



Stirling Stuff

Volume 64, No. 1

January 2020

Pastor's Letter



During the month of January, we celebrate both the baptism of Jesus and our own baptism and hold our annual meeting. I believe it is appropriate to reflect on the two together. In remembering our own baptism, we are mindful that others, with most of us baptized as infants, promised to raise us to be followers of Jesus, and then we completed that by being Confirmed as a youth or an adult. Some of you were not baptized as infants but made the Profession of Faith as an adult with your adult baptism. We all professed at some point that "Jesus Christ is my Lord and Savior." What does that mean for you? In my December 8th sermon, I asked you to reflect on and answer the following question, *Take a moment and daydream about what God's vision would be for you. What, that is, do you think God wants you to be and do?*

Then we come to the annual meeting following worship on January 26th, where we will be looking at the ministry of the church over the past year and looking ahead to 2020. It is important to consider that the church is a family of people where each member of the family believes that God wants them to be a certain way and do certain things and, of course, they are not all the same. So, how do we make it all work? First, we trust in the power of the Holy Spirit to lead us to a common purpose. The several times I have attended the General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA I've come away from it with my faith in the Holy Spirit renewed. That's the only way I believe hundreds of minister/elder commissioners from all over our country, with many different viewpoints, can get anything done. We, as a church, can get things done because the Holy Spirit brings us together with our different viewpoints and calls us to minister, not only to each other, but to those outside of our church family as well.

This year, following our streamlined annual meeting there will be a potluck lunch during which members of the FLHiP (Future of Long Hill Presbyterians) committee will share with you the gleanings from the process in our church so far. They will share what we have seen in the post-it notes we did at Meyersville, what we are hearing in the dialogue members participated in, and the demographics study we received. This will speak to us about who we are and where our common purpose as the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling lies. The



following week (Feb. 2nd) at Meyersville, there will be another pot-luck lunch, and we will begin to discern how God might be working with our two churches to help us be the church and do the work of the Church. This promises to be a pivotal moment in the lives of our two churches. I hope and pray that many of you will continue to be a part of this process by attending these two gatherings.

See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for January

January 5, 2020

Service in Stirling

- *Second Sunday after Christmas*
- *Epiphany Sunday*
- *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
Epiphany Pageant

January 12, 2020

- *Baptism of the Lord Sunday*
- *Renewal of Baptism Service*
Isaiah 42:1-9; Psalm 29;
Acts 10:34-43; Matthew 3:13-17
Life's Thin Places

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



January 19, 2020

- *Second Sunday after Epiphany*
Isaiah 49:1-7; Psalm 40:1-11;
I Corinthians 1:1-9; John 1:29-42
Truth-Telling When It Is Uncomfortable

January 26, 2020

- *Third Sunday after Epiphany*
- *Annual Congregational Meeting*
Isaiah 9:1-4; Psalm 27:1, 4-9;
I Corinthians 1:10-18; Matthew 4:12-23
Was The Church Ever Perfect?

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

Our final "first Saturday of the month Coffee Klatch" will be held on **Saturday, January 4th**, at the **Stirling House Diner at 9:00 a.m.** for fellowship and food. The conversation will be about whatever you want it to be about. Please join us for our last Coffee Klatch gathering.



Annual Reports

Please e-mail annual reports for your committee/group, using **Century Gothic 12 font**, to the church office by **Friday, January 14th** so they can be assembled and distributed in time for the meeting on January 26th. **Remember to attach your report in Microsoft Word format** so they can all be compiled using the office word program. E-mail reports to: Paulette at Secretary@fpcstirling.org. Thank you.



