



Stirling Stuff

Volume 66, No. 3

March 2022

Dear Church Family,

David Brooks, a conservative political columnist for the New York Times and the PBS Newshour, lamented in a column a while ago that there is a lack of optimism in our political discourse. He said that politicians and columnists “wallow in the pornography of pessimism, to conclude that this country is on the verge of complete collapse. That’s simply not true. We have problems, but they are less serious than those faced by just about any other nation on earth.” In this case, Brooks is using the term “pornography” in the strictest sense of depiction of something in a sensational way in order to arouse a quick and intense emotional reaction. Dramatizing, sensationalizing the bad things that happen can feed our emotions with intensity that may, but also may not, be merited. Pessimism has an immediate, “right now,” “we’re out of time!” quality that can waylay and even preclude the possibility of hope.



And it is this sensational pessimism that Brooks objects to. He says, “People are motivated to make wise choices more by hope and opportunity than by fear, cynicism, hatred and despair.”

The church season of Lent may sometimes feel like it is about pessimism – about reminding ourselves of sin, our need for repentance, how we mess up and miss the mark. If we are not careful, it can have the same immediate, shutting-down effect as pessimism. But Lent is not about pessimism. Lent is about hope. Lent is about allowing time for the reality of Easter to sink in, letting the Good News of Christ’s resurrection coming up at Easter ahead to inform and inspire hope. The meantime becomes not just about waiting but an opportunity for hope.

Emily Dickinson wrote, at a time when Protestants spent a lot of time worrying about hell, that “hope is the thing with feathers/ that perches in the soul/ and sings the tune without the words/ and never stops at all.”

Lent, getting ready for Easter, inspires us to give up on a pessimistic view of our lives and the world. Lent provides time and space for patience with ourselves, an opportunity to feed our hope and not our pessimism, to allow ourselves to bear fruit, to blossom, to fulfill God’s and our own plans for our lives.



Yours in Christ,
Barbara

The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling
Feeding Those Who Hunger

Shared In-Person Services

- Rev. Aspinall

The Meyersville Presbyterian Church and the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling will continue in-person worship services. We will wear face masks, social distance, and sign-in for purposes of contact tracing, if needed. **In March, the services will be held in Stirling.** Please plan to join us.

Our online services will also continue each week and are accessible through a link delivered by email and also on the church website, www.fpcstirling.org. The service can be viewed at any time. DVDs of the service are also available and may be requested through Janet Parziale.



Stewardship

Weekly Contributions

Whether you worship in person or on-line, please try to keep your pledges current. 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. You can send your weekly offering/pledge (in your offering envelope) to the church office or directly to Elsie Turqman. Thank you.



Installation of Church Officers



During our worship service in Meyersville on Sunday, February 13th, our Church officers were installed to their new terms of service: Kai Ihringer as our Church Treasurer, Ed Gerecht and Paul Wermuth as Elders, and Marie Darby and Elsie Turqman as Deacons. Elsie was also installed as Financial Secretary. May God guide them in their work of the ministry of First Presbyterian Church.

Pictured here: Rev. Aspinall, Kai Ihringer, Ed Gerecht, Paul Wermuth, Marie Darby, and Elsie Turqman.

Deacons' Corner

- Janet Parziale

We will continue **indoor worship** services at both **First Presbyterian Church (in March)** and **Meyersville Presbyterian Church (in April)**. As we continue working through the current Covid environment, masks and social distancing are still required inside both churches. We hope you will join us on Sunday mornings at 10:00 a.m.

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.



Mission of the Month - 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. Feel free to use the special envelopes available in the church pews 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.

Update - Mission of the Month - February**- Tom Parziale**

During the month of February, we held our annual Souper Bowl of Caring collection. To date, our church has **collected \$355**. This year the Deacons have chosen to send the entire amount to “**Twelve Baskets Food Pantry,**” housed at All Saints’ Episcopal Church in Basking Ridge. Our church and the Meyersville Church participate in and support the work of this food pantry. Click this link to learn more about this program <http://www.allsaintsmillington.org/outreach.html>. This is an incredible gift from our

church and will certainly help provide many grocery items for those who are struggling to put food on their table. **Thank you very much** to everyone who donated generously to this special mission program.

Update - Mission of the Month - January

During January, our Mission of the Month was for the Bridges Brown Bag Lunch Program we support. **Many, many thanks** to those who donated to this very worthy cause. To date, we collected a record amount of \$315, which will be used to purchase the meat, bread, snacks, fruit cups, and drinks for each lunch. This is an incredible amount that is greatly appreciated by the ladies preparing the monthly brown bag lunches. Thank you very much again for your support.

**Easter Flowers**

The Deacons are coordinating the ordering of Easter flowers from the Great Swamp Greenhouses to decorate the chancel for Easter morning in memory or honor of someone special in your life. The flowers will also be used in any recordings made during Holy Week. Please use the **form on page 8** of this newsletter or look for the Easter Flower Order Form in our Sunday morning worship bulletin, detailing the flower options and prices. The flowers will be from the Great Swamp Greenhouses. **The deadline to order is Sunday, March 6th.**



ShopRite Gift Cards



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.

