

HILLTOPPER

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

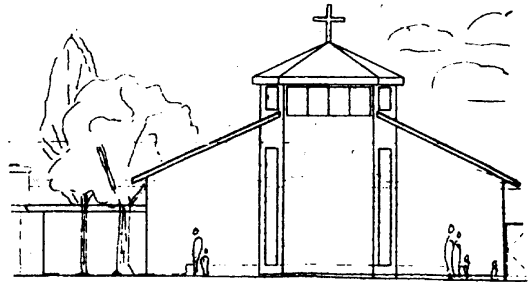
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

<http://www.parsippanyumc.com> E-Mail: jedwards14@juno.com

Sunday Worship Celebration: 10:30 a.m.

In a hostile, hurting world we reach out to share kindness and laughter. Our spirituality is based on Jesus and his love and compassion. We provide a community of support and healing where all are welcomed and valued regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender, or economic status. In a world where people feel they can love only those who are like themselves, we seek to celebrate the uniqueness of every human being.

"Making Room in the Circle"



DECEMBER, 2011



Pastor's Report to the Church Conference: Reviewing the Past Year

I would like to highlight a few new things that took place within our church's life during the past year.

In the beginning of January, as a part of our stewardship campaign, we instituted "Moments of Gratitude" in which a different member of our church family would take a couple of minutes immediately before the offering to say a few words about why there were grateful for the United Methodist Church and for this congregation in particular. A range of people young and old shared heartfelt testimonies to the grace they have experienced in this congregation, with each distinctly unique from the others.

In March we hosted the wonderful Watoto Children's choir, comprised of orphans from Uganda. Our sanctuary was standing room only for their evening concert, a deeply moving celebration of God's praise in song and dance through which everyone present felt powerfully blessed by these extraordinarily beautiful children. The thirty children and chaperones were hosted overnight in several of our families' homes. In the morning the children experienced snow for the first time in their lives. Our lives, and the lives of the dozens of people from outside our congregation who attended the concert, were changed for ever by the light that shown through these children.



There were several very special nights of fellowship enjoyed by the church family. In March a local band playing old classic rock and roll inspired children and senior citizens and all ages in between to dance an evening away together. The Youth Group sponsored two well attended movie nights. A family-friendly concert of a young classical pianist named Joe Mohan filled our sanctuary.



For the first time in my 23 years here in Parsippany we held a Vacation Bible Camp for a week, leading 24 children through a variety of fun and faith-growing activities as we learned about five heroes of faith. A highlight of this week was a visit we made to Troy Hills Nursing Center, where our children anointed the residents there with oil like Mary anointed Jesus, and presented them with drawings.

Amy Letsch began a children's bell choir that regularly performed in worship.

A blood drive was held in our church parking lot in January. Over the course of the past year, our youth raised \$2000 to build a well in an impoverished community in Kenya.



Last Spring I began a weekly men's discussion group where we seven or eight of us allow ourselves to go to a deeper level of sharing with one another than Sunday morning provides. In addition I continue to meet every Tuesday morning with a group of men at a local diner. I was blessed by being able to attend several of David Turner's sixteen small group sessions: his summer Movie Nights in members' homes, and the Cotton Patch Gospel during Lent where mutual support for the spiritual journey of the Jesus walk was warmly shared.

During Lent I sent out forty daily emails in which we read through the Gospel of Mark and I shared my personal commentary, praying for the entire congregation.

On four separate occasions in the past year I preached on a local cable program, "Mountain View" which is broadcast throughout the tri-state area.

I hiked to the top of Torne Mountain with our youth to share communion.



Our congregation hosted the Skylands District for a day of learning, focusing on worship.

Last December we produced a Christmas play I wrote entitled "This Train is Bound for Glory." In the summer I again invited whoever would like to be in another original Christmas play to step forward, and thirty three children, youth and adults responded to the invitation. In the past two

months I wrote a play that had brewing inside me that describes life in a suburban cul de sac of isolated strangers who move towards the grace of the coming of the Christ child. We have just begun to seriously rehearse for our three December performances.