Annual Congregational Meeting**- Rev. Peters**

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 26th**, in Pollard Hall. The purposes of this meeting are:

1. to receive the 2019 reports of Pastor, Committees, and groups involved with the church
2. to elect the 2020 financial secretary
3. to elect the 2020 nominating committee
4. to review and receive the 2020 budget
5. to amend the by-laws of the church requiring 7-9 Elders and Deacons to 5-6 Elders and Deacons
6. to elect Elders and Deacons



Please plan to attend this important event in the life of our Church as we look back over the past year and ahead to 2020. **There will be a pot-luck luncheon following the meeting.**

**Offering Envelopes****2020 Church Offering Envelopes**

The 2020 Church Offering envelopes are available to be picked up in Pollard Hall or the Church office.

Per-Capita Apportionment**- Rev. Peters**

For 2020, our per-capita apportionment to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly is **\$39 per active member**. Of this total, \$25.95 is used by our Presbytery, with the remainder sent, as required, to the Synod (\$4.10) and General Assembly (\$8.95). This money is used to help fund the different levels of the denomination. For a number of years now, we have not paid our entire apportionment, but only what we receive from members for pay their apportionment. Presbytery has to send the

Synod and General Assembly our full amount for those governing bodies whether we sent it or not, so we are hurting the Presbytery by not sending in our full amount. I find this especially poignant this year as our Presbytery Leader, Rev. Jeanne Radak, and Rev. David Harvey from Blairstown have been attending and leading the meetings and events of our FLHIP Committee, helping our church and Meyersville to discern our future, and it has not cost us anything for them to lead us in this process. Per Capita makes this kind of help possible. Please pay your full apportionment for each person in your family who is a member. The Per Capita envelope can be found in the front of your offering envelopes box.

Epiphany Pageant – January 5th**- Rev. Aspinall****The One-Page Christmas Epic**

What if a movie producer and a screen writer got together to write a feel-good, family, love story, arthouse, political, costume drama, horror, escape, disaster-that's-not-a-disaster, supernatural, musical, historical epic with animals and angels? Check out the Meyersville/First Presbyterian **Epiphany Pageant on January 5th in Stirling!**



The Concert Series in Stirling

On **Sunday, January 12th**, at **2:00 p.m.**, we will welcome violinist Gabriel Schaff and pianist Anna Keiserman. Mr. Schaff has been affiliated with several professional orchestras, as well as being an active chamber musician and recognized teacher and lecturer at the secondary and college levels. Pianist Anna Keiserman is known for her creative programming, expressive freedom, and singular vision. She performed in our concert series in December.



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 or Howard Kupferman. For more information, go to www.fpcstirling.org.



Welcome New Member

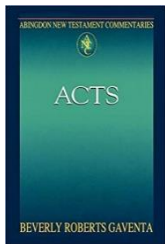
On Sunday, December 22nd, we welcomed Evelyn Smith into our church membership.

Pictured here: Rev. Peters, Evelyn, and Elder Bill Hopcraft



Christian Education Committee

- Lore Pateman



Adult Bible Study

- Rev. Peters

We are continuing our study of **Dr. Beverly Gaventa's book, Acts**. We often think of the Book of Acts as just stories about the beginning of the Christian Church. However, it is more about a movement struggling with what it means to believe in God and Jesus and how to be followers of Christ. It was a very intense time for the early Christian movement. Join us on **Thursdays from 10:30 - noon** for coffee, fellowship, and good open discussion.

Fourth Sunday Focus, January 26th

- 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 26th; we always have lively discussions on a wide range of topics. If you have a topic you'd like to discuss, contact Tom Parziale.



Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Non-Perishable Food Collection - January 5th**

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 5th, we will be joined by our friends from Meyersville as we celebrate Epiphany Sunday, also known as Three Kings Day. Rev. Aspinall has put together a pageant (information on pg. 3) which will be performed by members from both congregations. Please plan to join us.

Baptism of the Lord Sunday

On Sunday, January 12th, we will celebrate **Baptism of the Lord Sunday** with 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. The Worship Committee has a special service planned; everyone is invited to join us and **wear something blue** to symbolize the water of our baptism.

