 lunches per month to NJ/NY homeless.

Township Food Pantry

Non-perishable food items can be left in baskets labeled "Food Pantry Donations" in the Church narthex and outside Pollard Hall.

Items collected for various causes may be placed on the pew in Pollard Hall:

- ✓ Full-sized and "courtesy"-sized bars of soap, shampoo, conditioner, shower caps
- ✓ Cell phones, eyeglasses, sunglasses
- ✓ 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

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 each week during Fellowship Hour or by contacting 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
- ✓ Questions? Contact Debra Sprague

Please e-mail submissions for the January issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by **December 20th**. Thank you!

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 church?

