



Stirling Stuff

Volume 66, No. 2

February 2022

Dear Church Family,

As Jesus passed along the Sea of Galilee, he saw Simon and his brother Andrew casting a net into the sea—for they were fishermen. And Jesus said to them, “Follow me and I will make you fish for people.” And immediately they left their nets and followed him. As he went a little farther, he saw James son of Zebedee and his brother John, who were in their boat mending the nets. Immediately he called them; and they left their father Zebedee in the boat with the hired men and followed him. (Mark 1:14-20)



One of gospel writer Mark’s favorite words is “immediately.” He used it many times in his gospel, and it gives an air of urgency to the story of Jesus’ life and ministry. In the story of Jesus’ call to the disciples, Simon, Andrew, James, and John, this “immediately” also gives urgency to the disciples’ ministry. They didn’t stop to think and wonder and weigh alternatives. “Immediately they left their nets and followed him.”

This immediate response of those four fishermen is amazing, inspiring, and yet daunting because it sets the bar for discipleship so incredibly high. Leave family, job, home, security to follow an itinerant preacher into an unknown and possibly dangerous future . . . immediately? To be honest, I find it hard to imagine doing this. I expect most people do. I think we would all have serious and sincere reservations about doing this. So, do our reservations make us failures as Christians? Does that mean we are less faithful than Andrew and Peter and James and John? Well, perhaps, but remember that Mark also tells us that those same disciples ended up disappointing, denying, and abandoning Jesus at various points later in the story.

So, what was Mark’s point here? By the time he was writing his gospel, it was impossible to follow the earthly Jesus the way those four disciples did. So, what exactly was Mark seeking to inspire? What kind of example did he intend? Presumably Mark’s message to his readers in the 1st century and to us in the 21st is more about following Jesus in a general sense than specifically leaving everything – family, job, home - to traipse along with Jesus through the Galilean countryside.

Except that following Jesus “in a general sense” doesn’t really mean anything. We live, work, choose, love, in the particular. We follow Jesus not by literally walking behind him, but in the way we live every day, the priorities we make in our lives. But again, these priorities, this “way we live” has to be expressed in the particular, or to use Mark’s “immediately” in a different way, in the immediate.

Merely thinking of ourselves as good people or as Christian believers is not following Jesus. Following Jesus is something that must be done immediately – in the immediate – in the way we interact

with particular people, how we connect person to person, as we help with the new Twelve Baskets Food Pantry, as we pack lunches for NYC street folks, as we reach out to congregation members who are homebound.

I really think the way we let the Holy Spirit enliven us and our church is by listening to what Mark has to say about immediacy, about particularity, about personal connections. Jesus taught the crowds and fed thousands, but he called his disciples one and two at a time - as individual, particular people. And this is how ministry happens; this is how church growth happens; this is how the good news of Jesus Christ is shared – one person at a time, one personal connection, one invitation at a time. We, each one of us, has a word of good news to share. May we, each one of us, be inspired, have the courage, find the will, to speak, to invite, to share with particular, individual people... immediately.



Yours in Christ,
Barbara

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Return to In-Person Worship Services

- Rev. Aspinall



During the month of February, our worship services will be held in person in Meyersville at 10:00 a.m. We will wear face masks, social distance, and sign-in for purposes of contact tracing, if needed.

Our online services will continue, and I will send the link to you, as usual, on Saturdays.

Annual Congregational Meeting

The Annual Congregational Meeting was held following worship on January 30th. The following church members were elected/re-elected:

- Church Treasurer for 1 year: Kai Ihringer
- Financial Secretary for 1 year: Elsie Turqman
- Nominating Committee for 2022: Sandy Mackay, Evelyn Smith
- Elder for 1 year: Ed Gerecht
- Elder for 3 years: Joyce Koenig, Paul Wermuth
- Deacon for 1 year: Susan Gerecht
- Deacon for 3 years: Elsie Turqman, Marie Darby

Installation of the newly elected Elders and Deacons will take place on Sunday, February 13th, during morning worship in Meyersville.

Thank You for Serving**- Rev. Aspinall**

Our deepest thanks and appreciation to our church officers who have completed three- or six-year terms of office on the Session or the Board of Deacons. These folks have been dedicated to the ministry of Christ in Stirling, using God's gifts of intelligence, imagination, and love. Their energy and devotion have enabled and served the worship, work, and fellowship life of our congregation. From the Session: Yvonne Fletcher (3 years), Sandy Mackay (6 years), and from the Board of Deacons: Joanne Sama (3 years). Many thanks!

