



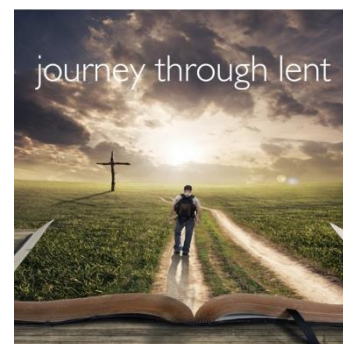
Stirling Stuff

Volume 62, No. 3

March 2018

Pastor's Letter

We are now in the midst of the church season of Lent. In most people's minds, Lent is about recognizing our sins. The Christian version of the Jewish Yom Kippur and the Muslim Ramadan also recognizes the importance of confession in order to be right with God. Lent often is about doing without. People will not eat chocolate, or drink alcohol, or deprive themselves of something else they like, in order to help them focus on Lenten themes. However, Lent is not just about confession. In his Lenten devotional, *Show Me The Way*, the late Henri Nouwen writes the following:



God's mercy is greater than our sins. There is an awareness of sin that does not lead to God but to self-preoccupation. Our temptation is to be so impressed by our sins and failings and so overwhelmed by our lack of generosity that we get stuck in a paralyzing guilt. It is a guilt that says: "I am too sinful to deserve God's mercy." It is the guilt that leads to introspection instead of directing our eyes to God. It is the guilt that has become an idol and therefore a form of pride. Lent is the time to break down this idol and direct our attention to our loving Lord.

As we consider our Lenten journey, as you consider my sermon series on the different meanings of *love*, I hope you will recognize that while we are created in the image of God's love, we fall way short in living it. But the good news of Holy Week and Easter is that God's own image of love burns through our failures and restores us in God's all-embracing love. That is why we must travel through Lent and Holy Week, with its Good Friday, because only having lived through those events can we understand the great gift of love God gives us on Easter.

May your Lenten journey be filled with reflection and recognition of the wonderful grace of God. Please know there is no sin that you can confess that God cannot, or will not, forgive.

See you in Church!

Tom

HOLY WEEK



The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for March

March 4, 2018**Worship at Meyersville**

- *Third Sunday in Lent*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection: Fruit Cocktail*
Exodus 20:1-17; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 1:18-25; John 2:13-22
Rev. Aspinall Preaching

March 11, 2018

- *Fourth Sunday in Lent*
Numbers 21:4-9; Psalm 107:1-3, 17-22;
Ephesians 2:1-10; John 3:14-21
Which Love Do You Mean?
4. Agape - Love for Everyone

March 18, 2018

- *Fifth Sunday in Lent*
Jeremiah 31:31-34; Psalm 51:1-12;
Hebrews 5:5-10; John 12:20-33
Which Love Do You Mean?
5. Storge - The Love of Family

*Worship begins at 10:00 a.m. on Sunday mornings,
followed by Fellowship Hour in Pollard Hall.
Child Care is provided in the Nursery.
Children join their families in church and then leave for
Christian Education classes after the Children's Talk.*

March 25, 2018

- *Palm / Passion Sunday*
Palm Sunday Readings:
Mark 11:1-11; Psalm 118:1-2, 19-29
Passion Sunday Readings:
Isaiah 50:4-9a; Psalm 31:9-16;
Philippians 2:5-11; Mark 14:1-15:47
Jesus is Spoilin' For a Fight!

March 29, 2018

- *Maundy Thursday*
- *Sacrament of Holy Communion*
Exodus 12:1-14; Psalm 116:1-2, 12-19
I Corinthians 11:23-26; John 13:1-17, 31b-35
The Binding of God's People
6:30 pm Potluck Supper
7:30 pm Worship

March 30, 2018**Worship at Meyersville**

- *Good Friday Service, 7:30 p.m.*
Isaiah 52:13-53:12; Psalm 22;
Hebrews 4:14-16, 5:7-9; John 18:1-19:42
Rev. Aspinall Preaching

**The Scripture readings for the sermon series on
Love will be different than those listed here.
The readings listed here are from the lectionary
for these particular Sundays.**

Pastor's Coffee Klatch

The monthly Coffee Klatch will be on **Sat., March 3rd, 9:00 a.m.**, at the Stirling House Diner.
We talk about whatever is on your mind. Come join the fellowship and conversation.

**Travnicek Memorial Ringers**

The Travnicek Memorial Ringers will be playing during morning worship on **Sunday, March 11th**. Plan to join us and enjoy the beautiful music of our handbell choir.

Memorial Service

A **Memorial Service for Laura Rinehart**, a former member of our congregation, will be held in **our sanctuary on Saturday, March 24th**. The time of the service is yet to be determined. As soon as it is confirmed, a message will be sent out to everyone.