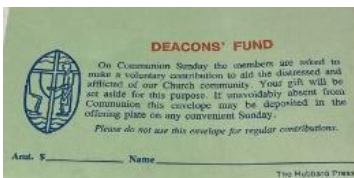


Deacons Fundraiser: First Presbyterian Church Notecards

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 is supported by the contributions and offerings so generously given by you in the **little green envelopes found in the church pews**. In recent years, this fund has been used to purchase the name plaques on the memoriam boards in Pollard Hall, candles and oil for the sanctuary, stamps for cards to the congregation, provisions for the Bridges Lunch program, to purchase special items like the cable for the remote TV used in Pollard Hall, and to support some of the mission projects of the Deacons. Every dollar is greatly appreciated and put to good use. You may send your donation directly to Elsie Turqman or use the little green envelopes in your pew on Sunday morning. Please note "Deacons' Fund" in the memo section of your check. Thank you very much!

Worship Committee**- Janet Parziale****Sacrament of Holy Communion and Non-Perishable Food Collection, March 6th**

It's been a long time since we've used our "FPC - Feed the Hungry" red wagon during our monthly Communion Sunday worship service to collect donations of non-perishable food. We'd like to start that tradition up again, **beginning on March 6th**. All food and monetary donations will be delivered to the "Twelve Baskets Food Pantry," housed at All Saints' Episcopal Church in Millington.

The items most needed include: baby food, applesauce, shelf-stable milk, cold cereal, crackers, chips, snacks, coffee, dried herbs and spices, canola oil, and olive oil. Thank you for your support of this local endeavor.

March Lectionary Readings**March 2 – Ash Wednesday**

Genesis 28:10-17; Psalms 90:1-6, 12-17; Philippians 4:4-9

March 6 – 1st Sunday in Lent

Deuteronomy 26:1-11; Psalms 91:1-2, 9-16; Romans 10:b-13; Luke 4:1-13

March 13 – 2nd Sunday in Lent

Genesis 15:1-12, 17-18; Psalms 27; Philippians 3:17-4:1; Luke 13:31-35

March 20 – 3rd Sunday in Lent

Isaiah 55:1-9; Psalms 63:1-8; 1 Corinthians 10:1-13; Luke 13:1-9

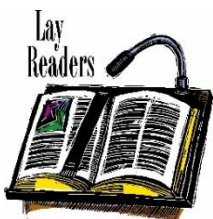
March 27 – 4th Sunday in Lent

Joshua 5:9-12; Psalms 32; 2 Corinthians 5:16-21; Luke 15:1-3, 11b-32

**Ash Wednesday, March 2nd**

The season of Lent begins on Ash Wednesday, March 2nd. We will be celebrating the Service of Ashes in Stirling at 7:30 p.m. Our theme of Lent this year is, "Surely the Lord is in This Place." Pictures representing this theme, which have been shared by congregation members, will be incorporated into the service. Please plan to join us as we begin our 40-day journey to the cross and Christ's resurrection.

ASH WEDNESDAY
Worship

Liturgists Needed for Worship Services

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

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.

Thank You to Boy Scout Troop 59

Many thanks to Boy Scout Troop 59, led by Ed Gerecht, for professionally lashing the wooden cross, handmade by Rev. Peters, to a post on the front lawn of our church. During Lent you will see different colored cloths draped on the cross. For most of Lent, it will be adorned in a purple cloth, representing penance, preparation, and sacrifice. On Good Friday, a black cloth will be placed on the cross, signifying Christ's death on the cross. On Easter, the cloth will be white to celebrate Christ's resurrection. Please take note of the cross when you pass by the church during Lent.



Mission Programs

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

- Janet Parziale

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.



Bringing the housed and homeless
together in community

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 Turqman.

"Thank You" - from Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

Our church has received a thank you from Bridges Outreach for our **recent donation of \$300, from our Mission of the Month collection**. In part, it reads: *"In this pandemic, Bridges has maintained and strengthened its resolve. You cannot stay home if you do not have one, so we are on the streets seven nights a week making sure no one is forgotten and helping guide them closer to shelter. Your support is appreciated now, more than ever, as we literally aim to minimize the pandemic in this vulnerable population and work towards permanent housing. Thank you very much for your generous support."*



Family Promise of Morris County

- Jan Somers



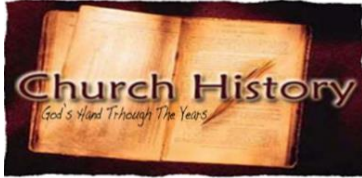
Thank you for supporting our Family Promise commitment during the week of February 6th. The families are always very appreciative of our donations to assist them with the purchase of food and other necessities. **Our remaining 2022 hosting dates are May 8 and October 23.** Please continue to support Family Promise through upcoming Mission of the Month collections.