In addition to the new initiatives mentioned above, the United Methodist Women continued their monthly meetings, often using members to present from their own body of knowledge and experience that was helpful, informative and inspiring. Our choir and bell choir continued to inspire with their blessed music. I gather every Wednesday morning with church members to pray for healing and blessing. Once a month I lead worship at the Troy Hills Nursing Center, and every other month members of our congregation cook dinner and take it to the people seeking refuge at Homeless Solutions in Morris Plains.



After the endless obstacles encountered over the past two years, the badly needed renovation of the kitchen has finally been completed and will shortly be put to use in the life of our church. We are grateful to our Trustees for dealing with the endless glitches of this process, as well as for negotiating the new contract with the new day care center. A very special thanks goes to Tom Smith who for nearly 20 years has served as the president of the Trustees faithfully overseeing the minutiae of concerns pertaining to our church property. We ask God's blessing as Tom looks to his approaching retirement and move with Arlene to Wyoming.

Ours is a congregation where it is easy to laugh, but it is also a place where we feel safe to cry when that is what the moment calls for. We wept when our beloved Al Booth left this world late in February after a year long battle with leukemia. Al served as head chef for our dinners, he took our Sunday School children fishing every year, he played Santa Claus in Christmas plays, he was our lay leader. We will miss him greatly and look forward to seeing him again in heaven.



It is a joy to serve among you in this extraordinary congregation of warm hearted folk.

In the kindness of Jesus,

Pastor Jeff

+ + + + +



Pastor Jeff leads worship at **Troy Hills Nursing Center** on Reynolds Road on the third Thursday of every month at 10:30 a.m. Anyone who would like to share in this ministry on is invited to join him.



On **Sunday, December 18th** our Choir will perform a **Cantata** and children and adults of our church will perform a **pageant**. The **rehearsal** for the Pageant will be held on **Saturday, December 17th at 10 a.m.** Anyone who would like to be a part of the pageant is invited to come to the rehearsal.



Our Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Service will be held at **7 p.m.** Join us as we rejoice in the light that has come to us in Christ Jesus our Lord.

We will be holding our regular worship service on **Christmas morning at 10:30 a.m.** Join us for an intimate and relaxed worship celebration of the birth of our savior.



Christmas poinsettias - This year I will be taking orders for poinsettias until Dec. 11. Order forms will be included in the bulletins for a few weeks. The poinsettias will be placed on the altar Dec. 18 and traditionally stay on the altar until after the Christmas Eve service. If you would like to make a monetary donation (instead of ordering poinsettias) that will be used to provide flowers for the Christmas season, please call me. Connie Keller 973-887-4384.



Since the Hilltopper is now electronic, we cannot send your annual Christmas Offering envelope. If you can, please consider making an additional donation this Christmas to help our church do the Lord's work. Envelopes will be available at church in your bulletins, but you do not need one to make your Christmas offering. Please bring your envelopes to church any time during the holidays and put it in the collection plate.

2012 PUMC Church "Angel" Calendar – Next month the church will be selling a 2012 Specialty Calendar. It's going to feature the smiling faces of our children and church family in action. The calendar is in production now and more information will be available soon. Watch for the ordering information. Is going to be great to be able to see the smiling faces of our loving church family as the time passes in 2012.



United Methodist
Women

Looking back...our budget/programs/pledge/nominations program was well attended and business went well and in a short time....

And next, time for some fun on....

Wednesday, December 14th – 7:00 p.m.

**PROGRAM: 2012 Officers Installation and
Christmas Party – Gift Exchange Game**

REFRESHMENTS will be served

For the Gift Game – bring a gift, approx. \$5.00, wrapped,
with YOUR NAME on the tag – the recipient will pray for
you all year

Dec. 1 – World AIDS Day

Dec. 7 – Pearl Harbor Day

Dec. 22 – First Day of Winter

Dec. 25 – Christmas Day

Dec. 31 – New Year’s Eve

Get well wishes to those of you who are ill, and

HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you celebrating this month with Ann Hawkins, Terri Ferriss and Helen Miller.

