

# HILLTOPPER

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

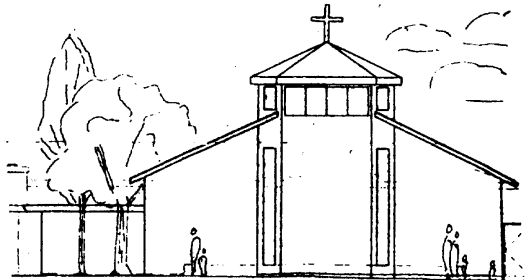
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*Sunday Worship Celebration: 10:30 a.m.*

*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"*



**4SUMMER, 2011**



**Beginning July 3rd our worship on Sunday mornings will begin at 10 a.m.**

**(continues through and includes Sept. 4<sup>th</sup>)**



*A sermon preached on Easter Sunday, April 24, 2011 based upon John 20:1 – 18 entitled, "Living the Resurrection."*

In the story we just hear from Easter morning, there are two different paths described to a trust in the resurrection. The beloved disciple comes by way of his head. He takes a look inside the empty tomb where Jesus' body had been laid, sees the cloth in which his body had been wrapped neatly set aside in one place, and the cloth that had been draped over his head in another. Mary had assumed that grave robbers have stolen Jesus' body, but from the evidence at the scene of the "crime" the beloved disciple discerns that this isn't what grave robbers would do. He concludes that a more logical explanation is that Jesus himself got up, and set the cloths neat aside.

This might not be persuasive evidence for us. But there is information that those of us who lead with our heads in life do well to grapple with when we ponder what actually happened way back at that tomb, and it is this: Religious movements were a dime a dozen in those days. Would-be messiahs came and went routinely. Jesus came from a podunk town with a handful of none too impressive followers. His ministry lasted all of two years, ending when he got himself crucified in Jerusalem. His disciples fled, filled with fear, guilt, grief and despair. The movement should have ended then and there, like so many others. The disciples should have gone back to fishing, which is what John suggests they tried to do.

Instead, the movement took off like wild fire. The disciples were transformed: they became courageous in ways they had never been before.

They were consumed with a love and joy that they hadn't possessed before. Their lives were pretty compelling evidence that something very dramatic had happened.

The disciples themselves were unanimous in saying that what had happened was that they encountered the living presence of Jesus after his death and that without this, they would have been lost.

What exactly that means, I haven't a clue. But we are left with the intellectual task of explaining what could account for such a transformation in a whole group of people? Some kind of shared conspiracy promoting the deception of the resurrection of the defeated leader just doesn't account for this change.

This doesn't prove a thing, of course, but it can bring a person who leads with their head to the point of saying it is not unreasonable to believe that something extraordinary happened back there to set this all in motion. That indeed, they truly did encounter his living presence after his death.

But that's not what I really want to talk about today.

I'd rather look at the transformation that Mary expresses in the story, the one coming at life from her heart. In Mary we see what resurrection living looks like. There are two things that I see in Mary I want to comment on: She comes to see the world through new eyes. And she is willing to be surprised, and to trust that the one who is ultimately behind the trusts has the best of intentions.

A story I read twenty-five years ago has stayed with me. William Willimon, now a Methodist bishop, describes in one of his books an actual experience he once had as a young pastor serving a church off a busy highway in Myrtle Beach. It was a balmy summer evening. He had put in a long day of work, and now he was walking across the church lawn to go to his office for several more hours of desk work. Across the way he saw a young man walking from the highway, carrying a canvas bag.

When he realized the young man was walking towards him, he thought wearily to himself, "Great. An already long day finished off now with a hitchhiker seeking money, a meal, a motel room."

With a church near such a busy highway, he was accustomed to a steady stream of people coming off the highway – each looking for a handout — each with their own tale of woe. Sometimes they could be aggressively demanding.

He decided to head him off at the front steps of the church, find out what he wanted, give it to him, and quickly send him on his way.

"Hello!" the young man called out cheerfully. "You're the pastor, right? That's your name on the sign out front."

"Yes," William answered wearily, slightly aggravated. He didn't appreciate the guy's cheeriness, his cute familiarity. He wanted the man to adopt an appropriately humble tone, make his request, and get on with it. "What can I do for you?"

"What can you do? Nothing. That is, no more than you're already doing," he replied, still smiling cheerfully.

This annoyed William. He wasn't going stand around waiting all evening waiting for the guy to take his sweet time getting around to his tale of woe. If he was looking to get ten bucks out of him, he'd better get on with it.

