



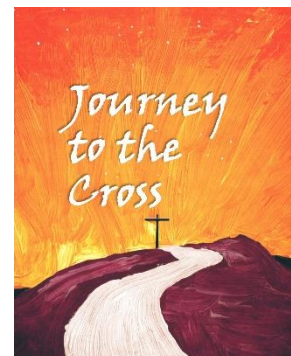
Stirling Stuff

Volume 64, No. 3

March 2020

Pastor's Letter

For the entire month of March, we will be in the season of Lent. It is a time for us to be introspective as we prepare for the events and message of Holy Week. It is time for us to prepare for the whiplash of the triumphal entry, the pangs of the trial and crucifixion of the one we call our Savior, and the great news of *He has risen!* Lent is a journey to prepare us, just as the season of Advent is a journey to prepare us so that we may find Emmanuel on Christmas and not just a tree with a lot of presents under it. The two big festivals of the Christian year take preparation if we are to receive any hope, consolation, or promise in them.



Lent encourages us to consider how our lives may lead Christ to Good Friday. It starts with Ash Wednesday when we hear the words, *Remember you are dust and to dust you shall return.* We are faced with our mortality and sinfulness. For our Lenten journey this year, I will be doing a sermon series entitled, *Untying the Knots.* I will be focusing on how we tie ourselves in knots in our daily lives and how we can untie them so we may be free to receive the good news that Christ died and rose from the dead; and, therefore, we can have hope and joy that the man from Nazareth spoke the truth and still loves us. Each week, I will be touching on ways that we can become open to the life Christ offers us. The sermon titles are in the "March Worship" section of this newsletter. The themes for the services are: being vulnerable, opening ourselves to visions and gifts Christ gives us, living with loss and grief, letting go of our preconceived notions of people and things, and reclaiming hope for our lives.

An anonymous person once said:

Religion is for people afraid of going to hell.

Spirituality is for people who have been there.

Our Lenten journey is one of climbing out of the hell of our lives and finding hope and joy. I pray that you will join us and that you may find peace at the end of the journey on the third day.

See you in church!

Tom

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Worship Services and Scripture Passages for March

March 1, 2020

Service in Stirling

- *First Sunday in Lent*
- *Sacrament of Communion*
- *Non-Perishable Food Collection*
 Genesis 2:15-17, 3:1-7; Psalm 32;
 Romans 5:12-19; Matthew 4:1-11
Untying the Knots
 2. *Being Vulnerable to Pain*

March 8, 2020

- *Second Sunday in Lent*
 Genesis 12:1-4a; Psalm 121;
 Romans 4:1-5, 13-17; Matthew 17:1-9
Untying the Knots
 3: *Letting Go and Receiving*

March 15, 2020

- *Third Sunday in Lent*
 Exodus 17:1-7; Psalm 95;
 Romans 5:1-11; John 4:5-42
 Travnicek Memorial Ringers
Untying the Knots
 4: *When Grief Overwhelms Us*

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



March 22, 2020

- *Fourth Sunday in Lent*
 1 Samuel 16:1-13; Psalm 23;
 Ephesians 5:8-14; John 9:1-41
Untying the Knots
 5: *What We See May Not Be the Truth*

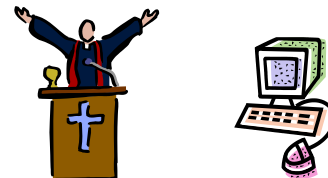
March 29, 2020

- *Fifth Sunday in Lent*
 Ezekiel 37:1-14; Psalm 130;
 Romans 8:6-11; John 11:1-45
 6: *Untying the Knots*
 A *Crisis of Hope*

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.



FLHiP Gathering



We will meet for our next brunch/FLHiP program on **Sunday, March 1st**, following worship. The Meyersville congregation will be worshipping with us in Stirling that morning. Rev. Jeanne Radak, from Presbytery, will be leading us in the next step of our journey. Please come, bring a dish to share, and let your voice be heard.

Travnicek Memorial Ringers

The **Travnicek Memorial Ringers** will be playing, *There Is A Balm In Gilead*, on **Sunday, March 15th**, during morning worship. Bell choir practice is now at **4:00 p.m. on Monday afternoons**. If you can count and would like to make music - come join us. We would love to have you!



Per-Capita Apportionment**- Sandy Mackay**

If you have not made your per-capita payment (\$39) for 2020, please do so. We have benefitted over the years from the leadership and support of Presbytery. So, please do your part, and send \$39 for each church member in your household. Thank you.

