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 Stirling, NJ 07980
 908-647-1033
www.fpcstirling.org



Meyersville Presbyterian Church
 223 Hickory Tavern Road
 Gillette, NJ 07933
 908-647-0390
www.meyersvillechurch.com

Dear Church Family,

You may be wondering why your church newsletter looks different this month. At our recent Joint-Church Worship Committee meeting, it was recommended that, since our newsletters contain a lot of duplicate information, they should be combined, at least for the near future. I will try to cover all the necessary congregation-specific details in a section devoted to each church. If there is something you'd like to have included in a future issue, please contact me at your church office. Once Rev. Muntzel has had time to settle in, we will review this decision and discuss how to proceed. *Jan Somers, Editor*

Upcoming Worship Schedule

Our Joint-Church Worship Committee has scheduled the Rev. William Culton to continue leading our worship services each week until Rev. Muntzel starts on May 28th. For the month of May, we will worship in Stirling at 10:00 a.m. Recordings for the online services will be done in Meyersville.

If you need a ride to church, please call upon a fellow church member; they are happy to help. Our online services will continue each week and are accessible through a link delivered by email and also on your church websites. The online service can be viewed at any time. DVDs of the service are also available and may be requested through the church office or any Deacon.

Notices of the worship location will be posted on the church doors so, if there is confusion, there will be time to dash to the other church and just be a few minutes late. Latecomers are always welcome!

Liturgists Needed for Worship Services



Both churches need Liturgists each week to do readings for both the in-person and online worship services. Recordings are typically done on Thursdays, late afternoon (other arrangements can be made, if needed).

To sign up, please contact Jan Somers (FPC), James Thorn (MPC), or leave a message at your church office. If you are contacted about reading, **please respond as soon as possible regarding if/when you will be**

available. Your readings will be emailed to you, along with confirmation of the location and time for the online recording. Thank you!

Welcome to Our Covenant Supply Minister

We look forward to meeting the Rev. Stefanie Muntzel on **Saturday, May 6th, at the Meyersville Presbyterian Church**. Our two Sessions will have time with Pastor Muntzel and her husband, Rich, at 1:00 pm, and the Deacons are welcome to join the Session members at 1:45 pm. **All church members are welcome to stop by between 2:00 pm and 4:00 pm for an open house celebration. Rev. Muntzel's first Sunday will be on Pentecost, May 28th, at First Presbyterian Church in Stirling.** We look forward to celebrating our new pastor with a special Fellowship Hour after the service.



Stewardship

Per-Capita Apportionment



Our 2023 per-capita apportionment to the Presbytery, Synod, and General Assembly is **\$43.50 per active member**. This represents our share of the administrative costs of the Presbytery and General Assembly of the Presbyterian Church USA. The Session is asking the congregation to consider paying the per capita for your family. In this way, you enable our church to use all pledge money for our church's operating expenses, church programs, and mission commitments. **If you are a member and do not contribute to the church financially, your per capita charge comes out of our annual budget.**

Weekly Contributions

Whether you worship in person or online, 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 to your church office.



Concert Series, May 14th, 2:00 p.m.



On Sunday, May 14th, we will welcome pianist Margarita Rovenskaya to The Rev. Dr. Thomas T. Peters Concert Series.

Born in Ukraine, Dr. Rovenskaya began studying the piano in Chicago at the age of six. She earned her Bachelor of Music in Piano Performance at Oberlin Conservatory in 2012, her Masters in Piano Studies at New York University in 2014, and her Doctorate of Musical Arts at Rutgers University in 2021. Her teachers include Efrem Briskin, Peter Takacs, Eteri Andjaparidze, and Vladimir Valjarevic.



Dr. Rovenskaya is currently based in New York City. She has served as Co-Adjunct Faculty at Rutgers University, Adjunct Piano Instructor at New York University, and is currently Head of the Piano Department at Newark School of the Arts, as well as Piano Faculty at the Spence School.

Her program will include J. S. Bach's "French Suite in D minor," Mozart's "Sonata in D major, k. 311," Lysenko's "Three Pieces After the Summer of 1902," Bortkewicz's "Morceaux op. 6," and Chopin's "Ballade No. 3."

Invite your family and friends to enjoy beautiful music in our sanctuary. As always, admission is free; a free-will offering is accepted. A short reception will follow the concert during which attendees may meet the performer.