**Deacons' Corner****- Janet Parziale****Mission of the Month - January - Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**

During the month of January, we will be collecting donations for the **Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**. Each month, volunteers from our church family gather in Pollard Hall to make 40 bag lunches containing a sandwich, fruit cup, drink, snack, mustard, spoon, and napkin. On several occasions over the past year, we have received help from the children of the Long Hill Montessori kindergarten class in filling the bags. The lunches are then taken to the Bridges Outreach office in Summit where they get distributed to many grateful members of the homeless community in Summit, Newark, Irvington, and even New York City.



We need your help to continue our program. We have committed to providing lunches through May 2020. The cost of providing the 40 lunches is approximately \$80 each month. During the month of January, the Mission of the Month offering will be for the Bridges program. All donations will be used to purchase the items that go into the lunch bags and will help us to continue this worthy program.

To help support our Bridges effort, please use the special Mission of the Month offering envelopes in the pew racks. Be sure to put your name or envelope # on it so you can receive credit for your donation.

Pot Luck Luncheon Reminder

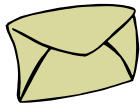
Following the Annual Meeting on January 26th, we will be having a potluck lunch. Everyone is invited to attend and bring a dish to share. Please mark your calendar and plan to attend this important meeting. (see article on page 3 for more information about the upcoming meeting)

Need A Ride to Church?

If you ever find that you need a ride to church, either to Stirling or Meyersville, please feel free to call Janet Parziale (908-647-2212), another deacon, or the church office (908-647-1033). We would be happy to make arrangements to pick you up! We never want the lack of transportation to keep you from joining us for worship or any church event.



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 or envelope # on it so you can receive credit for your donation.**

Fellowship Hour

Fellowship Hour is a very special time following each weekly worship service. It is an opportunity to share stories and catch up with each other after our busy 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 plate in an envelope marked "Fellowship Hour."



The coffee, tea, plates, napkins, and cups are all available in the kitchen. You just need to provide milk (usually a quart), juice (or simply water), and some goodies (cookies, fruit, pretzels, popcorn, etc.). 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.

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.



Visiting Nurse



Joyce Koenig is our congregation's Visiting Nurse. She makes visitations on her own and with Rev. Peters and is always available to answer your health-related questions. Thank you, Joyce!

Water Available During Worship

There is always 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.



A Look Ahead - February Mission of the Month

The Deacons have decided the mission of the month for February will be Doctors Without Borders. There will be more information in the next issue of Stirling Stuff. We hope you will join in supporting this worthy organization next month.

Facilities & Property Management**- Tom Parziale****Memorial Garden Re-dedication Celebration****- Lynn Blakeslee**

We are happy to report that the repairs and renovation to the Memorial Garden have been completed. Our contractor, Fitz's Fish Ponds from Green Brook, did a beautiful job of replacing the gate posts and setting them in concrete, resetting some of the sinking bluestone slabs, removing the dead plants, and installing a variety of beautiful and diverse plants. These plants include a trellised southern magnolia, a weeping redbud, a Japanese maple, and Japanese Acubas and hydrangeas.

We are very excited to celebrate the restoration of the Memorial Garden as a place of beauty and tranquility for remembrance and meditation. We are planning a re-dedication ceremony in the Spring, most likely May 20th (Mother's Day). Stay tuned for further details.

Thank you to those who have already donated to the Memorial Garden. If you have not yet donated and would like to contribute to the continued upkeep, please feel free to make a donation and note "Memorial Garden" on it. If you are interested in becoming a part of the Memorial Garden Committee, please contact a member of Session or Lynn Blakeslee, who has been spearheading this project.

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

Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, January 3rd, 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 Fletcher. If you'd like to help with this program, please speak to Jean or Yvonne.

Upcoming dates: Feb. 7, March 6, April 3, May 1

Family Promise of Morris County**- Jan Somers**

Thank you to everyone who helped with our Family Promise hosting dates in 2019! Our 2020 responsibilities for hosting clients at Trinity House in Stirling are: Thursday, Jan. 16th; Tuesday, March 10th; and, Friday, Oct. 30th.