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

Our next Family Promise hosting date is **Tuesday, March 10th** at Trinity House in Stirling. Dinner will be tacos, some side dishes, and dessert. The sign-up sheet is pretty much filled up. I could just use one more host for dinner, 5:30-9 p.m. Thank you to everyone--all of your help is greatly appreciated!

The Concert Series in Stirling

On **Sunday, March 8th, at 2:00 p.m.**, we will once again *Gather Under the Steeple* for a free concert. The musicians for this concert are two cabaret/Broadway singers: Christine Hjorth and Amanda Patanella. This will be a fun and lively concert; so, come join us and bring your friends!

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. 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.

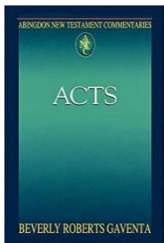
Service of Installation – Church Officers

On Sunday, February 9th, the following church members were re-installed into office:

Ruling Elders: Susan Brodziak and Bill Hopcraft

Board of Deacons: Carolyn Malfatone, Dawn Mackay, Janet Parziale,
and Joanne Sama

Congratulations and may God bless and guide them as they begin their new terms.

**Christian Education Committee****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, March 22nd**- 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 22nd; we always have lively discussions on a wide range of topics.



Topics in recent months have been: Our True Heroes, Smiles and Laughter, Competition, Friendship, Christmas Traditions, 2020 Vision, and Cooperation. **If there's a topic you'd like to discuss, contact Tom Parziale.**

Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Liturgists for March:**

March 1	Tom Parziale	March 22	Sue Gerecht
March 8	Dawn Mackay	March 29	Janet Parziale
March 15	Lore Pateman		



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 - March 1st - in Stirling

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.

**Season of Lent - "Atmosphere Table"**

During Lent, the Worship Committee and Rev. Peters will be preparing an "Atmosphere Table," adding items each week that symbolize Rev. Peters' sermons on the theme, "Untying the Knots." Please be sure to take a look at the table as it evolves from Ash Wednesday through Easter Sunday.

**Worship Service Reminder**

Just a reminder: If you arrive after the worship service has begun, please do not enter the sanctuary during a prayer or reading. Kindly wait quietly until a hymn or other similar opportunity so that the service is not disrupted. Thank you.

Deacons' Corner**- Janet Parziale****Mission of the Month - March & April - One Great Hour of Sharing**

Mission of the Month for March and April will be **One Great Hour of Sharing**. A gift to One Great Hour of Sharing enables the church to share God's love with our neighbors-in-need around the world by providing relief to those affected by natural disasters, providing food to the hungry, and helping to empower the poor and oppressed. To donate, please use the special Mission of the Month offering envelopes that can be found in the pew racks. Remember to put your name and/or envelope number on it so you can receive credit for your donation. Thank you in advance for supporting this special mission program.

**Fellowship Hour - We Need Volunteers!**

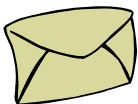
Fellowship Hour is a very special time following each weekly worship service. It is an opportunity to share stories and catch up with each other after our busy weeks. **Please consider helping with this important part of our church life by signing up to host yourself or with a partner or simply donating 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.

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.**

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.



Forks Anyone?

The Deacons need your help. We are running low on forks in our silverware collection in the kitchen. If you are getting rid of an old set of silverware or find one at a local garage sale, please consider donating it to the church. They will get plenty of use at our brunches, dinners, and Fellowship Hours. Thank you in advance for your help.

**Visiting Nurse**

Joyce Koenig is our congregation's Visiting Nurse. She makes visitations on her own and with Rev. Peters and is 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.

**Mission Programs****Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**

- Janet Parziale



Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Friday, March 6th, 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 Janet or Yvonne Fletcher. If you'd like to help with this program, please speak to Janet or Yvonne.

Upcoming dates: April 3, May 1

Souper Bowl of Caring Collection Update

- Tom Parziale

During the month of February, we held our annual Souper Bowl of Caring collection, and our **church collected \$362.18**. As we have done for the past several years, the money will be split between Family Promise of Morris County and Market Street Mission in Morristown. Thank you to everyone who donated generously to this special mission program.

**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 Jan 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.

If you have some free time, we have quite a pile of articles/newspapers that have accumulated since we last had a workday. They need to be perused and "clipped" so they can be put into our binders. 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.



Boy Scout Troop 59

- Ed Gerecht

Boy Scout Troop 59, which our church sponsors, will be holding an Eagle Scout Court of Honor for Dave Vreeland, on Saturday, March 28th, 3:00 p.m., in our sanctuary. Everyone is invited to attend this celebration of Dave's achievement.