**Stewardship****Weekly Contributions**

When we are not worshipping in our sanctuary, financial commitments still need to be met. Expenses for maintaining the buildings and grounds, paying our staff, or keeping up with our mission support, are ongoing. Whether we worship in person or on-line, please try to keep your pledges current. You can send your weekly offering/pledge (in your offering envelope) to the church office or directly to Elsie Turqman. Thank you.

Per-Capita Apportionment

For 2022, our per-capita apportionment to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly is **\$40 per active member**. This money is used to help fund the different levels of the denomination. 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.

**Deacons' Corner****- Janet Parziale****Returning to Indoor Worship Services at Meyersville and Stirling**

The Deacons want you to know we are **returning to indoor worship** services at both **Meyersville Presbyterian Church in February** and **First Presbyterian Church of Stirling in March**. We hope you will join us each Sunday morning at 10:00 am.

If you need a ride to either church, please feel free to call upon a Deacon or fellow church member. We are happy to help. One reminder--at Meyersville, there is an elevator that can be used instead of walking up the front steps to get to the sanctuary.

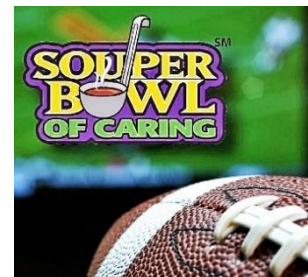
As we continue working through the current Covid environment, masks and social distancing are still required inside both churches. See you on Sunday mornings!



Mission of the Month for February - Super Bowl of Caring

- Tom Parziale

It's that time again: the 56th NFL Super Bowl championship game will be played on Sunday, February 13, and once again it will be an exciting time for football fans. It's also time for the annual Souper Bowl of Caring activities across the United States.



The Souper Bowl of Caring will be the February Mission of the Month. Last year we collected \$390 for this special mission. Remember, the money we collect is donated to organizations close to us.

Some history: in 1990 in South Carolina a simple prayer, "Lord, even as we enjoy the Super Bowl football game, help us be mindful of those who are without a bowl of soup to eat" inspired a youth-led movement to help hungry people. This movement has gathered money and food for those in need each year since then. In 2021, the amount of food and monetary donations totaled over \$5,328,000.

For the past few years, we have divided our donations between the Community Foodbank of NJ (Hillside) and Market Street Mission (Morristown). This year the Deacons have chosen to send the entire amount collected to All Saints' Episcopal Church's **"Twelve Baskets Food Pantry."** Checks can be sent to the church office or directly to Elsie Turqman, labeled "Mission of the Month-Feb." Click this link to learn more about the program: <http://www.allsaintsmillington.org/outreach.html>. Thank you for your consideration of supporting this cause.

Looking ahead: Mission of the Month for March and April

The 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, food to the hungry, and empowerment to the poor and oppressed. This special offering will be collected throughout the months of March and April. Feel free to use the special envelopes you may find within your pew at church or send your gift directly to the church or Elsie Turqman. Remember to include your name and/or your envelope number if you would like your donation to be recorded.

Click this link <https://specialofferings.pcusa.org/offering/oghs/> to learn more about the program. Thank you in advance for supporting this program.

**Easter Flowers**

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of Easter flowers to decorate the chancel for Easter morning in memory or honor of someone special in your life. Please use the **form on page 10** of this newsletter or look for the Easter Flower Order Form in our Sunday morning worship bulletins. The flowers will be from the Great Swamp Greenhouses. **The deadline to order is Sunday, March 6.**

Please note: the prices have not yet been established. We will notify you as soon as they are available.

ShopRite Gift Cards



Do you shop at ShopRite? Well, then, you cannot afford to pass up this deal to help support the church in another small way. For the past several years, the church has been selling ShopRite gift cards (known as our *Voucher Program*). For every \$100 sold, the church earns \$5; that is, we get 5% of all sales. Over the course of a year, at times that has translated to more than a \$1,000 earned.

The gift cards come in \$20, \$50, and \$100 denominations. They never expire; you can continue to use them until the balance is used up. To purchase these gift cards for yourself or as a gift, **please contact Yvonne Fletcher. She will be more than happy to help you out with your purchase.** Thank you in advance for helping in this special way.

Know Someone Who Needs a Card?

We know what the power of prayer can do in helping give strength to all those involved. If you know of someone who is in need of our prayers, please let Janet Parziale know so that a card can be sent. Janet can be reached at janetparziale@comcast.net or 908-647-2212.

