

The Messenger & Stirling Stuff

SUMMER 2023 NEWSLETTER

First Presbyterian Church, Stirling, and Meyersville Presbyterian Church

PASTOR'S NOTE

We need each other. It's a simple truth worth remembering from time to time. It's not just that "some people" need support—we all need others. Both the poorest and richest individuals on the planet were once helpless babies. I'm especially thinking about our interdependence after our area had heavy-duty storms pass through. As I write this: roads are blocked, waters are high, power is out for so many. Thank God for emergency personnel, power line repair workers, and even for friends and family who check up on each other. I am also thinking of the 12 Baskets Food Pantry our two congregations co-sponsor. The Pantry is housed in the Stirling church building this summer. This is an example of the power of neighbor helping neighbor. Community matters.

Scripture celebrates that God made us to belong to and with others. Practically speaking the wisdom of Ecclesiastes tells us: *"Two people are better off than one, for they can help each other succeed... A person standing alone can be attacked, but two can stand back-to-back and defend. Three is even better: a triple-braided cord is not easily broken."* We don't just *need* each other for the practical realities of living. Remember the invitation: "Let us love one another, for love comes from God. (1 John 4:7) God made us in God's own image. God is relational. God desires a relationship with us. God loves us and calls us to love one another. We are just not our healthy, true selves when we are isolated and alone.

I don't have to tell anyone that it is not always easy to be in a community. People are complicated. And people bring all their peculiarities and wounds into communities. But that is part of the messy beauty of families, neighborhoods, and communities of all kinds. That we can love one another, with all our human complications, is an amazing sacred blessing! So, in a world filled with division, I celebrate the beacon of care that our two congregations are. I admire the ways you practically care for our neighbors and the ways you simply love one another, as God calls us to do. I so look forward to inviting more people to know the blessing of being in the community of Christ. May we not take for granted the gift God has given us by bringing us together in worship, service, and fellowship.

Yours in Christ,

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

(aka Pastor Stefanie)



WORSHIP

July Worship Schedule

During July, our Sunday morning worship services will be held at the **First Presbyterian Church of Stirling**. Our worship time also changes to **9:30am** starting on July 2nd.

Notices of the worship location are posted on the church doors so, if there is confusion, there is time to dash to the other church. Latecomers are welcome! If you need a ride to church, please ask a fellow church member; they are happy to help. Our online services continue each week and are accessible through a link delivered by email. The DVDs of the service are also available and may be requested through the church office.



Graze and Praise in August!

During the month of August, we will worship in Meyersville for “Graze and Praise,” beginning with a covered dish supper at 6:00 p.m., followed by worship at 7:00 p.m. The main “protein” will be provided, but the congregation is invited to share a side dish, salad, or dessert. Sign-ups will begin in July.

On September 3rd, Labor Day Weekend, we will return to 10:00 a.m. worship in Stirling.



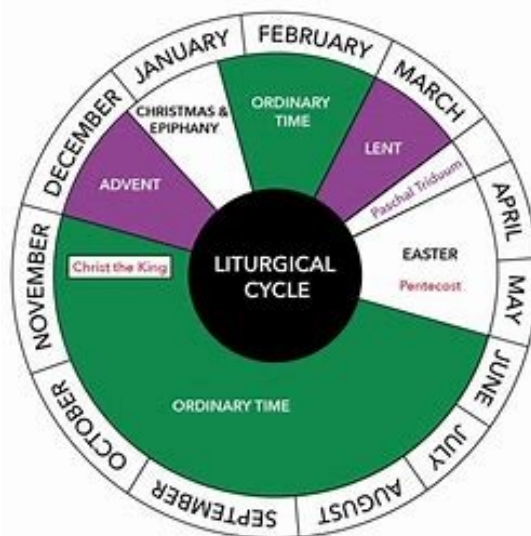
DID YOU KNOW? We are in the liturgical season known as “ordinary time”.

The festivals and seasons of the Christian year (or liturgical calendar) offer a way to order the annual life of the church. Some of the “holy days” (Pentecost, Holy Week, and Epiphany) can be traced to the earliest centuries of Christian practice; others (Trinity Sunday and Christ the King) developed later in the history of the church. Ordinary Time comprises all the days not marked by a specific season.