Please take a look at the sign-up sheet in Pollard Hall for our first date, Thursday, Jan. 16th. We are serving soup, mac & cheese, bread, salad (or another side dish), and dessert. Please sign up to help out by providing food, hosting dinner, or staying overnight. Contact Rev. Peters if you have questions.

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, or you can just give them to me any Sunday morning. Thank you for your continued support of these programs.

**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.

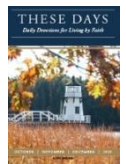
Church Archives**- Jan Somers**

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. Speak to Jan or Rev. Peters if you'd like to help keep the archives up-to-date.

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."

Copies are available in the Church narthex.

**Meyersville Presbyterian Church News****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 any time.

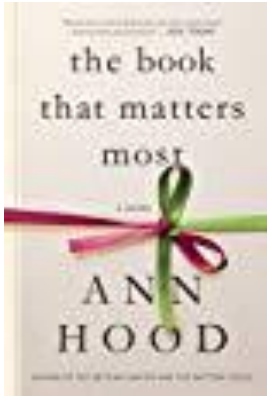


You will not be sitting or lying on the floor, so just bring yourself in comfortable clothes, and invite friends along. The classes are appropriate for all, the flexible as well as the tight. Injuries will be accommodated. Yoga is relaxing as well as good for general health; so, come give it a try. Call or email Roseanne with questions or concerns: 908-508-1435, rosanne.mcgraw@gmail.com.

Meyersville Book Club

- Jan Somers

The Book Club's current selection is **"The Book That Matters Most,"** a novel by Ann Hood. The group will meet in the parlor at Meyersville on Tuesday, January 28th, 7:30 p.m. to discuss the book. Rev. Aspinall still has copies of the book available. Everyone is welcome to join the group.

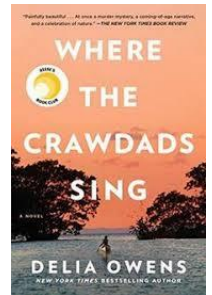


"An enthralling novel about love, loss, secrets, friendship, and the healing power of literature."

Ava's twenty-five-year marriage has fallen apart, and her two grown children are pursuing their own lives outside of the country. Ava joins a book group, not only for her love of reading but also out of sheer desperation for companionship. The group's goal throughout the year is for each member to present the book that matters most to them. Ava rediscovers a mysterious book from her childhood—one that helped her through the traumas of the untimely deaths of her sister and mother. Alternating with Ava's story is that of her troubled daughter Maggie, who, living in Paris, descends into a destructive relationship with an older man. Ava's mission to find that book and its enigmatic author takes her on a quest that unravels the secrets of her past and offers her and Maggie the chance to remake their lives.

The group's next selection is **"Where the Crawdads Sing,"** a novel by Delia Owens. Copies are available in local libraries.

The story follows two timelines that slowly intertwine. The first timeline describes the life and adventures of a young girl named Kya as she grows up isolated in the marsh of North Carolina from 1952–1969. The second timeline follows a murder investigation of Chase Andrews, a local celebrity of Barkley Cove, a fictional coastal town of North Carolina.

**Pictures from our Season of Advent**

David and Eleanor Parziale listening to
Talk with Children, Dec. 8



Brooke, David, and Eleanor Parziale,
visiting from Des Moines, Iowa, with proud
grandparents, Tom and Janet Parziale



Sandy and Dawn Mackay
Lighting the Advent Candles, Dec. 22



Blue Christmas Service, Dec. 22
Lynn Rosol, Israel Sierra, Rev. Peters,
Tatiana Akhounzianova, and Chester

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service



Bill, Toni, and Sharon (Alongi) Hopcraft
Lighting the Advent Candles



Alice Linden listening to "The
Christmas Miracle of Jonathan Toomey"



Rev. Peters reading
"The Meaning of Christmas"

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 23rd. 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

Why not invite a friend to church?



Epiphany

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.

