

March 2024 NEWSLETTER**The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling and Meyersville Presbyterian Church***LONG HILL NJ PRESBYTERIAN CHURCHES PARTNERING TOGETHER***NOTE FROM THE PASTOR**

Symbols can be helpful tools in our faith-life. They are visual reminders of important realities. The cross has become a universal symbol of Christianity. During Maundy Thursday and Good Friday of Holy Week, Christians everywhere will recall the reality of Jesus's death on a cross.

Crucifixion was an ancient method of execution. It was practiced in the Roman Empire and neighboring Mediterranean cultures at the time Jesus lived. A person was tied or nailed to a large wooden stake with a cross beam. The purpose of crucifixion was to provide a gruesome public way to execute criminals and dissenters so that the masses would be dissuaded from challenging laws and the authority of the empire. Dying on a cross was simply humiliating and horrific. And this is what we have as the focal point in both our church sanctuaries???

Presbyterians, like many other Protestant denominations, however generally use a **plain** cross in our worship and spiritual practices. For the power of the symbol for Protestant Christians lies in the **emptiness** of that brutal device. Christ could not be held by violence and fear of those who accused him — love overcame hate, life had victory over death!

The shape of a tool of hurt and hate has been reclaimed and reimagined as a symbol of love and life- reminding us that nothing can separate us from the love of God through Christ our Lord! As you go through the season of Lent this March, coming ever closer to the promise and hope of Easter, when you see a cross may it remind you of God's power working to defeat all that is evil and violent in this world.

I wonder what other symbols speak to your heart and soul and remind you of God's transformative love? A simple rock can remind you of the boulder which was rolled away from the empty tomb and of God's daily gift to you of life. The spring flowers we share at Easter time too are symbols of life which burst forth after the cold and darkness of winter. This Lent and Easter I pray that you will look and see in symbols, and in your life, the power of God's unstoppable goodness and love!

Yours in Christ, Rev. Stefanie Muntzel

EASTER IS MARCH 31st!

Please join us for worship on Easter -

7:00am at the Hill View Farms

10:00 am at First Presbyterian Church of Stirling



MARCH 10TH IS DAYLIGHT SAVINGS !

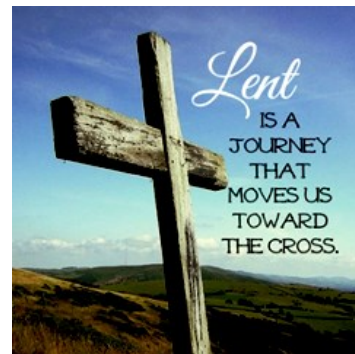
WORSHIP

March Worship

We will worship at **Meyersville Presbyterian Church** in March. Our online services are accessible through a link delivered by email and are also posted on social media and on both church websites.

Lent

March 3rd, is the 3rd Sunday in Lent. We will share the Lord's Supper.
 March 10th is the 4th Sunday in Lent.
 Newly elected elders and deacons will be ordained and installed in worship.
 March 17th is the 5th Sunday in Lent.



Holy Week



Sunday, March 24th begins Holy Week and is Palm Sunday.

Scripture text is Mark 11:1-11.

We recall Jesus's entry into the city of Jerusalem. He was met by crowds who had come to mark Passover. They people welcomed him by shouting Hosanna and waving palm branches. We too will shout Hosanna and have palm branches in worship.

Thursday, March 28th is Maundy Thursday.

Scripture text is John 13:1-17, 31b-35.

Come, join us as we recall the Last Supper with a Covered Dish Dinner on Maundy Thursday, March 28th at 6:30 pm followed by a service of Communion at the First Presbyterian Church of Stirling.

The word "Maundy" originated from the Latin word called "mandatum," which means "commandment." This day is named after Jesus's commandment to his disciples to love one another. Maundy Thursday demonstrates the importance of humility and service by remembering Jesus washing the feet of his disciples.

If you would like to attend this special dinner, please sign up on the Signup Sheet currently in Stirling's Pol-lard Hall or during March in Fellowship Hall at Meyersville. When you sign up, please note whether you can bring a salad, vegetable, main dish, or dessert. The Worship Committee will provide bread, butter, and beverages. We hope to see you there!