The name “Ordinary Time” does not mean ordinary as we use the word. It comes from the word ordinal. It is an adjective denoting a numerical position of an object—“first, second, third.” Originally, all the Sundays that weren’t in the Advent/Christmas or Lent/Easter seasons were indicated by ordinal numbers. Ordinary Time is basically “counted time.”

There is something about the word “ordinary” that makes sense. Not in the sense of boring or dull but as an “in-between” season, a time to breathe after celebratory days. Just as most of our days are lived between the big events, so the church year is filled with more ordinary days than holidays. The holy days are the mountaintops, whereas Ordinary Time is the slopes, valleys, and flatlands. All are beautiful and necessary.

Each season in the ‘liturgical year’ has been assigned a color. The season of ordinary time is appropriately green.



Worship continued...

Weekly Lectionary Readings

Proper 8 (13) - July 2, 2023

- Genesis 22:1-14 and Psalm 13
- Psalm 89:1-4, 15-18
- Romans 6:12-23
- Matthew 10:40-42

Proper 9 (14) - July 9, 2023

- Genesis 24:34-38, 42-49, 58-67 and Psalm 45:10-17 or Song of Solomon 2:8-13
- Zechariah 9:9-12 and Psalm 145:8-14
- Romans 7:15-25a
- Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30

Proper 10 (15) - July 16, 2023

- Genesis 25:19-34 and Psalm 119:105-112
- Isaiah 55:10-13 and Psalm 65:(1-8), 9-13
- Romans 8:1-11
- Matthew 13:1-9, 18-23

Proper 11 (16) - July 23, 2023

- Genesis 28:10-19a and Psalm 139:1-12, 23-24
- Isaiah 44:6-8 and Psalm 86:11-17
- Romans 8:12-25
- Matthew 13:24-30, 36-43

Proper 12 (17) - July 30, 2023

- Genesis 29:15-28 and Psalm 105:1-11, 45b
- 1 Kings 3:5-12 and Psalm 119:129-136
- Romans 8:26-39
- Matthew 13:31-33, 44-52

Proper 13 (18) - August 6, 2023

- Genesis 32:22-31, Psalm 17:1-7, 15
- Isaiah 55:1-5 and Psalm 145
- Romans 9:1-5
- Matthew 14:13-21

Proper 14 (19) - August 13, 2023

- Genesis 37:1-4, 12-28, Psalm 105
- 1 Kings 19:9-18 and Psalm 85:8-13
- Romans 10:5-15
- Matthew 14:22-33

Proper 15 (20) - August 20, 2023

- Genesis 45:1-15 and Psalm 133
- Isaiah 56:1, 6-8 and Psalm 67
- Romans 11:1-2a, 29-32
- Matthew 15: (10-20), 21-28

Proper 16 (21) - August 27, 2023

- Exodus 1:8-2:10 and Psalm 124
- Isaiah 51:1-6 and Psalm 138
- Romans 12:1-8
- Matthew 16:13-20



Liturgists Needed for Worship Services

Liturgists are needed each week for both the in-person and online worship services. Recordings are typically done late afternoon on Thursdays (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. Your readings will be emailed to you, along with confirmation of the location and time for the online recording.

Stewardship: Weekly Contributions

Whether you worship in person or online, please keep your pledges current. Expenses for maintaining the buildings and grounds, paying our staff, and keeping up with our mission support are ongoing. You can send your weekly offering/pledge to your church office.

Garden Flowers Welcome

Do you have flowers in your garden that you would like to share? We would love to have fresh flowers in the sanctuary for our in-person and online worship services. Please leave a message at your church office or email Rev. Muntzel (StefanieMinfaith@gmail.com) to let us know when you would like to share your flowers.



MISSION

Mission of the Month:

Each month the congregations of Stirling and Meyersville support a special group to receive our mission collection.

JULY: Angel Tree Christmas in July

There are so many requests from worthy charities during the Christmas season. Giving to our church Angel Tree might not be something you could do at that time of year. So why not give now? Funds collected in July will be used to purchase items which will be distributed during the holidays— to help give joy and practical support to children. We work with the Salvation Army who distributes gifts to the families with children who are part of their Plainfield program.