Service of Ordination & Installation

On Sunday, February 4th, the following members of our congregation were ordained and/or installed:

As Elder: Ed Gerecht

As Deacons: Jenny Chang, Joyce Koenig, Janet Parziale, and Israel Sierra



We congratulate and welcome each of them to their terms of service to our church. Thank you to Susan Gerecht and Katherine Ihringer for their commitment and dedication as they finish their terms.

The Concert Series in Stirling

- Debra Sprague

Our next concert will be on **Sunday, March 11th, at 2:00 p.m.** Please watch for more information when plans are finalized. The concerts are free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception follows the concert, during which guests may meet the performer(s). Refreshments will be served. We hope you will invite your family and friends and join us for beautiful music played in our sanctuary.

One of the goals of our Concert Series is to bring new people into our church through music. Our Concert committee could use your help with the following:

- contacting potential sponsors
- helping with Hospitality - set up/clear up the post-concert reception

If you can help, even for one concert, please contact Debra Sprague or Rev. Peters. **Thank you!**

Family Promise of Morris County

- Jan Somers

Our next responsibility for hosting the guests at Trinity House in Stirling is **Wednesday, March 28th. Volunteers are needed for hosting from 5:30-9:00 p.m., staying overnight from 9:00 p.m.-7:00 a.m., and for donations for dinner.** We will be serving pizza, salad, and dessert. Please take a look at the sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall, and help out in any way you can. If you have questions, please speak to Rev. Peters.



Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman



Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters

Our **Bible Study of the Gospel of Luke** continues on **Thursday mornings from 10:30 a.m. – noon.** We invite you to join us in our study of Rev. Dr. Fred Craddock's book, *Luke*.

Fourth Sunday Focus, March 25th

- 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. Our next "Fourth Sunday Focus" gathering will be on **March 25th** 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 have a topic you'd like to discuss, contact Tom Parziale.**



Joint-Church Lenten Program

- Debra Sprague

This year's joint-church Lenten program is structured a bit differently from the past few years. We have joined with Meyersville to offer **three after-church brunch** programs:



Our second session is on **Sunday, March 4th, when we will be worshipping in Meyersville.** They will host a brunch, and Revs. Aspinall and Peters will lead the session. In light of recent events, the topic has been changed to:

Can We Just Talk About It? – Gun Control

The recent tragic school shooting in Florida has again raised the issue of gun control. The line between gun control advocates and their opponents grows more rigid with each terrible event. Let us join together as people of faith to have a thoughtful conversation on this difficult issue.

Our third session is on **Sunday, March 18, hosted by our church.** Our topic is **Climate Change**, and it will be led by Hal Benz, who is the son-in-law of Jean & Warren Hoffman. Hal took Al Gore's course on *Climate Change* and is anxious to share his knowledge with us.

Please plan to join us for these timely, informative discussions.

Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

Liturgists for February:

March 4	Meyersville	March 18	Ed Gerecht
March 11	Tom Parziale	March 25	Jan Somers



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 (Fruit Cocktail), March 4th - in Meyersville

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.



The congregation at Meyersville Presbyterian Church has pledged to donate canned mixed fruit, sometimes labeled "fruit cocktail," to the township food pantry. Since we will be worshipping at Meyersville on March 4th, please consider bringing this item (preferably the kind in juice and not syrup) to donate when we are there.



Palm Sunday, March 25th

We begin the observance of Holy Week with our **Palm Sunday service at 10:00 a.m.** The congregation will receive branches of eco-palms, and we will celebrate Jesus' triumphant procession into Jerusalem. Everyone is invited to process from Pollard Hall to the sanctuary as the service begins.

Maundy Thursday, March 29th, in Stirling

We will host the congregation of Meyersville as we remember the Last Supper. There will be a **pot-luck supper at 6:30 p.m., followed by worship and the Sacrament of Holy Communion at 7:30 p.m.** Rev. Aspinall will be preaching.

Good Friday, March 30th, at Meyersville Presbyterian Church

Our Holy Week observance concludes as we join the congregation of Meyersville **at 7:30 p.m.** to commemorate the crucifixion of Jesus and his death at Calvary.

Looking Ahead

Easter Sunday, April 1st

Our Resurrection of the Lord/Easter Sunday morning will begin with a **service at Kielblock Farm in Meyersville at 7:00 a.m.** We will then celebrate Christ's resurrection with a service in **our sanctuary at 10:00 a.m.**

Archive Sunday, April 29th

The Worship Committee will be hosting a special Fellowship Hour and **Archive Sunday on April 29th** following morning worship. At that time, everyone is invited to share a special/favorite memory of the church. We decided to tell you about this now so you'll have lots of time to think of something.