(Holy week continues...)



Friday, March 29th is Good Friday.

An Easter Vigil will be kept from 10 am to 4pm in the Meyersville sanctuary.

Members of both churches are welcome to sit vigil. You can sign up for ½ hour times from 10 a.m.-4 p.m. There will be devotions and information available for you to use in your prayers. You can read, pray, or sit in quiet reflection during your time. There will be no one else in the sanctuary during your time. It is a way to reflect on what the crucifixion and death of Jesus means for you and for the church.

Good Friday Tenebrae Service

The Good Friday Tenebrae Service at 6:30pm will be held at Meyersville Presbyterian Church. Tenebrae is Latin for “darkness” or “shadows”. We will recall the events which led to Jesus’s death on the cross and listen to the last words Jesus spoke. As we do we will extinguish candles. The service ends in near darkness. Please come to this meaningful experiential service.

Resurrection Sunday, March 31st

On Easter there will be a brief early morning service at 7:00 a.m. at Hillview Farm in Meyersville. Wear old comfortable shoes as the walk up to the orchard can be a little muddy. Dress for the weather.



Then, at 10:00 a.m., we will have our Easter service in the sanctuary in Stirling. We hope you will join us for this celebration as we recall the good news that He has risen. The church will be decorated with the Easter flowers/plants that people have ordered.

Please consider bringing a family member or friend to any of these services. Visitors are always welcome.



LENT 2024

Lenten Sermon Series **SERMON SERIES ON FASTING**

The 40 days before Easter are often a time when people “give something up” for Lent. No chocolate, no meat, no swearing... This is a version of Lenten fasting. And many people may choose to fast, even just from red meat, without really understanding why.

This Lent I would like to explore the benefits of this spiritual discipline in our faith life. What is the fast which God asks of us?

Bible Study: BIBLE STUDY ON PASSAGES WHERE JESUS IS SHARING A MEAL WITH OTHERS

The Gospels are full of stories of Jesus sharing meals with disciples, friends, even tax collectors and Pharisees. Whether multiplying bread to feed a whole crowd, relaxing with his inner circle, or telling curious elites stories about even greater banquets, Jesus imparts wisdom as he shares the wine, and grants forgiveness, as he distributes the fish. Join Pastor Stefanie for good conversation and reflection.

Tuesdays– 6 Session on March 5th, 12th, 19th

Time: 1:30 PM

Location: Stirling

Time: 6:00 PM

Location: Meyersville



MISSION

MISSION OF THE MONTH

The One Great Hour of Sharing

For 75 years, One Great Hour of Sharing has provided Presbyterians a way to share God's love with our neighbors in need around the world. In this season of Lent, we follow Jesus' example; walking alongside the most vulnerable to partner in repairing the harm inflicted upon them. **WE ARE THE CHURCH, TOGETHER**

Each gift to One Great Hour of Sharing helps improve the lives of the suffering and the vulnerable through three life-saving programs:

PRESBYTERIAN DISASTER ASSISTANCE

PRESBYTERIAN HUNGER PROGRAM

SELF DEVELOPMENT OF PEOPLE



Bridges Outreach Lunch Program

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.

This program has been a huge success because of the dedicated help provided by members of both churches.

The cost of providing the 40 lunches is approximately \$90 each month, \$2.25 per lunch.

We accept donations of snacks, fruit cups or applesauce, and drinks throughout the year. If you are able to help with this, please drop your donations off at FPCS and mark it "Bridges Lunches." All monetary donations will be used to purchase the items that go into the lunch bags and will help us to continue this worthy program.

Our next lunch-making date is Tuesday, March 26th in Pollard Hall. If you have an hour's time and would like to help, we would love to have you join us. Thank you.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE

Prayer Concerns

Please prayer for peace in our world and for our members, family and friends.

PRAYER REQUESTS Please let Rev. Muntzel know if someone you requested prayers for should be removed. Send names to be added to our lists to Rev. Muntzel's email,

StefanieMinfaith@gmail.com.