"Look, what do you want? I'm rather busy now and need to..."

"I don't need anything. I just wanted to drop by and say, 'Hello,' to tell you how much I appreciate what you do," he said.

William began looking at the young man more closely. What was the deal here? Was the guy psychotic, or just weird? Could he be dangerous? There was, however, nothing about the man's appearance that suggested William had reason to fear.

"Well that's good of you," William said. "But who are you? I didn't get your name."

"Jesus Christ," the young man said.

William paused. "Look, are you trying to be funny?"

"No. Does that strike you as funny?" he asked, seeming amused that William should challenge him.

"I'm very busy," William said. "I've had a long day. Get to the point. What do you want?" "I know you've had a long day," he said, moving closer, while William moved back a step towards the church. "I know. All I wanted to do was to stop by and tell you, face to face, how much I appreciate what you're doing here. I know it's not easy."

"Well, that's kind of you," William allowed, begrudgingly.

"Yes, this isn't the easiest place to serve. But the church looks good" (he surveyed the yard as he talked), "and you've done a good job."

William stood there, his mouth open, speechless.

"Say, do you read the Bible?" the man asked. William nodded.

"Good. Are there any questions you have about it? Anything you don't understand?"

"Well, yes I read it. I mean as often as I can. I suppose everybody has questions about it. I suppose that's natural." What am I doing? he thought.

Why am I saying this? Why am I talking to him?

"But do you enjoy the Bible," he asked, moving his face close to mine, squinting his eyes.

"Oh, yes, I like it, yes," William said.

"Thank you."

"Look, if you're Jesus, where are you going?" I asked.

"Akron, Ohio."

"You got to be kidding. Why Akron, Ohio?" William asked.

"Business. You know, usual stuff," he said.

The young man put his hand on William's shoulder. "I know you're busy and I don't want to keep you. I just wanted to drop by and say thanks."

"And you don't want anything? You don't need something?" William asked.

"No. No thanks. Keep up the good work. Don't be discouraged."

With that the young man turned and walked back towards the highway, waving to William once before he was out of sight. William half raised his arm to return the wave. He stood there watching as the man faded from view. (adapted from *On a Wild and Windy Mountain*, by William Willimon, 1984.)

I love this enchanting little story. So what was the deal there? Was that really Jesus? Who knows? Maybe. Even if we assume it wasn't actually Jesus – that it was some guy impersonating Jesus – well, we certainly have to admit he did a good job. And in simplest terms, isn't that what we're supposed to be doing? He graced William, changing him. Like Mary, he had been surprised, and presumably would be even more open to gracious surprises afterwards. He would see things a bit differently from there on in.

Coming over to the church this past week, I was feeling weighed down by the pastor burden of writing holy week sermons. There were two Mexican laborers, working on the church's lawn. I didn't think much of it. But then I suddenly remembered: Mary mistook Jesus for a gardener. These guys are gardeners of a sort. Could they be Jesus?

I stopped and waved to them and said, "Hi." They smiled and waved back.

Jesus often spoke about how when we encountered one of the least of his brothers and sisters in this world, we were, in fact, encountering him. He was talking about a new way of seeing in this world.

Rachel Naomi Remen is a medical doctor as well as a woman of great wisdom gleaned in part from her own struggle with serious illness. She is a counselor and author. In her wonderful book *My Grandfather's Blessings*, Rachel describes working with a gifted cancer surgeon named Josh who came to see her because of depression. Disillusioned and cynical, he was thinking about early retirement.

"I can barely make myself get out of bed most mornings," he told her. "I hear the same complaints day after day. I see the same diseases over and over again. I just don't care anymore. I need a new life."

Rachel quoted Proust as having said that the voyage of discovery lies not in seeking new vistas, but in having new eyes. She gave Josh an assignment of spending fifteen minutes at the end of each day in which he would ask three questions: *What surprised me today? What moved me or touched me today? What inspired me today?* He was jot down a few words in a journal in response. He didn't need to write a great deal. The key was simply reliving the day from a new perspective. Reluctantly Josh agreed.

He called back a couple of days later, his voice sounding irritated on the phone. "Rachel," he said, "I have done this for three days now and the answer is always the same: 'Nothing. Nothing and nothing.' I don't like to fail at things is there a trick here?"

Rachel laughed. "Perhaps you're still looking at your life in old ways... Try looking at the people around you as if you were a novelist, a journalist, or maybe a poet. Look for stories."

There was a brief silence, "Right," he said.