Meyersville Presbyterian Church News

Free Gentle Yoga Class

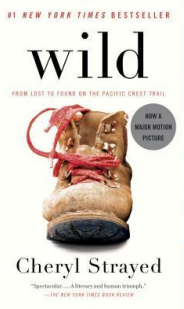
Roseann McGraw, a certified yoga teacher, offers free yoga classes in the parlor at Meyersville Presbyterian Church on Tuesdays, from 9:00 – 10:00 a.m. The classes are on-going, so you can join any time.



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 **"Wild: From Lost to Found on the Pacific Crest Trail,"** a memoir by Cheryl Strayed. The group will meet in the parlor at **Meyersville on Tuesday, March 24th, 7:30 p.m.** to discuss the book. Everyone is welcome to join the group.



At twenty-two, Cheryl Strayed thought she had lost everything. In the wake of her mother's death, her family scattered and her own marriage was soon destroyed. Four years later, with nothing more to lose, she made the most impulsive decision of her life. With no experience or training, driven only by blind will, she would hike more than a thousand miles of the Pacific Crest Trail from the Mojave Desert through California and Oregon to Washington State—and she would do it alone. Told with suspense and style, sparkling with warmth and humor, Wild powerfully captures the terrors and pleasures of one young woman forging ahead against all odds on a journey that maddened, strengthened, and ultimately healed her.

Almost Spring Rummage Sale & Pancake Breakfast Buffet

The rummage sale will be a **2-day event this year, Friday, March 13th and Saturday, March 14th, from 9 am to 5 pm each day.**



In addition to all the usual fun items, this sale will include contents from a local estate which consisted of many interesting collections and antiques. Collections include banks, cobalt blue and delft pieces, pottery and pitchers, cows, apples, thimbles, Raggedy Ann and Andy, Campbell Soup Collectibles, and Santas. Antiques include oil lamps and lanterns, stoneware jugs, old bottles, vintage hats, jewelry, and tools. There are many interesting old and new books including coffee table books, soft and hard cover novels, and reference books. The sale also includes luggage, small furniture, art, and many more treasures from "Granny's Attic," including a ping-pong table.



On Saturday from 9-noon, take time to enjoy a \$5 Pancake Buffet with sausage and fruit, OJ, coffee, or hot chocolate. Delicious homemade baked goods, including pies and cakes, will be available for sale, too. Come enjoy good food, spend a little time with your neighbors, and find a treasure or two to take home. There is a little something for everyone. For more information, call the MPC office, 908-647-0390.

Millington Volunteer Fire Company**- Ed Gerecht**

The Millington Volunteer Fire Company is holding its **Fifth Annual Comedy Night, Saturday, March 21st**. Doors open at 7 p.m.; live music from 7-8 p.m. and 10-10:30 p.m.; comics will perform from 8-10 p.m.; 50/50 tickets will be sold; drinks will be sold; snacks will be provided, but feel free to bring your own food. Tickets: \$35 in advance; drop your check in the fire house drop slot, or call 908-656-0082 for reservations. Tickets at the door: \$40.

Free Items Available

As you know, Jean Hoffman is in the process of selling her home in Warren and has some items available to anyone who can use them:

- 2 Two-drawer file cabinets that can be stacked
- Singer sewing machine (works), with cabinet and bench



If you are interested in any of these items, please contact Jean (908-350-3408).

Earth Hour 2020

- Jan Somers

Earth Hour 2020 is Saturday, March 28th, from 8:30-9:30 p.m.

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wide Fund for Nature (WWF). It is observed annually, encouraging individuals, communities, and businesses to **turn off non-essential electric lights for one hour, from 8:30 to 9:30 pm, as a symbol of commitment to the planet.** It was started as a lights-off event in Sydney, Australia, in 2007. Since then, it has grown to engage more than 7,000 cities and towns across 187 countries and territories to raise awareness of energy consumption and effects on the environment. 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.

In 2019, millions around the world came together to speak up for nature and inspire urgent action for the environment. As Earth Hour rolled around the globe, thousands of landmarks switched off their lights in solidarity for the planet. #EarthHour, #Connect2Earth, and related hashtags trended in 26 countries as people across the globe generated over 2 billion impressions to show their concern for nature. People pledged their support for the planet, challenging world leaders to push the issue up the global agenda. Earth Hour 2019 mobilized people across continents to speak up on issues such as sustainable lifestyles, plastic-free oceans, deforestation, and water conservation to help raise awareness of the value of nature – a vital first step in starting a global movement for nature.



This Earth Hour, Shine A Light On Climate Action!

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
- ✓ 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 April issue of Stirling Stuff to:

jsomers17@hotmail.com

by **March 19th**. 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?