Attendance at these concerts has fallen off in recent months. Please continue to support this series, which had always been a dream of Rev. Tom Peters.

Joint-Church Worship Committee**Sacrament of Holy Communion and Non-Perishable Food Collection**

We will celebrate the Lord's Supper in **Stirling on May 7th**. Please remember to bring a non-perishable food item or monetary donation for the "Twelve Baskets Food Pantry." While we are receiving the Lord's Supper, we also want to provide for others.

**May Lectionary Readings****May 7 – 5th Sunday of Easter**

Acts 7:55-60; Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16; I Peter 2:2-10; John 14:1-14

May 14 – 6th Sunday of Easter

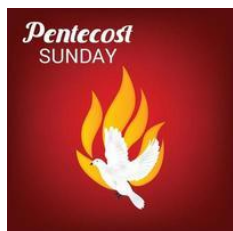
Acts 17:22-31; Psalm 66:8-20; I Peter 3:13-22; John 14:15-21

May 21 – 7th Sunday of Easter

Acts 1:6-14; Psalm 68:1-10, 32-35; Isaiah 45:1-7; I Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11; John 17:1-11

May 28 – Day of Pentecost

Acts 2:1-21; Psalm 104:24-34, 35b; I Corinthians 12:3b-13; John 20:19-23

**Pentecost, May 28th**

On May 28th, we will celebrate Pentecost Sunday, which commemorates the descent of the Holy Spirit upon the Apostles and other followers of Jesus. The church will be decorated with symbols of Pentecost, and everyone is encouraged to wear **RED** to the service in Stirling that morning. Our Fellowship Hour will include a welcome to Rev. Muntzel as well as a Pentecost celebration with special goodies.

**Our Church Missions****Mission of the Month: May**

Our Joint-Church Mission Committee has chosen the **Jersey Battered Women's Service of Morris County as the Mission of the Month for May**. This is a full-service domestic violence and abuse prevention agency. Their services include a 24-hour hotline, counseling, a safe house, services for children, vocational counseling, batterers' intervention, and legal assistance.

Their mission is the prevention of domestic violence through the protection and empowerment of the victim, rehabilitation of family members, and education of the public about domestic violence and its consequences.

If you would like to support this ministry, please place your donation in the offering plate or send it to your church office marked "MOM," or "JBWS." Thank you.

**Bridges Outreach Lunch Program**

- Janet Parziale

We continue to provide 40 bag lunches to the Bridges Outreach organization for distribution to the homeless in Newark, Irvington, and NYC. The sandwiches, drinks, and non-perishable goodies are delivered to Summit monthly in brown lunch bags. The children from the Long Hill Montessori School often decorate the lunch bags. Our **next commitment** date for preparing 40 lunches is: **Tuesday, May 23rd, 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall.** Your help in making these lunches would be greatly appreciated. If you are available to help, please speak to Janet Parziale.



Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Our local food pantry, Twelve Baskets, is housed at All Saints' in Millington. Jointly sponsored by our church, All Saints', Meyersville, and LHT CERT, the food pantry has been serving guests on the first and third Saturday mornings of each month. Volunteer help is needed to set up tables, put the items out, and then pack it up afterwards. Help is also needed for picking up food from the distribution center in Hillside. There is plenty to do, and the volunteer opportunities are well organized. **Please contact Lynn Blakeslee (FPC) or Doris Mertz (MPC) if you would like to contribute an hour or two of your time.** For more information on this program, go to: <http://www.allsaintsmillington.org/outreach.html>



If you or someone you know is in need of food or other non-grocery items, please call the food bank office at 908-647-0067 (Ext. 4) and leave a confidential message.

Please see the special article about the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry on page 7-8 of this newsletter.

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 Ronald McDonald House Charities—a nonprofit charity dedicated to supporting families with sick children in their time of need. You can give them to me any Sunday morning, leave them at the church office, or I can pick them up from you. Thank you for your ongoing support of this program!

Easter Ham Donations

Once again, our congregations came through and donated 8 hams and 1 small turkey. Tom Parziale (FPC) delivered 1 ham to a local family and the other donations to the Market Street Mission in Morristown. The following week, another ham was donated by a local resident. Doris Mertz (MPC) brought it to the Twelve Baskets Food Pantry. Your support of this program is very much appreciated.