AUGUST: Bridges Outreach



Bridges Outreach seeks to make an impact on the lives of homeless folks living in Newark, Irvington, Summit, and NYC. Their mission is “Bridges ends homelessness through volunteer-driven outreach and individual case management focusing on health, housing and independence. We form relationships with those experiencing homelessness while meeting their most urgent needs.” They have provided lunches, socks and underwear, toiletries, soup, and clothing to over 21,000 homeless folks. In addition, they also provide case management services at their Project Connect office in Newark, see folks in Summit every Friday for their Neighbors in Need program, and for more than 1,000 children eligible for free and reduced lunch in Summit and sheltered children in Newark and Irvington, they provide new backpacks and school supplies.

Please make a donation in July and August to each Mission of the Month by marking your check, on-line gift, or envelope with “MoM” (Mission of Month).

Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

Won't YOU help provide bag lunches to the homeless in Newark, Irvington, and NYC?

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. Our next commitment date for preparing 40 lunches is: Tuesday, July 18th, 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.

*Mission continued*Twelve Baskets Food Pantry

Twelve Baskets Food Pantry is working out of the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling in July and August (and in September).

Shelf stable food, as well as meat, dairy products, eggs, and fresh produce are available for food insecure families in our area.

As of July, the summer schedule will be on the first and third Thursdays each month from 5:00 PM – 6:30 PM. The dates are as follows:

JULY 7/6, 7/20 and AUGUST 8/3, 8/17



Please contact Lynn Blakeslee (FPC) or Doris Mertz (MPC) if you would like to support this important ministry.

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

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.

Pop-Top Can Tabs

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 Jan Somers on Sunday morning, leave them at either church office, or she can pick them up from you. Thank you for your ongoing support of this program!



For I was hungry and you gave me food,
I was thirsty and you gave me drink,
a stranger and you welcomed me,
naked and you clothed me,
ill and you cared for me,
in prison and you visited me.
Matthew 25: 35-36



CONGREGATIONAL LIFE AND CARE

Coffee Hour Hosts

Hosts are needed for coffee hour. If you are able to host in July, please be in touch with Susan Gerecht (FPC). Hosts in August are not needed, but everyone is welcome to contribute to the Graze and Praise evening “meal.” Look out for Sunday sign-ups.



MEYERSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - *Congregational News*

Rummage Sale!

It's That Time Again!

The Meyersville Bazaar and Rummage Sale is August 18-19, 9 am – 4 pm.

Please start collecting items for sale. Household, kitchen, decorative items, and books are

welcome. Let your neighbors and friends know so they can start collecting. Items can be brought to the church starting in July—**no clothing please**. Call the MPC church to confirm that someone is there (908-647-0390).

Rug Braiding—Comes Back in October!



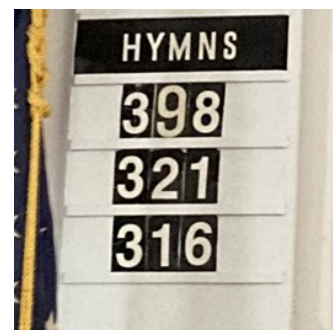
FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH, STIRLING *Congregational News*

150TH ANNIVERSARY!

In 2023, FPC-Stirling will celebrate its 150th anniversary and 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 the church family. Please date 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 outside the church offices.

THANK YOU!

Janet Parziale sanded and repainted the hymn board that hangs in the FPC sanctuary. Rev. Tom Peters built the hymn board many years ago.



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.



Chrissie & Samantha DiBartolo, daughter and granddaughter of Janet & Tom Parziale, were featured in the Spring 2023 issue of the Camp Johnsonburg & Retreat Center's newsletter. They were at the camp helping out during a workday.



Fabi & Jacob Malfatone, first married on March 3rd, held a second ceremony and reception on June 3rd when Fabi's family and friends from Austria were able to attend. Jacob is the grandson of Carolyn Malfatone. Congratulations again!



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The Messenger & Stirling Stuff is the combined **newsletter** of The Meyersville Presbyterian Church and The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. Deadline for September newsletter is August 22. Submissions can be sent to Rev. Muntzel 's email, StefanieMinFaith@gmail.com.



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