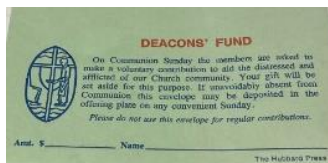


Deacons Fundraiser: First Presbyterian Church Notecards



The Deacons are selling packets of **ten cards and envelopes for \$5.00**. The note cards have a pencil sketch of our church on the front; they are blank inside, thus making them useful for any type of communication. If you are interested, please let any Deacon know or leave a message at the church office, and we will get a pack or two to you. Proceeds will go into the Deacons' Fund. Thank you for your support of this project.

Deacons' Fund



The Deacons' Fund helps the Deacons do their Mission work and is funded by donations given so generously by the congregation. You may send your donation to the church or directly to Elsie Turqman. Please note "Deacons' Fund" in the memo section of your check and include your envelope number. Thank you!

Worship Committee

- Janet Parziale

February Lectionary Readings

February 6 - Fifth Sunday after Epiphany

Isaiah 6:1-8 (9-13); Psalms 138; 1 Corinthians 15:1-11; Luke 5:1-11

February 13 - Sixth Sunday after Epiphany

Jeremiah 17:5-10; Psalms 1; 1 Corinthians 15:12-20; Luke 6:17-26

February 20 - Seventh Sunday after Epiphany

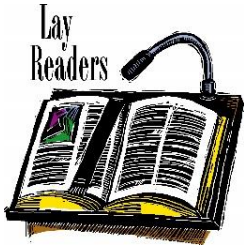
Genesis 45:3-11, 15; Psalms 37:1-11, 39-40; 1 Corinthians 15:35-38; 42-50; Luke 6:27-38

February 27 - Transfiguration of the Lord

Exodus 34:29-35; Psalms 99; 2 Corinthians 3:12-4:2; Luke 9:28-36 (37-43a)



Liturgists Needed For Worship Services

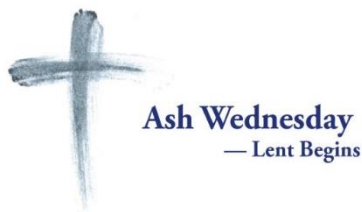


We need Liturgists each week to do readings for the in-person and on-line worship services. **For the month of February, we will be worshipping in Meyersville; recordings will be done in Stirling,** typically on Thursday afternoons (other arrangements can be made if necessary).

To sign up, please contact Jan Somers. If Jan contacts you about reading, please **let her know as soon as possible if/when you will be available.** Rev. Aspinall will send you a copy of your readings and confirm the location and time for the on-line recording. Thank you.

Your Pictures Wanted!

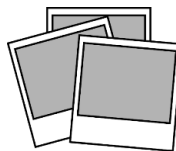
Then Jacob woke from his sleep and said, "Surely the LORD is in this place—and I did not know it!" And he was afraid, and said, "How awesome is this place! This is none other than the house of God, and this is the gate of heaven." Genesis 28:16, 17



Ash Wednesday, the beginning of Lent, will be on March 2nd this year. There will be an online Ash Wednesday service to be shared that day as well as an in-person service at First Presbyterian Church in Stirling at 7:30 p.m. The focus of traditional Ash Wednesday services is the brevity of life, that we came from dust and will soon enough return back to the earth, dust once more. Considering the couple of years we have all just been through, this is something we are all very well aware of. I am not sure we need too much reminding of this truth.

Another way of thinking about this is that the brevity and uncertainty of life makes this life we have even more precious, inviting us to praise, wonder, and seize the moment. This is the day and let us rejoice in it! What we love is mortal and transitory but, instead of grieving that this year, let's celebrate the things in this world, the people we love, that remind us of the presence of God and God's everlasting love for us. Like Jacob after his dream of the ladder to heaven, Ash Wednesday causes us to pause, notice, wake up, and discover that "God is in this place" and now we know it!

In view of this perspective on Ash Wednesday, one component of this year's online Ash Wednesday service will be a celebration of the people, circumstances, places, and times that have reminded us that "God is in this place." To help with this celebration, all who have cameras, cell phones, pictures, are invited to share their own "God is in this place" moments by taking pictures and **sending them** to baspinall223@aol.com or directeur@klokhuis.com by **Feb. 16th**. These could be pictures of places, things, or people that remind you of God's presence and love. No explanation is necessary - just your pictures!



Mission Programs**Family Promise of Morris County**

- Jan Somers



Our church is hosting the guests of Family Promise of Morris County during the week of February 6th. There are currently five families in the program, and they are still being housed in motels due to Covid. We have been asked to provide gift cards and/or monetary gifts to help them with the purchase of food and other necessities. To support this program, please send your donation to the church or directly to Elsie Turqman and note "Family Promise" on your check. Thank you!