God Bless,
Doris Bradley

Prov. 17:17 “A friend loves at all times.”

++++++

Something New: **Our church calendar is now available on the church’s website.** If you are planning an event and need to book the church or a particular room, please check the calendar on the website, then call Gail Booth or Wes Sitgreaves to confirm availability and reserve your time. (Fred Coleman will also have a hard copy of the calendar here at the church that you can also check for date availability.)

++++++



Shredding Event –The Parsippany United Methodist Church will be hosting a SHREDDING EVENT on **Saturday, December 3, 2011 from 9 am – noon.**

Bring all of your papers to be shred, clean out your files! There will be a truck on site to shred your confidential items. Cost \$6.00 per box (the size of a copy paper box) \$30 for a 64 gal container. This is a fundraising event for our church, all of the proceeds from this SHREDDING EVENT will be ear-marked for our mandatory Fair Share Giving Contribution to the District. To date our church has not been able to make any contribution yet this year. So please gather your old papers together; tell your neighbors, tell your friends, TELL EVERYONE.

Let’s clean our houses of those old papers before the holiday season!!! If you have any questions, get in touch with Connie Keller.

Introducing the New Board of Trustees. Listed below are the names, phone numbers and the area of responsibility for each of them. Please feel free to contact these individuals with your concerns. Please try to go to the person responsible for the area with the problem.

Amy Gripp, Trustees President, in charge of Special Projects 973-428-9403

Bob Laux, Trustees Vice President, in charge of church building maintenance and special construction projects 973-768-6443

Fred Schlosshauer, Trustee Treasurer, in charge of insurance and the keeper of the keys 973.-887-2617

Sue DeJessa, Trustee Recording Secretary 973-334-9170

Connie Keller, Trustee liaison with Korean Church and Daycare 973-568-5404

Gail Booth, Trustee in charge of church building usage and rentals 973-402-8609 or 973-953-0417

Wes Sitgreaves, Trustee in charge of church building usage and rentals 973-335-7297

Bill Gripp, Trustee in charge of parsonages' maintenance 973-428-9403

Tom Albert, Trustee in charge of ground's maintenance 973-768-0682

+ + + + +

Healing Prayer sessions are held every Wednesday morning from 10:30 a.m. to 11:30 a.m. in the prayer chapel. All are invited to come and be a part of this time of prayer -- for yourself or for others.

+ + + + +

A day time men's discussion group with Pastor Jeff is meeting on **Fridays at 1 p.m.** at the church. We listen to short audio tapes and discuss what we hear during the 90 minute sessions. Any men available in the day time are invited to join us.

+ + + + +

Time for God

People Seeking Connection with One Another and with God
Through Fellowship and Prayer



TIME FOR GOD are "come as you are" gatherings, led by David Turner, offering an opportunity for us to open ourselves to God's presence in our midst. There will be time for quiet reflection, discussion, and the sharing of prayer concerns. Everyone is welcome to participate—or to simply sit back and listen.

Meetings will be held on **Tuesday evenings** in the chapel, **from 7:00 to 8:30, starting November 1st.**

How do I sign up? Not necessary. If you want to come, just show up.

Got questions? Please contact David by phone (973) 759-7850 or email psalter103@aol.com.

Please note that everyone will be asked to turn off all cell phones, pagers, radios, etc. during our time together.

Anyone who is interested in serving from time to time as a *liturgist* in the Sunday worship service is invited to speak to Pastor Jeff.

+ + + + +



On the second Thursday of every other month our congregation provides dinner for the families at **Homeless Solutions**. Our next scheduled dinner is **Thursday, December 8th**. If you would like to take a turn in helping with this outreach, or if you would like to donate money towards the expenses, please speak to Laurie Wilken or Connie Wallace.