Rev. Muntzel is available to pray with you and visit with you!
Should you be admitted to the hospital, please contact Rev. Muntzel. Hospitals are not allowed to give even pastors information about your admission.
Rev. Muntzel: StefanieMinfaith@gmail.com, cell phone 973 722 2304.

Deacons Corner

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 deacons know.

FIRST PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH OF STIRLING - Deacon, Kimberly Ridgway

MEYERSVILLE PRESBYTERIAN CHURCH - Deacon, Carol Boyle

Meyersville Deacons meet at 9:30 am, Sunday, March 3rd

First Stirling Deacons meet at 8:45 am, Sunday March 10th.

✙✙ Deacon boards from both churches will work together to bring Easter flowers to some of our members this year, who we want to show our on-going care. ✙✙

Braided Rug Restarting

Tuesdays, 10:00am at Meyersville Presbyterian Church

Peg Arnold made beautiful braided wool rugs for years and inspired this group. There is now a small group working on rugs.

EVERYONE IS WELCOME!

The goal is to make a beautiful braided rug out of wool strips. New-comers can learn how to cut strips, braid and stitch to make beautiful, long-lasting rugs. The group has some material stockpiled with enough wool to get you started! If you would like to bring your own, the best material for these rugs is medium weight 100% wool fabric. Reach out to Gail Duffy for any questions!



Fourth Sunday Focus

—Tom Parziale

A colorful graphic for a church rummage sale. It features a church building with a steeple and a cross on top. In front of the church are various items for sale: a blue and red patterned shirt on a hanger, a green lamp, a brown box labeled 'Kitchen', a red lamp, a beach ball, a red chair, a brown box labeled 'Toys', a green pitcher, and a brown box labeled 'Dishes'. The text 'Church Rummage Sale' is prominently displayed in the center, with 'Church' in red script, 'Rummage' in large brown block letters with a hatched pattern, and 'Sale' in large brown block letters. Three balloons (red, yellow, green) are floating to the right of the text.

LINDA MURPHY, OFFICE MANAGERS OFFICE HOURS:

Tues., Wed., Fri.: 10am –1pm @ FPC

Thursday: 10am-1pm @ MPC

REV STEFANIE MUNTZEL, PASTORS OFFICE HOURS:

Tues. and Thurs. 11am-3pm @ MPC

Wed. and Fri. 11 am –3pm @ FPC

Mon.– Pastor's Day Off

Pastor's emergency cell: 973 722 2304

Installation of Church Officers

During our worship service in Meyersville on Sunday, March 10th, our Church officers will be ordained and installed in their new terms of service. May God guide them in their work of the ministry for our two churches in partnership—The First Presbyterian Church and Meyersville Presbyterian Church.

* Take note it is daylight saving! Our clocks "spring forward" !

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 April newsletter is Tuesday, March 19th.

Submissions can be sent to Rev. Muntzel.

Rev. Stefanie Muntzel, Pastor StefanieMinfaith@gmail.com

Office email for Meyersville Presbyterian Church: office@meyersvillechurch.com,

Office email for The First Presbyterian Church of Stirling. fpcchurchsecretary@gmail.com

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MARCH 2024 CALENDAR

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2
3 Worship @ MPC 9:30 am MPC Deacons 10 am Worship Service 11 am Fellowship 11:15 am Bells	4	5 Bible Study 1:30pm @FPCS 6:00 pm @MPC	6	7	8	9
10 @ MPC 8:45 am FPCS Deacons 10 am Worship Service 11 am Fellowship 11:15 am Bells	11	12 Bible Study 1:30pm @FPCS 6:00 pm @MPC	13	14	15	16
17 @MPC 10 am Worship Service 11 am Fellowship 11:15 am Bells	18	19 Bible Study 1:30pm @FPC 6:00 pm @MPC	20 FPCS Session 6:00pm	21	22	23
24 @MPC 8:45am 4th Sun. Focus 10 am Worship Service 11 am Fellowship 11:15 am Bells	25	26 Bridges Lunches 9:30am in Pollard Hall	27	28 Maundy Thurs. 6:30PM Covered Dish @FPCS 7:15PM Worship	29 Good Friday Vigil @ MPC 10am -4 6:30PM Worship	
31 7am Sunrise Service 10 am Worship Service @ FPCS						