



Stirling Stuff

Volume 63, No. 1

January 2019

Pastor's Letter

The Rev. Dr. Ted Loder, a United Methodist Church Minister, published a book in 1984 entitled, *Guerrillas of Grace: Prayers for the Battle*. In it, there is a prayer/poem entitled *Guide Me into an Unclenched Moment*:

Gentle me,
Holy One,
into an unclenched moment,
a deep breath,
a letting go
of heavy expectancies,
of shriveling anxieties,
of dead certainties,
that, softened by the silence,
surrounded by the light,
and open to the mystery,
I may be found by wholeness,
upheld by the unfathomable,
entranced by the simple,
and filled with the joy
that is you.



It seems that this is a good way to think and reflect during the month of January. We've just come through the celebrations and stress of the Thanksgiving/Christmas season, and now we have the opportunity to let go, or "unclench" as Rev. Loder puts it, and be claimed by the all-embracing love of God and the Christ, whose birth we just celebrated.

It is too easy to leave Bethlehem too quickly. It is too easy to pack up the good news of Emmanuel, God with us, with the Christmas decorations, and put them away until next year. Rather, let us be softened by the silence of the after-Christmas glow and open ourselves to the mystery of the unfathomable love of God. May we open ourselves up and be filled with the joy of being a beloved child of God.



I encourage all of us to live with this prayer during the month of January and open ourselves up to the wholeness that only God can give.

See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for January

January 6, 2019**Service in Stirling**

- Epiphany of the Lord
- Sacrament of Holy Communion
- Non-Perishable Food Collection
Isaiah 60:1-6; Psalm 72:1-7, 10-14;
Ephesians 3:1-12; Matthew 2:1-12
Light and Inclusiveness

January 13, 2019

- Baptism of the Lord Sunday
- Renewal of Baptism Service
- ** **Meyersville Congregation will be with us****
Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 29;
Acts 8:14-17; Luke 3:15-17, 21-22
We've Been There

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.

**January 20, 2019**

- Second Sunday After Epiphany
Isaiah 43:1-7; Psalm 36:5-10;
1 Corinthians 12:1-11; John 2:1-11
Redefining the Christian Message

January 27, 2019

- Third Sunday After Epiphany
- **Annual Congregational Meeting Sunday**
Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10; Psalm 19;
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a; Luke 4:14-21
Have We Heard or Seen It Yet?

Scriptures that are listed after the first Gospel reading are non-lectionary passages that will be used in the sermon. All the scriptures are provided here for any weekly Bible reading you may do.

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, January 5th, 9:00 a.m.**, at the Stirling House Diner. We talk about whatever is on your mind. Come join the fellowship and conversation.

**Offering Envelopes****2019 Church Offering Envelopes**

The 2019 Church Offering Envelopes are available to be picked up in Pollard Hall or the Church office.

Per Capita Apportionment



The 2019 Per Capita amount we are being assessed **per member is \$37**. This money enables the Presbyterian Church (USA) and its Councils (Presbytery and Synod) to do their work. Please help out by paying the \$37 for everyone in your family who is a member of the church. The Per Capita envelope can be found in the front of your offering envelopes box. Thank you.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday



On **Sunday, January 13th**, we will celebrate **Baptism of the Lord Sunday**. The **Travnicek Memorial Ringers** will be playing the old Christian song, ***Down to the River to Pray***. This song was reintroduced in the baptism scene of the movie, *O Brother, Where Art Thou?* We will also be celebrating our annual renewal of baptism service during worship. This is not a rebaptism; it is a renewal in that we ask God to help us live up to our baptism. Everyone is invited to **wear something blue** to symbolize the water of our baptism. Our brothers and sisters from the Meyersville Church will be here that day as Rev. Aspinall will be on vacation.



Family Promise of Morris County



Thank you to everyone who helped out with our Family Promise hosting dates in 2018. Our 2019 responsibilities for hosting clients at Trinity House in Stirling are: Friday, Feb. 1st; Tuesday, March 19th; and, Tuesday, Oct. 31st.

Please watch for a sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall for Friday, Feb. 1st through noon on Sat., Feb. 2nd.

We are serving a dinner of soup, bread, salad, and dessert. Please sign up to help out by providing food, hosting dinner, or staying overnight. Contact Rev. Peters if you have questions.

The Concert Series in Stirling

On **Sunday, January 13th at 2 p.m.**, we will welcome pianist, Olga Gurevich, and cellist, Tomas Ulrich. While Ms. Gurevich has played here several times, this will be the first appearance for Mr. Ulrich. He received music degrees from Boston University and the Manhattan School of Music. In addition to his classical music activities, Mr. Ulrich has performed and recorded with such artists as Anthony Braxton, McCoy Tyner, Aretha Franklin, and Natalie Merchant. He is surely one of the most accomplished and intriguing cellists in improvised music, with a brilliant technical mastery.



The concert is free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception follows the concert, during which guests may meet the performers. 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.

Annual Congregational Election Meeting



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 27th**, in Pollard Hall. The purposes of this meeting are: to hear and receive the annual reports of the committees of the congregation and of groups sponsored by the church; to elect a financial secretary for a term of one year; and, to affirm the 2019 church budget. Please plan to attend this important event in the life of our Church as we look back over the past year and ahead to 2019.

Annual Reports

Reminder: Please submit annual reports for your committee/group to the church office by Friday, January 11th so they can be assembled and distributed in time for the meeting on January 27th. Thank you.



Church Directory Update

Our church secretary, Paulette, is in the process of updating our church directory. If you would like to make changes/additions to your current listing or add your name if you are not already included in the directory, please **complete the form (on pg. 10)**, and place it in the offering plate on Sunday or return it to the church office. Forms are also available in the church narthex. If you know of other changes that need to be made to the directory, please alert Paulette to them asap.