Rachel saw Josh regularly over the next couple of weeks, but during that time he did not mention the journal. Over time, though, his outlook seemed to improve.

After six weeks he brought a little bound book and told her what he thought was really helping him. He said he had trouble with the journal at the beginning and had wondered how he could be so busy and living such an empty life. But slowly he had begun to find some answers to the three questions. He opened the journal and began to read some of them to Rachel.

At first the most surprising thing in a day was that a cancer had grown or shrunk two or three millimeters, and the most inspiring thing was that a new or experimental drug had begun to work. But gradually he had begun to see more deeply. Eventually he saw people who had found their way through great pain and darkness by following a thread of love, people who had sacrificed parts of their bodies to affirm the value of being alive, people who had found ways to triumph over pain, suffering, and even death.

In the beginning, he said, he would only notice the things that surprised him, moved him, or inspired him several hours after they happened, in the evening in the privacy of his home. "It was like one

of those fairy tales,” he said. “Like being under a spell. I could only see my life by looking backwards over my shoulder.”

But gradually this lag time became shorter and shorter. “I was building a capacity I had never used. But I got better at it,” he told me. “Once I began to see things at the time they actually happened, a lot changed for me.”

Rachel was puzzled. “What do you mean?”

“Well,” he said. “At the beginning I couldn’t talk about it and I just wrote everything down. But I think when I began to see things differently, my attitude started to change. Maybe that showed in my tone of voice or in some other way. People seemed to pick up on it because their attitude seemed changed, too. And after a while, I just began talking to people about more than their cancer and its treatment. I began talking about what I could see.”

The first patient he spoke to in this way was a 38 year old woman with ovarian cancer who had undergone major abdominal surgery followed by a very debilitating chemotherapy. In the midst of a routine follow-up visit one morning he suddenly saw her as if for the first time, her 4 year old on her lap and her six year old leaning against her chair.

Both little girls were obviously well loved, well cared for. Aware of the profound suffering caused by her sort of chemotherapy, he was deeply moved by the depth of her commitment to mother her children, and for the first time he connected it to the strength of her will to live. After they spoke of her symptoms, he had commented on this. “You are such a great mother to your kids,” he told her. “Even after all you have been through, there is something very strong in you. I think that power could maybe heal you someday.” She smiled at him, and he realized with a shock that he had never seen her smile before.

“Thank you,” she told him warmly. “That means a lot to me.”

He was very surprised at this, but he had believed her. It had never occurred to him that people would value what he had to say beyond his expertise in cancer and its treatment.

Encouraged, he began to ask other people one or two questions had not been taught to him in medical school. “What has sustained you in dealing with this illness? or “Where do you find your strength?” and found that people with the same disease had very different things to say. Things he really wanted to hear about. In some way what they said was true for him, too, as he struggled to deal with the difficulties of his own life. “I knew cancer very well, but I did not know people before.”

People began to give him gifts — to show their appreciation to him in a way never before. He brought out a beautiful stethoscope engraved with his name on it. A patient had given it to him, it had moved him. And what do you do with that?

“I listen to hearts, Rachel. I listen to hearts.”

What would it mean for you to live the resurrection? Can you be open to God’s surprises? Can you begin to see the world through the eyes of Jesus?

Each Sunday, I began worship here by welcoming people and declaring that we believe that newcomers in our midst are Jesus in disguise. Can we see Jesus underneath the disguises? Can we recognize someone with a hidden capacity for a great love? Can we trust that we, too, are Jesus in disguise?

Jesus told Mary not to cling to him. It takes a light touch to live the resurrection. Slow down. Take in the sights and sounds – all the senses. Go forth into this world expecting surprises, and that the surprises will ultimately be very good.

In the kindness of Jesus,  
Pastor Jeff

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Check out our website, and Pastor Jeff’s posted sermons and other reflections, at [www.parsippanyumc.com](http://www.parsippanyumc.com). You’ll also find the church on Facebook. Pastor Jeff invites us to submit questions and topic suggestions for him to write reflections on, as well as to preach about. You can place suggestions in the offering plate, or give them to Pastor Jeff directly. [JEdwards14@juno.com](mailto:JEdwards14@juno.com)

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We are looking into the possibility of holding a Vacation Bible School for our children during one of the weeks of the summer. If this interests you, please speak to Mariahna Suzan or Pastor Jeff.



United Methodist Women

Looking back...Bob Keller educated us about Oil Companies, his background, and the price of gas. Very interesting!  
Ladies, all ladies, come and bring a freind....

