

The Messenger & Stirling Stuff

OCTOBER 2023 NEWSLETTER

First Presbyterian Church of Stirling & Meyersville Presbyterian Church

LONG HILL NJ PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES

WORSHIPPING TOGETHER

Pastor's Note

Do you like autumn? Some folks really enjoy the season of soup and sweaters, while others miss the sun and soaring temperatures of summer or the blooming flowers of spring. God is of course present in the new life blossoming in spring, in the lushness of the summer, and even in the deep quiet of winter. Autumn feels different. For me, fall is a liminal season. The word "liminal" comes from the Latin root, limen, which means "threshold." A liminal time is one of transition. It is neither what was before it, nor is it completely something new.

There is something vulnerable about being in transition. Author and theologian Richard Rohr describes liminal time and space as 'when we are betwixt and between'. And he observes that the very vulnerability of liminal time creates an openness which can allow room for something genuinely new to happen. Being still and observing where you have been and wondering about where you might be going— is exactly the time to open ones self to God. Personally we may find ourselves in the autumn of life. This can be difficult, such as when one is in remission from cancer: We are not sick nor are we well. Other transitional time are good, when someone gets engaged or when we prepare to retire. These times invite us to reflect upon what we value. Introspection helps us decide what to let go of from our past, what we might take with us into the future and what new things might be taking seed for the next chapter of our life. Our two congregations are in a time of transition. We are not two separate churches, we are not churches who have merged. What are we? Who are we?

In 'threshold' times, we can slow down and breathe deeply. There is no reason to rush or to feel anxious. It is a perfect time to be present, observe, and reflect. If you are in a time of transition, I hope you will take a deep breath and know that God is working in your life for good. Find comfort in the season of 'betwixt and between'. There is no hurry, now is a time to nestle in and trust God's grace.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel



Important Announcement

It is with sadness that we share the news that Jan Somers has resigned as the office manager for our two congregations as of September 30, 2023.

Jan Somers gave of her time in service to the church as a member of First Presbyterian Church of Stirling for over 40 years. She was editor of Stirling Stuff for many, many years. But she came onboard as the office manager during a challenging time – when we were in transition after our interim pastor and long-time secretary had retired. Jan was the only staff person in the office for several months, doing what was needed to be done to keep our congregations going forward during the search for a new pastor. She served as both our churches' office manager, going back and forth between church offices. Among other things, she took the initiative to merge our two newsletters and her organizational skill, efficiency and attention to detail were much appreciated. Both the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling and Meyersville Presbyterian Church Sessions wish Jan the very best now and in the future.

The office manager position will continue to be a position shared by both our congregations. Therefore both church Sessions will jointly work on hiring a new office manager and will keep the congregations informed as the hiring process moves forward in the coming weeks.



In Numbers 6, God told Moses to have Aaron and his sons bless the children of Israel with an extraordinary pronouncement of security, grace, and peace. This prayer is also known as the Benediction. It is one of the oldest poems in the Bible. The blessing, packed full of meaning, is a beautiful way to say thank you to someone you wish well:

**The Lord bless you and keep you;
The Lord make His face shine upon you,
And be gracious to you;
The Lord lift up His countenance upon you,
And give you peace.**

(Numbers 6:24-26)

WORSHIP

October Worship



Sunday morning worship services are at **10am**.

This month we will worship at **The Meyersville Presbyterian Church**.

Our online services are accessible through a link delivered by email and are also posted on social media and on both church websites.

World Communion Sunday, October 1st

The first Sunday in October is World Communion Sunday, a day which celebrates our oneness in Christ with all our siblings around the world. We will have **communion breads** from all over the world and hear **different languages** spoken in worship.

Blessing of the Animals, October 15th

World Animal Day is a celebration of animal life. October 4th was originally chosen for World Animal Day because it is the feast day of St. Francis of Assisi, a nature lover and champion of animals and the environment. Numerous churches throughout the world observe October 4th (or a Sunday close to it) with a Blessing of the Animals service. Our church service will be held outside on October 15th and you are invited to bring a beloved pet. There will be a time in our service when animals are given a blessing. Please bring animals on leashes or in carriers. You may also bring a **picture or name** of a pet you would like to lifted in blessing or remembrance. In the case of bad weather, animals are still welcomed and our service will move inside.

BRING A FRIEND! Do you know someone who does not have a spiritual home, but who loves animals? This is the perfect Sunday to invite them to church!

World Communion Sunday (originally called World Wide Communion Sunday) is a gift of the Presbyterian Church to the larger ecumenical church. The first celebration occurred at Shadyside Presbyterian Church in Pittsburgh, PA, in 1933 where Dr. Hugh Thompson Kerr served as pastor. Donald Kerr explains how the idea of World Communion Sunday spread: "It was during the Second World War that the spirit caught hold, because we were trying to hold the world together. World Wide Communion symbolized the effort to hold things together, in a spiritual sense. It emphasized that we are one in the Spirit and the Gospel of Jesus Christ."