Local Food Bank – Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

- Lynn Blakeslee

We are happy to report that the Long Hill Township "Twelve Baskets" Food Pantry has successfully launched with First Presbyterian Church-Stirling (FPC), Meyersville Presbyterian Church (MPC), and All Saints Episcopal Church (ASEC) in Millington working together to open a physical food pantry for Long Hill area residents who are experiencing food insecurity. On Saturday, January 22nd, these efforts culminated in a very successful opening day of the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry, housed at ASEC. On that day, we provided food to 14 families/households, for a total of 44 people served -- 20 adults, 17 children, and 7 seniors. It is estimated that approximately 568 pounds of food was distributed on opening day!



Formal meetings between the three churches and interested community volunteers began the end of November 2021. ASEC was already a partner agency of the Community Food Bank of NJ (CFBNJ) which enabled them to get larger quantities of food for distribution through our local food pantry. The food obtained from the CFBNJ, as well as donations from the community and from our church, helped to stock the pantry.

A group of very active volunteers, including Rev. Aspinall, Doris Mertz of MPC, Kai Ihringer and Lynn Blakeslee from FPC, members of ASEC, numerous community volunteers, and the Long Hill Community Services Director, Shayne Daly, worked to help make the Food Pantry a reality. The group installed shelving and organized goods, created a flyer, distributed information throughout the community, picked up food from the CFBNJ in Hillside, and staffed the food pantry on opening day.

Going forward, the pantry will be open every first and third Saturday of the month. Currently, it offers non-perishable foods, dental supplies, paper goods such as toilet paper and paper towels, and cleaning supplies. It is anticipated that the pantry will add a limited number of perishable items in the future by utilizing monetary donations given for that purpose. A valid driver's license or state ID card is the only documentation needed to "shop" at the food pantry.

If you would like to become part of the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry Committee, or otherwise volunteer, please contact Lynn Blakeslee, Kai Ihringer, or Rev. Aspinall. For a list of items needed for the food pantry, please see our website or the printed flyers available in Pollard Hall. All food collected by our church will now be brought to ASEC to be distributed at the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry. To make a monetary contribution, please make your check payable to FPC, note that it is for the "Food Pantry," and our church will forward your donation to the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry account.

For more info: <http://www.allsaintsmillington.org/outreach.html>

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**- Janet Parziale**

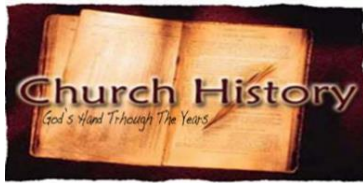
Bringing the housed and homeless
together in community

The Bridges Outreach organization is in need of as many lunches as we can provide. Currently, one person is making sandwiches and one person is filling the brown bags. The children from the Montessori School often decorate the bags and write messages to the recipients. The sandwiches, drinks, and non-perishable goodies are delivered to Summit monthly.

We are always in need of small bottles of water or cartons of juice; snacks of cookies, nuts, Goldfish, pretzels; and small fruit cups, applesauce, pudding, etc. Cash donations are also appreciated to help with the purchase of bread and lunch meat. You can drop items off in Pollard Hall (call the office to confirm that someone is there) or send cash donations to Elsie Turgman.

**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, Stirling Stuff, Pastor's sermons, Scripture readings, Church history, and more.

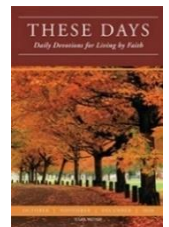
Church Archives**- Jan Somers**

Please continue to save 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.** Items can be mailed to the Church (labeled "Archives"), or you can save them until you are in the building. Thank you.

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 Christian life."

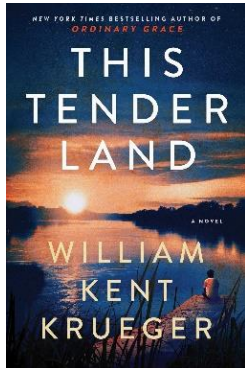
Copies of this devotional booklet are available at the church. If you would like a copy, contact the church office and one can be mailed to you.

**Pop-Top Can Tabs****- Jan Somers**

Please continue to save pop-top can tabs, any size. **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, you can give them to me any Sunday morning, or I can pick them up from you. Thank you for your continued support of this program.