+ + + + +



FLOWERS FOR THE ALTAR ON SPECIAL OCCASIONS – If you want to remember or honor a special occasion in your life by putting flowers on the altar, please get in touch with Connie Keller. Flower arrangements are currently being purchased at Shop Rite for varying costs depending on what you want. You are certainly welcome at any time to place flowers on the altar. If you want an announcement in the bulletin, please call Connie Keller or send her an email with the dedication. Contact information:

Connie's cell: 973-568-5404: home: 973-887-4384: email: connie@mhmlender.com

+ + + + +



Our church website has been revised and updated. If you haven't seen it lately, check it out at Parsippanyumc.com. At the website you will find a link to all of Pastor Jeff's sermons, as well as his occasionally bloggings.

+ + + + +

The **UMW** is selling **Food Gift Cards to benefit the General Budget** for ShopRite as an *ongoing Fund Raiser*. The church will receive 5% of all purchases (you buy \$100 of gift cards, the church gets \$5). Gift Cards are available in \$5, \$10, \$20, \$25, \$50 and \$100 denominations. Please see Betty Polen at the beginning of Coffee Hour if you would like to purchase ShopRite Gift Cards. Checks should be made payable to The United Methodist Women.

Thank you, The UMW

+ + + + +



Parsippany Food Pantry - **Wes Sitgreaves** has called to our attention the ongoing need of the Emergency Food Pantry in Parsippany in these difficult economic times. There are more and more families turning to the food pantry for help. You can bring your donations of non-perishable food items to the church any Sunday. Wes Stigreaves takes the food over as the bin gets filled up. Supermarket gift cards are also welcome - buy them from Betty Polen and raise money for the church at the same time!!! This is a very easy way to give back to the less-fortunate in our own township.



Consider becoming a part of one or more of our Musical Groups here at church:

Bell Choir – rehearses Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. If you are interested in joining us, please speak to Barb Bradley or Aimee Letsch - or just show up on Thursday and see what happens!

Choir – rehearses Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. We always have an "open robe" for anyone who loves to sing. We sing in 4-part harmony, so if you've sung in your high school chorus or any other equivalent, you have a great start! Speak to any choir member or Barb Bradley if you're interested.

Kids Bell Choir – rehearses every Sunday after worship. All children and youth in 3rd grade and up (including junior and senior high school) are welcome. Directed by Aimee Letsch (973-585-7634).



A **small gathering of men** from our church meet together every Tuesday at 7:15 a.m. at the Empire Diner with Pastor Jeff for breakfast, conversation, and a concluding prayer. All men are welcome.

+++++++



Anyone aware of a **Prayer Concern** is invited to contact Grace Agre at 539-3855 who will put the **Prayer Chain** into action. If Grace cannot be reached, please contact Pastor Jeff. If you would like to add your name to the people who receive the prayer chain, please speak to Betty Polen

+++++++



SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR DECEMBER

Dec. 4th

Isaiah 40:1-11
2 Peter 3:8-15a
Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 11th

Isaiah 61:1-4,8-11
1 Thess 5:16-24
John 1:6-8,19-28

Dec. 18th

2 Samuel 7:1-11,16
Romans 16:25-27
Luke 1:26-38

Dec. 25th

Isaiah 52:7-10
Hebrews 1:1-4
John 1:1-14

Back in October we were blessed to receive **Richard Witter Jr.** into membership as he professed in faith in Jesus Christ.

Richard was born in Sumter, South Carolina and grew up in Greensboro, North Carolina. At the age of 19 Richard was drafted into the air force, and following in the footsteps of his dad who was a pilot, Richard flew Apache helicopters out of London and Germany. Following his discharge at the age of 22, Richard worked as a North Carolina State Trooper for seven years. After moving north to New York, Richard worked briefly as a NYC policeman before finding employment with Blue Cross Blue Shield as a supervisor in accounting, and later with a bank operations center. Richard concluded his career in Parsippany working with Dialogic, retiring this past June 15th.

The important people in Richard's life are his parents, his brother, various aunts and uncles, his eleven kids, and his fiancée, Sharon Swift, who sang a beautiful Gospel solo on the day of his profession of faith.