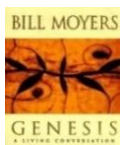
If you do not have a current directory, there is one available in the church office for you to look over.

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!

Fourth Sunday Focus, January 27th

- 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. 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, please join us on the 27th; 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 January:**

Jan. 6	Jan Somers	Jan. 20	Katherine Ihringer
Jan. 13	Tom Parziale	Jan. 27	Janet Parziale



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, January 6th

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.

**Epiphany Sunday**

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 January, we will continue the special offering for the **California Wildfire victims**. The money 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.

Thank You for Decorating!

A special thank you to everyone who helped the Deacons decorate the church for this wonderful Advent and Christmas season. Deacons Carolyn Malfatone, Joanne Sama, Israel Sierra, and Janet Parziale were expertly assisted by Kim Burrows, Keith Lord, Rev. Peters, Tom Parziale, Ed and Sue Gerech, Sandy MacKay, and Elsie Turqman. Everyone had a fun time setting up and trimming the tree, putting up the wreaths, and decorating the pews and window sills.

**Another Note of Thanks!**

The Deacons would like to thank everyone who ordered the beautiful poinsettias that decorated our sanctuary this Christmas season. Also, thanks to Israel and Evelyn for picking the poinsettias up from *Flowers on the Ridge* early so we could enjoy them at church a little longer.

Christmas Carol Sing

Our Annual Christmas Carol Sing was held indoors this year, following morning worship on December 16th. The Deacons then hosted a special reception of hot chocolate and cookies. Thank you to everyone who participated in this celebration and to those who donated homemade cookies. Here is a picture from that morning, including Bill Combs (left) in his official Christmas Carol Sing pants.



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 2019. See you in church!



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."



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.

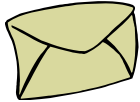


Church Flowers

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.



Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Jean Hoffman



Our first 2019 commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, March 8th, 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 dates: April 5th and May 3rd

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

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 signed a contract with Capitol Roofing. Our building partners have been alerted. 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.

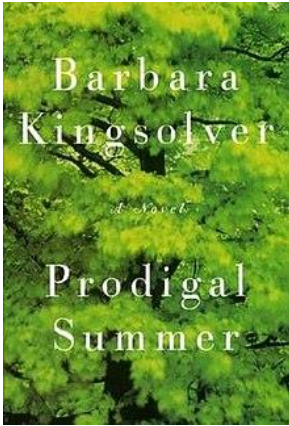
Items of Interest**- Jan Somers**

Jean Hoffman has **HP Ink Cartridges #60XL Tri-Color** that she cannot use with her printer. If you or someone you know can use them, please contact Jean or Jan.

Meyersville Presbyterian Church News**Meyersville Book Club**

- Jan Somers

The Book Club is currently reading **Prodigal Summer**, a novel by Barbara Kingsolver.



"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, 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, a newly-widowed city-born entomologist, clings to an epiphany of her husband. The elderly Garnett toils to revive the American chestnut tree, made extinct by loggers and fungal blight."

The group will meet in the parlor at Meyersville on Tuesday, January 29th, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the book. Everyone is welcome to join the group. Speak to Jan Somers if you would like a copy of the book.

At our meeting on January 29th, copies of the next selection, The Shoemaker's Wife, a novel by Adriana Trigiani, will be distributed. Please join us.

Christmas Pageant, December 23rd

Members of our congregation joined with the Meyersville congregation on Sunday, December 23rd, in a pageant entitled, **"A Portrait of Christmas."** While narrators told the history of many Christmas traditions, such as decorating trees, singing carols, and candy canes, a "modern-day family" acted out these traditions. The pageant then told the story of the nativity. The "family members" included Amanda & Ed Gerecht and Kylin & Paige Szewczuk. (If you missed it, check out the church website for the audio under the Sermon Archive link.)

The Meyersville choir (joined by Carolyn Malfatone) sang and was accompanied by a young flute player, Judy York, in Johannes Petzold's *The Christmas Story*. The morning was a wonderful celebration of Jesus' birth shared with our friends from the Meyersville Presbyterian Church.



The nativity scene was re-enacted by Amanda & Ed Gerecht, Kylin & Paige Szewczuk, and Kristin, Tobias, Jonas, & Elias Landgren (from Meyersville).

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service

Pictured are some scenes from our Christmas Eve Candlelight Service: our beautifully decorated sanctuary; a Christmas Eve "Atmosphere Table;" guest Liturgist, Allison Peters; Rev. Peters and his family lighting the Advent candles; Alice Linden (and her doll) listening to the Children's Talk; and, singing *Silent Night, Holy Night* by candlelight.



Church Directory Update

We are updating our church directory. Please make any changes/additions to your name, address, phone(s), or e-mail(s) information by completing the following form. Include **YOUR NAME AND ANY UPDATED INFORMATION**, and place the form in the collection plate or send it to the church office.

If you do not have a current directory, there is one available in the church office you can look over. If there are no changes to your listing, you do not need to respond. Thank you.



Name _____

Address _____

E-Mail _____

Phone _____

Cell Phone _____

The new church directory will be completed in January, so please forward your information asap.

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 February issue of Stirling Stuff to:

jsomers17@hotmail.com

by January 24th. Thank you!

Stirling Stuff is the newsletter of

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling

158 Central Avenue
Stirling, NJ 07980

Editor: Jan Somers

The Rev. Dr. Thomas T. Peters, Pastor
pastor@fpcstirling.org
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?