Fundraiser: ShopRite Gift Cards



For several years, both of our churches have been selling ShopRite gift cards (known as the Voucher Program). For every \$100 sold, the church earns \$5; that is, we get 5% of all sales. Over the course of a year, that can add up to a significant addition to our church budget. Everyone buys food and other necessities. Why not use the gift cards for that purpose and help the church at the same time? The gift cards come in \$20, \$50, and \$100 denominations. They never expire; you can continue to use them until the balance is \$0.

To purchase these gift cards for yourself or as a gift, **please contact Lynn Blakeslee (FPC) or Doris Mertz (MPC).** They will be more than happy to get them to you. Thank you for helping in this special way.

Atlantic Visiting Nurse Rummage Sale (formerly VNA of Somerset Hills)

The biannual rummage sale in Far Hills is their major fundraiser. The funds they receive help provide home health and hospice care for uninsured and underinsured patients.

RUMMAGE SALE

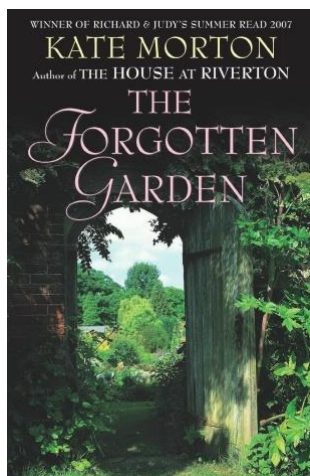
May 5 & 6
9:30am - 3:30pm

May 7
12:30 - 3:30pm

Far Hills Fairgrounds

Meyersville Book Club

The May book club selection is *The Forgotten Garden* by Kate Morton. The group will be meeting on Tuesday, May 30th at 7:30 p.m. via Zoom. Everyone is welcome to join the group; please leave a message at the Meyersville church office (908-647-0390) so you will receive the Zoom link. The book is available at local libraries.



From a Goodreads review:

A founding, an old book of dark fairy tales, a secret garden, an aristocratic family, a love denied, and a mystery, the Forgotten Garden is a captivating, atmospheric, and compulsively readable story of the past, secrets, family, and memory from the international best-selling author Kate Morton.

Cassandra is lost, alone, and grieving. Her much-loved grandmother, Nell, has just died and Cassandra, her life already shaken by a tragic accident ten years ago, feels like she has lost everything dear to her. But an unexpected and mysterious bequest from Nell turns Cassandra's life upside down and ends up challenging everything she thought she knew about herself and her family.

Inheriting a book of dark and intriguing fairytales written by Eliza Makepeace—the Victorian authoress who disappeared mysteriously in the early twentieth century—Cassandra takes her courage in both hands to follow in the footsteps of Nell on a quest to find out the truth about their history, their family, and their past; little knowing that, in the process, she will also discover a new life for herself.



Upcoming Graduations

Please send the names and specifics regarding graduates in your families to your church office so they can be recognized for their achievements in the June newsletter.

Pictures from Palm Sunday and Holy Week Observances



Palm Sunday



Maundy Thursday
Rev. William Culton serving
communion by intinction



Rev. Culton and Elder Joyce Koenig
serving each other communion



Good Friday



Easter Morning



Tatiana leading the handbell
choir in "Easter Fanfare"



Jan Somers' granddaughter, Paige, playing
"The Strife is O'er" for Easter morning



Thank you to Ed Gerecht and
the Boy Scouts of Troop #56
who set up the cross in
Stirling for Holy Week



Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

The following article appeared in the March 2023 Episcopal Diocese of Newark newsletter. It was based on an interview with the Rev. Vicki McGrath from All Saints' Episcopal Church in Millington. It shows what everyone working together can accomplish for those in need.

"Two phone calls transform church's fading food pantry into thriving community partnership"

In 2021, Twelve Baskets Food Pantry, a ministry run for six years solely by All Saints', Millington, was on the brink of closing – until two unexpected phone calls led to it becoming a thriving community partnership with local government, other houses of worship, and neighborhood volunteers.