Celebration of World Communion Sunday was adopted as a denominational practice in the Presbyterian Church (US) in 1936. Churches in other denominations were invited to celebrate with us from the beginning, but it wasn't until 1940 when the Department of Evangelism of the Federal Council of Churches (a predecessor body of the National Council of Churches) promoted extending the celebration to a number of churches around the world that the practice became widespread. Today, World Communion Sunday is celebrated around the world.

[Presbyterian Mission Agency World Communion Sunday](#) | [The Church Calendar](#) | [Presbyterian Mission Agency](#)

Worship continued...

Handbell Choir Resumes

Would you like to make a joyful noise to the Lord? Our Handbell Choir will resume in October. The choir is open to anyone who is willing to try! Practice is held on Sunday afternoons. If you are interested please speak with Tatiana Akhounzianova, Organist and Handbell Choir Director.

Sunday Lectionary Readings

Sunday, October 1 (Proper 21)

Semicontinuous

Exodus 17:1–7

Psalm 78:1–4, 12–16

Philippians 2:1–13

Matthew 21:23–32

Sunday, October 22 (Proper 24)

Semicontinuous

Exodus 33:12–23

Psalm 99

1 Thessalonians 1:1–10

Matthew 22:15–22

Sunday, October 8 (Proper 22)

Semicontinuous

Exodus 20:1–4, 7–9, 12–20

Psalm 19

Philippians 3:4b–14

Matthew 21:33–46

Sunday, October 29 (Proper 25)

Semicontinuous

Deuteronomy 34:1–12

Psalm 90:1–6, 13–17

1 Thessalonians 2:1–8

Matthew 22:34–46

Sunday, October 15 (Proper 23)

Semicontinuous

Exodus 32:1–14

Psalm 106:1–6, 19–23

Philippians 4:1–9

Matthew 22:1–14



All Saints' Sunday, Nov. 5th

We will be observing **All Saints Sunday on November 5th**. This is a day when Christians give thanks for all the good people God has placed in their lives. During this service, we will take time to remember those special people we have lost during the past year, and a candle will be lit as each name is read aloud.

Help us honor those saints who have died. Please share your name, the name of who you would like to have remembered in our worship service, and your relationship to them. Forms to share this information will be available for you to fill out and leave in offering plate during October. Or email Pastor Stefanie (StefanieMinfaith@gmail.com) with your information by Friday, October 27th.

MISSION

Mission of the Month:

Heifer International is a global nonprofit dedicated to ending hunger and poverty while caring for the Earth.



Heifer International's mission to help hungry people become self-reliant began in 1944 when church leader and midwestern farmer Dan West rallied the support of his congregation for families in need. They knew one heifer could produce milk and cheese to feed a family. Heifer has helped more than 36.7 million families since then. Heifer describes their work in this way: "We know that having a secure source of income can be truly transformational for farmers and their communities. Cows, goats, chickens, bees and seeds can provide nutritious milk, meat, eggs, food, fodder and so much more for communities living in hunger and poverty."

All gifts made will be matched by the Heifer program— doubling your impact!

To make a donation in October mark your check or envelope with **"Heifer"**.

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

Won't YOU help provide bag lunches to feed unhoused people in Newark, Irvington, and NYC? The sandwiches, drinks, and non-perishable goodies are delivered to Summit monthly in brown lunch bags. Our next commitment date for preparing lunches is Tuesday, October 24, at 9:30 a.m., in Pollard Hall. Your help would be so appreciated.

If you are available, please speak to Janet Parziale.

Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Twelve Baskets Food Pantry is a cooperative project of First Presbyterian Church of Stirling, Meyersville Presbyterian Church, All Saints' Episcopal Church, and the Long Hill Township CERT & Community Services.



The Twelve Baskets' Food Pantry will be moving out of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling by October 15, 2023. It was a great success to host this effort to feed our hungry neighbors at one of our church buildings this summer. Thank you to anyone who gave time and donations.

We welcome volunteers to help both on days the public is served by also on other occasions. Please reach out to Kristen Oleske, who coordinates volunteers for Twelve Basket's Pantry, at oleske@oleskelaw.com. If you would like to support this important ministry, you may also contact Lynn Blakeslee (FPC) or Doris Mertz (MPC)

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.

Mission continued...

Natural Disasters



PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

OUT OF CHAOS, HOPE

As Christ's followers, we are called to action. It is a way we show our love for Christ and display God's faithful love to those around us.