Deacons Corner

– Janet Parziale

Mission of the Month

Starting on Super Bowl Sunday and continuing throughout the **month of February**, we collected donations for our Mission of the Month, **Souper Bowl of Caring**. As of today, we have collected a total of \$303, which the Deacons have decided to split between Family Promise of Morris County and the Market Street Mission in Morristown. Thank you to everyone who donated so generously to this special mission program.



The **Mission of the Month for March** will be Presbyterian Church USA's **One Great Hour of Sharing** (OGHS). A gift to OGHS enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need both in our country and around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed.

There are special "**Mission of the Month**" envelopes in the pew racks for this offering, which will be collected throughout the month of March. Thank you in advance for supporting this program.

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 over 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 by 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 plate in an envelope marked "Fellowship Hour."

What is involved in hosting? The coffee, 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/or popcorn are some examples) to set out on the table. Coffee and tea are normally served during the fall, winter, and spring. During the summer, we serve cold drinks. 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 all.

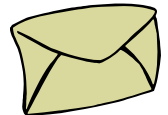
Church Flowers

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.** Thank you!



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.



2018 Board of Deacons Responsibilities

Moderator	Carolyn Malfatone
Recording Secretary	Joyce Koenig
Corresponding Secretary	Janet Parziale
Treasurer	Carolyn Malfatone
Stirling Stuff "Deacons Corner"	Janet Parziale
Fellowship Supplies	Joanne Sama
Flowers	Israel Sierra
Mission & Outreach	Rev. Tom Peters
Parameters	Dawn Mackay
Nominating Committee	Janet Parziale
Reception Coordinators	Carolyn Malfatone & Jenny Chang

Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman



Due to the possibility of bad weather and the resulting travel difficulties for our volunteers, we will not be preparing lunches for January-March. Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: Friday, April 4th, 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 Madeline or Jean. If you'd like to help with this program, please speak to Jean or Madeline.

Upcoming dates: May 4, June 8, July 13, Aug. 3, Sept. 7, Oct. 5, Nov. 2, and Dec. 7

Upcoming Community Concerts

A Song Full of Hope

- Debra Sprague

Debra Sprague sings with the Somerset Hills Chorus and has invited everyone to a very special concert on Sunday, March 4th, 5:00 p.m., Hauser Auditorium at the Pingry School in Basking Ridge.

J. Donald Dumpson will be the guest conductor of a concert in which the Somerset Hills Chorus will be joined by the Caritas Chamber Chorale and the Apprentice Chorus of the Newark Boys Chorus School in a program of African American sacred music including Robert Ray's *Gospel Mass*.

Tickets are available: <https://www.showclix.com/event/donald-dumpson>

Pingry School Hauser Auditorium

131 Martinsville Rd

Basking Ridge, NJ 07920

Masterwork Chorus Concert**- Rev. Peters**

Rev. Peters and the Masterwork Chorus will be singing a concert celebrating the Bernstein Centenary. Selections from *Mass*, *Candide*, *West Side Story*, and other works comprise Masterwork's participation in the two-year celebration of this genius composer's 100th birthday. The concert will be held on **Saturday, March 10th, 7:30 p.m., at the Chatham United Methodist Church.**

Boy Scout Troop 59 Fund Raiser**- Ed Gerecht**

The Boy Scout Troop sponsored by our church will be **selling Palm Crosses for \$10 each during Fellowship Hour on Sundays, March 11th and 18th.** Please support their fundraising efforts.

Earth Hour 2018

Earth Hour 2018 is Saturday, March 24th, from 8:30-9:30 p.m.
This Earth Hour, Shine A Light On Climate Action!

Every year, millions of people around the world join the Earth Hour movement and switch off their lights for one hour to show support for protecting our planet and stopping climate change.



Earth Hour 2018 comes at a critical moment in the fight against climate change. After the United States announced its intent to withdraw from the Paris Agreement—the world's first truly global plan to address climate change—more than 2,500 leaders across America's state houses, city halls, board rooms, faith organizations, and college campuses stepped up to say they are still committed to meeting America's climate goals.

Church Archives

Please remember to forward news clippings, bulletins, programs, pictures, or other memorabilia regarding any member of our church family to the church office so our archives can be kept up-to-date. There is a **Church Archives** mailbox outside the church offices for this purpose. **(Please date items you leave in the mailbox.)**



Church Website

Our Church website, www.fpcstirling.org, is a good source for church news, the Church calendar, Stirling Stuff, upcoming events/programs, Pastor's sermons, Scripture readings, Church history, and more. Please make it a point to log on regularly and keep up-to-date with what's happening.

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.

Free Gentle Yoga Class – Meyersville Presbyterian Church

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.

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. Thank you.



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 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 Madeline Hahl.

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

Please e-mail submissions for the March issue of Stirling Stuff to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by **March 22nd**. 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?



Daylight Savings Time

Don't forget: Turn your clocks
AHEAD 1 hour on Saturday night,
March 10th, before going to bed.