Launched in 2015 with a name inspired by the feeding of the 5,000 ("And all ate and were filled; and they took up what was left over of the broken pieces, twelve baskets full" – Matthew 14:20), Twelve Baskets originally fed hungry neighbors through partnerships with the Long Hill Senior Center, the local Veterans' Hospital, and the food pantry at St. John's, Dover.

When the COVID-19 pandemic interrupted those partnerships, All Saints' adapted by inviting neighbors to come to their parish hall by appointment to "shop," and a small but steady stream of clients did so. However, by 2021 operating Twelve Baskets had become more difficult as several core volunteers moved out of state, and clients began to return to work, reducing the need.

Long Hill Township had recently created the position of Community Resource Officer and, in September 2021, All Saints' met with her to find out about needs she might know about locally. A few days later, the pastor of the two Presbyterian congregations in town, First Presbyterian Church in Stirling and Meyersville Presbyterian Church, called All Saints' to ask if they could help with Twelve Baskets. For many years they had collected food for another organization but were looking to make a change. Then the following day, a very active local volunteer called; she had a small army of volunteers who had been helping senior citizens with shopping and medical appointments through the worst of the pandemic and wanted to continue their outreach efforts.

"These two phone calls seemed to us to be a gift of the Holy Spirit," says the Rev. Vicki McGrath. In November 2021, All Saints' had their first brainstorming meeting with members from all three churches, the Community Resource Officer, the Long Hill School Superintendent, members of the Community Emergency Response Team (CERT), and other interested residents. One particular area of concern was that because the local elementary and middle schools do not have cafeterias, children who qualified for free or reduced-price lunches were only getting milk, since they were unable either to bring lunch from home or purchase it from outside vendors, as the other children did.

The group decided to expand the food pantry with a much wider volunteer base, including people to drive to the Community Food Bank in Hillside to pick up orders; sort and shelve in-kind donations; set-up, staff, and break down the pantry two Saturdays a month; and, work on publicity and communications.

The newly revitalized Twelve Baskets Food Pantry opened on the first Saturday of February 2022 with 25 households coming to shop. Today they serve nearly 50 families twice a month, with on-going donations from all three churches and the wider community, both in-kind and financial.

The items the pantry offers have expanded as well to include personal care items and cleaning supplies. Financial donations received from parishioners and community members enable the food pantry to purchase and distribute a dozen eggs per client household, and to offer milk, butter, cheese, and yogurt. One of the volunteers owns a local farm stand and was extremely generous in providing fresh produce throughout the 2022 growing season. Last Thanksgiving, they provided turkeys and dinner fixings to 40 households; last Christmas, they provided hams, turkeys, and holiday baking ingredients to 45 households.



Pictured here: Lynn Blakeslee and Lori Pilsbury for Twelve Baskets at the 2022 Stirling Street Fair

Meanwhile, a small group worked with Community Resources and the School Superintendent to find a solution to the elementary and middle school lunch problem: children who qualify for free or reduced-price lunches have them delivered from the cafeteria of the local high school.

Food pantry volunteers meet monthly by Zoom to review operations, set policy, and resolve any concerns that may arise. Sub-committees meet in between to work on operations, communications, and volunteer management. The pantry has a separate checking account held by All Saints' in order to receive financial donations and purchase food and any equipment that is needed.

The mayor and council of Long Hill Township support Twelve Baskets by allocating a portion of the Community

Resource Officer's (CRO) time to it, as well as drawing on the township's CERT volunteers. In turn, this enables the CRO to connect with vulnerable township residents. She is then able to bring support services from Morris County to some pantry days via a mobile social services unit called Navigating Hope.

Twelve Baskets Food Pantry has become a community partnership that benefits all involved. Hungry people in the community are being identified and fed. Three church communities have drawn together around a common mission. Township officials are more aware of the actual needs of residents that are often hidden, and they see value in what the churches have to offer.

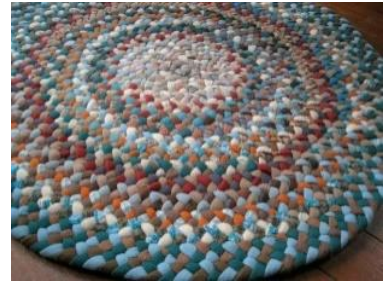
Rev. McGrath says, "None of this would have been possible if All Saints' was trying to do it on our own. We are still learning. This project has been one of those 'flying the plane while you are building it' adventures. The pantry continues to develop, as we grow in our understanding of the needs of the people in our community, and as God leads us. We are very grateful to the Holy Spirit for giving us the nudge we needed to do God's work in this way that really benefits the whole community."