**Wednesday, June 1<sup>st</sup> – 7:00 p.m.**  
**PROGRAM: TBD**  
REFRESHMENTS will be served  
Bring a friend!

June 14 – Flag Day  
June 19 – Father’s Day

June 21 – 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Summer  
June 29 – Homemade Cakes for Morris View

July – Ladies Night Out – Wednesday, July 6<sup>th</sup> - location to be announced  
August – Ladies Night Out – Wednesday, August 3<sup>rd</sup>- location to be announced

Get well wishes to those of you who are ill, and  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you celebrating this month.

God Bless,  
Doris Bradley

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

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Josh Romine is our youth leader, assisted by Dawn Barhite.

**Youth Group Mission Project:** Youth Group to raise green to make it clean!

**Overview of Project:** More than 1 in 6 people in the world don't have access to safe drinking water. The Parsippany United Methodist Youth Group is trying to help.

During the Fall of 2010 and the Spring of 2011, the Youth Group will lead a project to raise \$2000 to build wells in Kenya to provide clean water to an entire community. The Youth Group will be working with an organization called The Water Project whose goal is to provide clean water one village at a time to the 1 billion people around the world who don't have access to clean water.

Go to <http://thewaterproject.org/wells-for-kenya.php> to learn more about The Water Project.

All donations large and small are welcomed and greatly appreciated. If you want to contribute, contact Josh Romine ([jromines@gmail.com](mailto:jromines@gmail.com)), Dawn Barhite ([Lilgems4me@yahoo.com](mailto:Lilgems4me@yahoo.com)), or see Pastor Jeff.

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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.

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On the second Thursday of every other month our congregation provides dinner for the families at **Homeless Solutions**. Our next scheduled dinner is **Thursday, June 9th**. 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.



**SPARE CHANGE CAMPAIGN** - We will- be kicking off our Spare Change Campaign in June. Spare Change Campaign baggies will be available for everyone attending worship and will be available every Sunday in June. The small effort of saving our spare change has brought in over \$6000 in the past 6 years. It's very simple to participate, instead of letting your spare change collect in your chairs, your car, your sofas, the floor of your kids room, the kitchen counter....you get the idea.....put it into your SPARE CHANGE CAMPAIGN baggie (or a baggie of your own). We're only asking you to do it over the summer. We start collecting the bags on Labor Day and during the month of

September. A little effort goes a long way! Won't you please join in this year? If you have any questions, please see Bob or Connie Keller or call 973-887-4384

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**YOUR PLEDGE**  
This Summer

Along with your spare change this summer, please remember to keep your pledge up to date by either mailing it in, or bringing it to the church any time during the week if you won't be there on Sunday. Our church is in the midst of some financial woes, and keeping your pledge current during the summer will go a long way to help us keep our bills paid.

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**Garage Sale – June 25<sup>th</sup>** We will be holding a summer garage sale on Saturday, June 25<sup>th</sup> from 9 a.m. to 2 p.m. Wes Sitgreaves, our fearless leader in our sales, is taking donations for the sale – please see him if you have any questions. Wes could also use some help on during the sale – please talk to him if you can donate your time. Please come help, or come shop!

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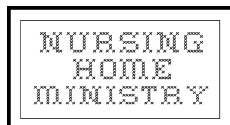
**Summer Music:** On June 19<sup>th</sup>, the choir will sing its last anthem for this season. We are blessed to have a church with many musically gifted people. This summer, in addition to having our choir members perform solos during the summer, I want to give other people the opportunity to share their musical gifts. If you would be interested in performing a musical piece (either vocal or instrumental) during the anthem spot during the summer worship services, please speak to me to schedule a Sunday. ~ Barb Bradley

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Our **United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR)** is on the scene offering assistance to those in the United States who have been affected by the severe weather of this past Spring. Working with bishops and disaster response teams in annual conferences, they are assessing damage and assisting communities in need. If you would like to contribute to this relief effort, you are invited to give a check made out to PUMC with the note "Spring Storms" in the memo.

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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.



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.



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

**Bell Choir** – rehearses Thursdays at 7:00 p.m. The Bell Choir has been shrinking over the last few years and we sure would like more people to join us! Speak to Tom Smith or Barb Bradley - 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).

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**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.

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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.

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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





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

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**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.