Richard likes just about everything about our church. He finds special pleasure in the children's time during our worship service. His advice to young people would be, *"Be steadfast in your studies. Take time, however, for breaks by which you can relax your mind. Doing so, you will find yourselves able to succeed in anything you put your minds to. Feel free to speak your mind, and to ask questions, for by doing so you can overcome great obstacles."*





BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES

DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

2 nd	Fred Davis	20 th	Marissa Raier
3 rd	Ann Hawkins	24 th	Linda Winz
4 th	Fred Coleman	24 th	Deana Larsen
5 th	Andrew Edwards	25 th	Keith Sakelakos
8 th	Tom Zibura	25 th	Helen Miller
14 th	Gloria Gounaud	26 th	Jean Sakelakos
14 th	Claudia Bartek	31 st	Flora Dierbach
16 th	Jessica Colletto	31 st	Kassie Dadian
20 th	Jennifer Savarin		

+ + + + +

Cul de Sac

An original Christmas play written by Jeff Edwards

Parsippany United Methodist Church

903 South Beverwyck Road, Parsippany

“funny” “familiar” “heart-warming” “hopeful” “real”

Starring Garret Belanus, Alexandra Bond, Victoria Bond, Gail Booth, Richard Witter, Jr., Jessica Colletto, Kayla Christopherson, Arianna Urban, Karlee Urban, Alison Cogan, Cassie Cogan, Edward Cogan, Justin Cogan, Marissa Cogan, Jeff Edwards, Maidie Erikson, Terry Germann, Kelsey Gripp, Amy Gripp, Ryan Laux, Erika Gripp, Anna Gripp, Anita Laux, Brendan Laux, Briana Laux, Donna Miceli, Katie Milalko, Mary Milhalko, Betty Polen, Jolie Rajaskaran, Eric Roelofs, Garin Roelofs, Jean Sakelakos, Michael Soriano, and Linda Winz



Performances: ***Friday, December 9th @ 7:30 p.m.***
Saturday, December 10th @ 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 11th @ 6:30 p.m.

Admission is free; a free will offering is welcome

December 2011

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="7">Nov 2011</th></tr> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td></td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Nov 2011							S	M	T	W	T	F	S		1	2	3	4	5		6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30				<table border="1" style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <thead> <tr><th colspan="7">Jan 2012</th></tr> <tr><th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th></tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </tbody> </table>		Jan 2012							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					1 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:45 PM Adult Choir	2 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group	3 Shred Event 9 a.m. to noon
Nov 2011																																																																																																								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																																		
	1	2	3	4	5																																																																																																			
6	7	8	9	10	11	12																																																																																																		
13	14	15	16	17	18	19																																																																																																		
20	21	22	23	24	25	26																																																																																																		
27	28	29	30																																																																																																					
Jan 2012																																																																																																								
S	M	T	W	T	F	S																																																																																																		
1	2	3	4	5	6	7																																																																																																		
8	9	10	11	12	13	14																																																																																																		
15	16	17	18	19	20	21																																																																																																		
22	23	24	25	26	27	28																																																																																																		
29	30	31																																																																																																						
4 Worship 10:30AM	5	6 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast 7:00 PM Time for God - Discussion Group	7 10:30 AM Healing Prayer	8 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:45 PM Adult Choir	9 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group 7:30 PM Christmas Play	10 7:30 PM Christmas Play																																																																																																		
11 6:30 PM Christmas Play Worship 10:30AM	12	13 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast 7:00 PM Time for God - Discussion Group	14 10:30 AM Healing Prayer 7:00 PM UMW	15 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:45 PM Adult Choir	16 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group	17 10:00 AM Pageant Rehearsal																																																																																																		
18 Christmas Pageant Worship 10:30AM	19	20 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast 7:00 PM Time for God - Discussion Group	21 10:30 AM Healing Prayer	22	23 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group	24 7:00 PM Christmas Eve Candlelight Service																																																																																																		
25 Worship 10:30AM	26	27 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast	28 10:30 AM Healing Prayer	29	30 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group	31																																																																																																		