Meyersville Presbyterian Church

Rug Braiding Returns

After a short hiatus while most of the group was volunteering at the Atlantic Visiting Nurse (VNA) Rummage Sale, the plan is to restart on **Tuesday, May 16th, 10:00 a.m.** Please confirm the date with Doris Mertz as it approaches.

The group is a generous bunch and they will help get you started if you have never done it before. The goal is to make a beautiful braided rug out of wool strips. The group will be meeting on Tuesdays at 10:00 am in the Meyersville Church parlor. If you would like to participate, the best material for these rugs is medium weight 100% wool fabric. This can be fabric from sewing projects you never got to, wool skirts, coats, jackets, blankets that have perhaps worn out in the middle. The church also has a good supply of wool to get you started. If you are a knitter or have some other project you are working on, you are welcome as the company is good even if you aren't braiding!



Church Website and Facebook Page

Keep up to date with events, monthly missions, photos, book club, church history and much more by visiting our church website meyersvillechurch.com and our Facebook page www.facebook.com/MeyersvillePresbyterianChurch. They are a wealth of information where you can also find links to our online services and monthly newsletters.



For special events, worship times, and office hours at Meyersville, please be sure to check out your church calendar you received with your copy of the newsletter.

First Presbyterian Church - Stirling

Fellowship Hour in May

We will be hosting these wonderful gatherings in Pollard Hall following worship services in May. If you would like to provide some snacks to share, there is always someone who would be glad to help you set up. Please consider helping with this important part of our church life by volunteering to host one yourself or with a partner or simply donating money to be used by the Deacons 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." Again, if you need help setting up, please feel free to ask any Deacon or other member of the congregation. Our Fellowship Hours are fun to do and are thoroughly appreciated by everyone.



Flowers to Beautify the Sanctuary



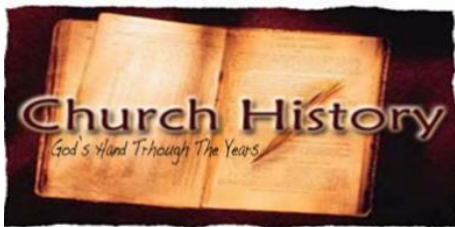
If you would like to provide flowers for a live or online worship service in May, please contact the church office or a Deacon. Flowers can be placed in honor or memory of someone. Leave the information (your name, the date you want, and who the flowers are in honor/memory of) on the answering machine, or sign up in Pollard Hall. Flowers can be ordered for \$20, and Kimberly Ridgway will pick them up and arrange them in church. The flowers can also come from your own garden. Thank you for helping beautify our sanctuaries!

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 Kimberly Ridgway know so that a card can be sent letting them know we are thinking about them.



Church Archives



In 2023, our church will celebrate its **150th** anniversary. The Worship Committee is planning a special Archive Sunday later this year to celebrate the occasion. 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 put them in the "Archives" mailbox outside the church offices. Thank you.

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.



We have lots of baby news to celebrate:

Cole William, 7 lbs. 8 oz., was born on March 31st to Dana and Gui DaSilva. Cole had a rough start, but after two weeks in the NICU at the University of VA Hospital, he's home and doing well. Proud grandparents are Jody (Riggins) and Bob Senna.

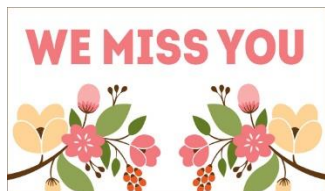
Cole is pictured here with his big brother, London.



Josie Evangeline, 6 lbs. 12 oz., was born on April 10th to Erica and Alexander Turqman. Proud grandfather is Eric Turqman, and beaming great-grandmother is Elsie Turqman.



Blair Anne, 9 lbs. 1 oz., was born on April 17th to Lindsay and Tony Mansco. Proud grandparents are Jean and John Nahonecky; Jean is the daughter of proud great-grandmother, Lynn Rosol.



We recently received greetings from two of our favorite people who have moved away and are dearly missed:
Evelyn and Israel





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!