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We have been wonderfully blessed to have **Kelly Tooley** in our midst over the past few months. Mother's Day was Kelly's last Sunday with us, and with the help of our children Pastor Jeff presented her with one of our prayer blankets and prayed over Kelly and her mom. For the next two years Kelly will be serving through the Peace Corp in Swaziland as an HIV/AIDS educator. While Kelly is in Swaziland you can follow her blog at <http://ktooley.blogspot.com/>



**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SUMMER**

<u>June 5<sup>th</sup></u> Acts 1: 6-14 1 Peter 4:12-14; 5:6-11 John 17:1-11	<u>June 12<sup>th</sup></u> Acts 2:1-21 1 Corinth. 12:3b-13 John 7:37-39	<u>June 19<sup>th</sup></u> Genesis 1:1-2:4a 2 Corinth 13:11-13 Matthew 28:16-20	<u>June 26</u> Genesis 22:1-14 Romans 6:12-23 Matthew 10:40-42
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<u>July 3<sup>rd</sup></u> Genesis 24:34-38 Romans 7:15-25a Matthew 11:16-19,25-30	<u>July 10<sup>th</sup></u> Genesis 25:19-34 Romans 8:1-11 Matthew 13:1-9	<u>July 17</u> Genesis 28:10-19a Romans 8:12-25 Matthew 13:24-30	<u>July 24</u> Genesis 29:15-28 Romans 8:26-39 Matthew 13:31-33,44-52	<u>July 31</u> Genesis 32:22-31 Romans 9:1-5 Matthew 14:13-21
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<u>August 7</u> Genesis 37:1-4,12-28 Romans 10:5-15 Matthew 14:22-33	<u>August 14</u> Genesis 45:1-15 Romans 11:1-2a,29-32 Matthew 15:21-28	<u>August 21</u> Exodus 1:8-2:10 Romans 12:1-8 Matthew 16:13-20	<u>August 28</u> Exodus 3:1-15 Romans 12:9-21 Matthew 16:21-28
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1 <sup>st</sup>	David Armstrong	12 <sup>th</sup>	Bethany Brodock
1 <sup>st</sup>	Dawn Armstrong	12 <sup>th</sup>	Danielle Bianchi
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Alison Christian	12 <sup>th</sup>	Anna Egorova
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Eric Mortensen	13 <sup>th</sup>	Ted Schnetzer
6 <sup>th</sup>	Maidie Erickson	13 <sup>th</sup>	Charles Dierbach
7 <sup>th</sup>	Charles Faulend	14 <sup>th</sup>	Melissa Scherzer
8 <sup>th</sup>	Sarah Bush	17 <sup>th</sup>	Reagan Moreng
8 <sup>th</sup>	Maggie Letsch	21 <sup>st</sup>	Elizabeth Scherzer
10 <sup>th</sup>	Stephanie Weiss	25 <sup>th</sup>	Sangeetha Gunaseelan
10 <sup>th</sup>	Dan Gourlik	26 <sup>th</sup>	Zachary Wilken
11 <sup>th</sup>	Susan Smarth	26 <sup>th</sup>	Jack Walsh
11 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Zibura	28 <sup>th</sup>	Jolie Rajasekaran
11 <sup>th</sup>	Barbara Christofferson	29 <sup>th</sup>	Arlene Smith
12 <sup>th</sup>	Jessica Calise (Parizo)	30 <sup>th</sup>	Marcus Beckler
		30 <sup>th</sup>	Julia Beckler

**JUNE ANNIVERSARIES**

12<sup>th</sup> Karen & Robert Wilk

**JULY BIRTHDAYS**

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Sydney Petzinger	17 <sup>th</sup>	Barbara Bradley
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Zachary Petzinger	18 <sup>th</sup>	Kristina Beckler
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Ruth Faulend	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Bob Seaman
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Nathan Petzinger	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Tim Tyler
3 <sup>rd</sup>	Margot Romeo	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Kelsey Gripp
7 <sup>th</sup>	Hwa Chun	24 <sup>th</sup>	Edward Cogan
7 <sup>th</sup>	Mary Milhalko	26 <sup>th</sup>	Cassie Cogan
9 <sup>th</sup>	Marguerite Schnetzer	27 <sup>th</sup>	Betty Polen
11 <sup>th</sup>	Carol Korab	29 <sup>th</sup>	Fred Schlosshauer
11 <sup>th</sup>	Kevin Sklow	31 <sup>st</sup>	Jim Steen
14 <sup>th</sup>	Lynn Agre	31 <sup>st</sup>	Bob Keller