Presbyterian Disaster Assistance (PDA) is the emergency and refugee program of the Presbyterian Church U.S.A. The core budget, including staff and administrative costs, is funded through the One Great Hour of Sharing, and its program work is additionally funded through designated gifts. PDA works collaboratively with other partners to provide support to those impacted, nationally and internationally, by natural disaster.

Gifts can be made online at pcusa.org or by phone at (800) 872-3283. Checks can be made payable to Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.) and mailed to the Presbyterian Church (U.S.A.), P.O. Box 643700, Pittsburgh, PA 15264-3700. You can direct your support to the [U.S.A. Disasters and Emergencies fund \(DR000015\)](#) which enables a significant, initial response to major national disasters and emergencies throughout the USA. If you wish to make a donation through our churches, please mark your check memo as PDA.

Deacons Corner

Know someone who needs a card? We know the power of prayer in giving strength and encouragement when someone needs it the most. If you know of someone who needs a card, please let Kim Ridgway of the FPC deacons or Sue Hahn of the MPC deacons know so a card can be sent.

Fellowship Hour

Please consider volunteering to host a coffee hour. You can do so yourself or by partnering with a deacon, congregational life committee member or just another church friend.

Our Fellowship Hours are thoroughly appreciated by everyone.

If you wish to host Fellowship Hour for Sundays when we worship at First Presbyterian Church of Stirling please speak with deacon, Susan Gerecht (FPC) or sign up in Pollard Hall. And to host or help with Fellowship Hour when we worship at Meyersville Church, speak with Kelly Roshto (MVP).



CONGREGATIONAL CARE



150th Anniversary of the First Presbyterian Church

In 2023, First Presbyterian Church of Stirling joyfully marks its 150th anniversary.

The Worship Committee is planning events to celebrate the occasion in November, including an **Archive Sunday**.

Please continue to save news clippings, bulletins, programs, pictures, or other memorabilia regarding any member of the church family. And if possible, highlight the names of church members in the material. Items can be mailed to the Church (labeled “Archives”) or put in the “Archives” mailbox which is outside the church offices at First Presbyterian Church of Stirling.

Thanksgiving Pies

It is a tradition of the Meyersville Presbyterian Church to gather together to make and then sell delicious pies right before the Thanksgiving holiday.

This year, there will again be an opportunity to peel apples, roll pie crust and sell and buy pies for Thanksgiving. The pies will be baked on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving, with pick-up for sold pies that day. Look for more details in weekly announcements in November.

There will be an order form in next month’s Newsletter and in bulletin inserts!

You don’t have to settle on either an apple or pumpkin pie— you can order both!

Please keep this effort in mind as you plan your holiday and speak with family and friends about their Thanksgiving plans!



MEETING NOTICE

A meeting of the congregation of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling will be held on Sunday October 29, 2023, immediately following worship for the purpose of electing church Elders and Deacons.

Ed Gerecht is the elected Chair of the Nominating Committee. If you feel called to give your time and talents as either a deacon, offering care and compassion to our congregations, or as elder, offering guidance and discernment for our congregation—please speak with Ed.

OTHER NEWS

2023 Fall Rummage Sale – Far Hills Fairgrounds

Atlantic Visiting Nurse (formerly Visiting Nurse Association - VNA)
Friday, Saturday, Sunday—October 6, 7, 8
9:30am– 3:00pm

Twice a year, in spring and fall, Atlantic Visiting Nurse holds an epic rummage sale at the Far Hills Fairgrounds off routes 202 and 512 in Far Hills, New Jersey. The sale is helps provide home health and hospice care for uninsured and underinsured patients. Rummage Sale involves hundreds of volunteers and attracts thousands of bargain hunters who scour our two acres and 25 departments of bargain merchandise.

Volunteers from this effort also help with the Meyersville Rummage sale, so support this worthy cause as a way of saying thank you!

OCTOBER 10, BY WENDELL BERRY

NOW CONSTANTLY, THERE IS THE SOUND
QUIETER THAN RAIN,
OF THE LEAVES FALLING.

UNDER THEIR LOOSENING BRIGHT
GOLD, THE SYCAMORE LIMBS
BLEACH WHITER.

NOW THE ONLY FLOWERS
ARE BEEWEED AND ASTER, SPRAY
OF THEIR WHITE AND LAVENDER
OVER THE BROWN LEAVES.

A CALLING OF A CROW SOUNDS
LOUD - A LANDMARK - NOW
THAT THE LIFE OF SUMMER FALLS
SILENT, AND THE NIGHTS GROW.

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October 2023 NEWSLETTER

The Messenger & Stirling Stuff is the combined newsletter of
The Meyersville Presbyterian Church and
The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling, both in Long Hill NJ.
The deadline for November newsletter is October 24, 2023.

Submissions can be sent to Rev. Muntzel at

StefanieMinFaith@gmail.com.

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