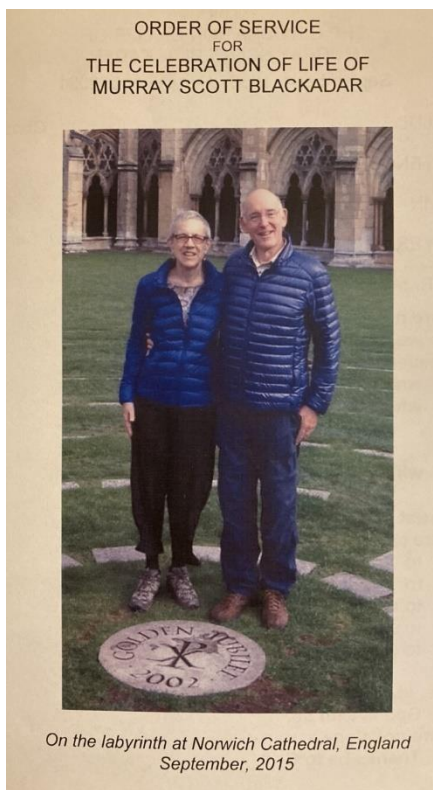
Meyersville Book Club**- Jan Somers**

The Book Club's current selection is, *"This Tender Land,"* a novel by William Kent Kruger, based on historical fiction. The group will be **meeting via Zoom on Monday, March 21st, 7:30 p.m.** to discuss the book. Everyone is welcome to join the group; please contact Rev. Aspinall so she can send you the Zoom link. The book is available at local libraries in several different formats.



In 1932 Minnesota, the Lincoln School is a pitiless place where hundreds of Native American children, forcibly separated from their parents, are sent to be educated. It is also home to an orphan named Odie, a lively boy whose exploits earn him the superintendent's wrath. Forced to flee, he and his brother Albert, their best friend Mose, and a brokenhearted little girl named Emmy steal away in a canoe, heading for the mighty Mississippi and a place to call their own.

*Over the course of one unforgettable summer, these four orphans will journey into the unknown and cross paths with others who are adrift, from struggling farmers and traveling faith healers to displaced families and lost souls of all kinds. With the feel of a modern classic, *This Tender Land* is an enthralling, big-hearted epic that shows how the magnificent American landscape connects us all, haunts our dreams, and makes us whole.*

Rev. Murray Blackadar – Memorial Service**- Jan Somers**

A memorial service for Rev. Blackadar was held at the Providence Presbyterian Church in Rhode Island on January 8th. Due to Covid, the service was for family only, but several of us viewed the service on Zoom. Afterwards, I contacted Murray's wife, Judy, and asked if she would send me a program from the service for our Church Archives. I received a copy, with a wonderful picture of her and Murray on the cover, along with a lovely note. Here is part of Judy's message:

"It was wonderful to see Stirling people listed on Zoom for Murray's service. Those years are remembered by all of us especially since we have the book put together by Betty Addison. So much history including Senior Citizen Housing which I'd forgotten about.

The kids and grandkids looked through the book and got some idea of what their grandfather was up to in New Jersey. Good luck with keeping a record (archives).

I know Murray and Tom kept in touch and we were so sad to hear of his death."

EASTER FLOWERS/PLANTS ORDER FORM

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of flowers/plants to be placed on the chancel for Easter morning in memory or honor of someone special in your life. Please use the form below or the forms available in the Sunday bulletin to place your order. The deadline to order is Sunday, March 6th.



As soon as prices are available, everyone will be notified.

	<u>What Color?</u>	<u>How many?</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
Azaleas - \$ each (Red, Pink)	_____	_____	_____
Daffodils - \$ each (All Yellow)	_____	_____	_____
Lilies - \$ each (All White)	_____	_____	_____
Tulips - \$ each (Yellow, Pink, Purple)	_____	_____	_____
TOTALS	_____	_____	_____

Flowers are purchased in **MEMORY / HONOR** of:

Please circle one

Given By: _____

Please print clearly

To be picked up following worship on Easter morning: _____ To be planted at Church: _____

Please submit your order form and check to Carolyn Malfatone, the church office, or place it in the offering plate on Sunday morning.

***Deadline to order: Sunday, March 6th

Make checks payable to: FPC-Deacons and note: Easter Flowers on your check. Thank you.

Ongoing Mission Programs:

Family Promise of Morris County
Bridges Outreach Lunch Program
Local Food Pantry

Please e-mail submissions for the
February 2022 issue of *Stirling Stuff* to:
jsomers17@hotmail.com
by **February 24th**. Thank you!

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 from 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

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Why not invite a friend to church!



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.