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

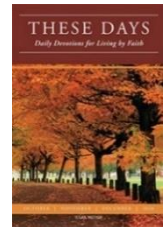


Please continue to save news clippings, bulletins, programs, pictures, or other memorabilia regarding any member of our church family so our archives can be kept up to date. **Please be sure items are dated and, if possible, the names of church members and/or families are highlighted.** Items can be 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 in the church narthex. You can also contact the church office and one will be mailed to you.



Pop-Top Can Tabs

- Jan Somers

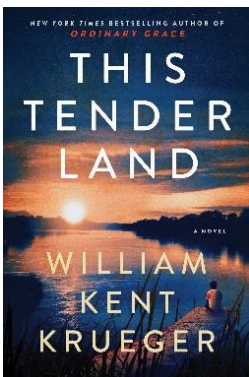


Please continue to save pop-top can tabs, any size. **The can tabs are sold by weight to recycling centers, and the proceeds are donated to assist people on dialysis.** There is a collection canister in the church office, you can give them to me any Sunday morning, or I can pick them up from you. Thank 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 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 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.

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.**



	<u>What Color?</u>	<u>How many?</u>	<u>Total Price</u>
Azaleas - \$22 each (Rose, White)	_____	_____	_____
Daffodils - \$10 each 6" Pot - (All Yellow)	_____	_____	_____
Lilies - \$14 each 6" pot - (All White)	_____	_____	_____
Tulips - \$10 each 6" Pot (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.

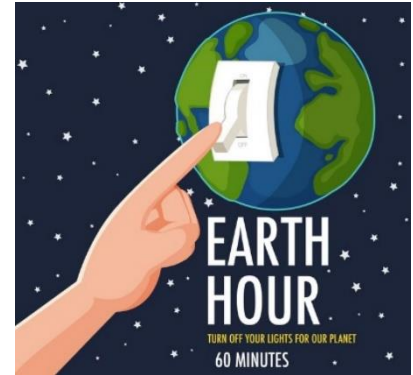
*****Deadline to order: Sunday, March 6th**

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

Earth Hour 2022 is Saturday, March 26th, 8:30-9:30 p.m.**- Jan Somers**

Earth Hour is a worldwide movement organized by the World Wildlife Fund for Nature (WWF) in 2007. It is observed around the world on the last Saturday in March 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.**

2022 presents an incredible once-in-a-decade opportunity to push world leaders into action. Later this year, world leaders and representatives from all over the globe will be attending a crucial United Nations conference for nature and biodiversity.



The state of nature and biodiversity will be the focus of this conference, and global plans will be made for the next 10 years – decisions that will affect not only the next decade but our future and well-being for many years to come. With enough public pressure, this could be ***the*** conference where we secure an ambitious global commitment – similar to the Paris Agreement, but for nature – to reverse the loss of nature and biodiversity by 2030.

Why 2030? **Nature is not only our biggest provider – it's also one of our strongest allies against the climate crisis.** Unless world leaders urgently step up their efforts to protect nature, global temperatures could rise above the 1.5° Celsius limit set by the Paris Agreement as early as 2030--a decade earlier than previously expected. Any further increase in temperatures could mean irreversible damage to our planet.

With supporters in over 190 countries and happening shortly before the UN conference, Earth Hour is an unmissable opportunity to put the spotlight on this crucial conference for nature, building the global momentum needed to pressure world leaders into action.

With everyone's support, Earth Hour 2022 could be the main attention that puts the environment at the center of international conversations. Together we can take responsibility and show the world leaders that the environment matters for everyone. Therefore, immediate actions are needed to reverse the loss of the environment.

Please plan to participate on Saturday, March 26th, by turning off all your electric lights from 8:30-9:30 p.m.

Welcome Little One

Congratulations to Bert Lare on the birth of her new great-granddaughter, Camille Sarah, on January 20th, to her grandson, Tyler Young, and his wife, Sarah. Proud grandparents are Bert's daughter and her husband, Linda and Jeff Fossett. (Looks like Camille is already a Rangers fan!) Best wishes to the happy family!



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 March 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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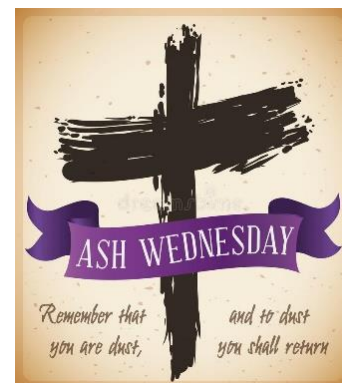
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Our Mission

Jesus said, "Feed My Sheep." This welcoming and caring family, empowered by the love of Christ, shares the grace and peace of God's blessings by serving those who are hungry in body or spirit.

Why not invite a friend to church!



Saturday night, March 12th
Turn Clocks Ahead 1 Hour