**JULY ANNIVERSARIES**

6<sup>th</sup> Bob & Lyn Krisa

**AUGUST BIRTHDAYS**

2 <sup>nd</sup>	Patti Wink	21 <sup>st</sup>	Tom Albert
6 <sup>th</sup>	Natasha Valcoff	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Jenna Letsch
9 <sup>th</sup>	Conrad Roelofs	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Barbara Simmons
11 <sup>th</sup>	Bobby Edwards	24 <sup>th</sup>	Tim Booth
11 <sup>th</sup>	Kevin Sklow	24 <sup>th</sup>	Sharon Christian
16 <sup>th</sup>	Juliana Schimpf	27 <sup>th</sup>	Terry Germann
16 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Anastasi	28 <sup>th</sup>	Tom Polen
16 <sup>th</sup>	Art Gibson	29 <sup>th</sup>	James Curry
18 <sup>th</sup>	Lynn Barbarite	29 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Keller
19 <sup>th</sup>	Wes Sitgreaves	30 <sup>th</sup>	Bob Mortensen

**AUUST ANNIVERSARIES**

17<sup>th</sup> Gloria & Ron Gounaud  
 26<sup>th</sup> Marian & Jim Steen  
 28<sup>th</sup> Tom & Arlene Smith

We've begun a new tradition. Each Sunday right before the offering, a different member of the church takes a turn to speak for a minute on the theme of "I am grateful to God for our church because..." Below are our recent **moments of gratitude**:

### **Jolie Rajasekaran**

Hi Everyone! I was both thrilled and honored to be asked to tell the congregation about my feelings towards the church and why I'm grateful for it." As a newcomer to Parsippany United Methodist Church, I feel I need to tell you something of my past in order to explain why I am grateful to have found this church.

My mother left when I was three. I was then raised briefly by an alcoholic grandfather before being sent to live with my biological father who was very abusive. I had only seen the ugly side of life and had no concept of a "loving family." I was in and out of foster care and then I was finally freed to live on my own when I was 15 years old. I hadn't been raised to believe in anything, much less God. My life changed for the better when I gave birth to my son, Eddie. When I held him for the first time, I was overwhelmed with love and happily so. I had feared that I would' have the ability to love him as my family seemed to lack the caring. But with Eddie I was able to break the cycle of abuse.

My church experiences in the past had varied a lot, I was an on and off again Christian. Some of the foster families took me to their churches and I was baptized over and over in different religions. But I had always felt a sense of resentment and anger towards God. Where was he while I was being beaten, treated worse than an animal or while I begged for God to just have my father love me? This, added to my worsening health over the years, caused my anger to fester and kept me from being able to worship God from the heart. The last place I went to church extremely restrictive. They felt women should be quiet in church and any questions I had were met with disapproval. I was told I was not welcome back after my divorce and my refusal to go before the church and confess my sins publicly.

It took me 10 years to decide that I would like to go to church again. I came to PUMC the first time during a rummage sale. I was approached and had a very lovely conversation with a woman named Karen. She was so welcoming and sweet to me that I decided I would stop by that Sunday and see if I felt that I could become a regular attendee. To my surprise, the congregation was so warm and welcoming and I loved the way they accepted everyone despite their differences. I started coming regularly and even asked to become a member. Before becoming a member I had a chance to talk to Pastor Jeff and tell him some about myself and some questions I had. After having heard me out, he said something that surprised me and made me think. He said, "How do you think you had the strength to make it through everything you did? What made you so strong? Perhaps God was helping you by giving you the strength you needed?" I went home and thought about that. Everyone had always told me that I turned out great considering what I had gone through. I realized then how vain I was to think I had done it alone. It was that one moment of clarity that lead me to be able to let go of my hurt and anger towards God.

So when you ask me why I am grateful to come to this church and I tell you that I have several reasons.

- \* I have found a family that gives its love to you without conditions and despite your differences. (And in many cases because of your differences!)

- \* I have a wonderful Pastor that helped me heal and love God instead of being angry at him. Pastor Jeff came to see me in the hospital a couple of times and I also think that he was instrumental in helping me patch up my relationship with my older brother with whom I'd been estranged from for nearly 25 years.

- \* I am now able to worship God through song. I have always loved to sing and with the choir I have found a place that lets me do something I love and worship while doing it.

- \* As a member of the choir I have made friends with some truly amazing people and am grateful to be a part of them. They helped me make it through while I had my knee surgery. I had never received a card or anything while in the hospital before. The card they sent me, the visits from Karen and the lovely flowers she brought, and the concern that was shown through email and phone conversations just made me feel so much a part of the congregation.

### **Garrett Belanus**

No, even though Barbara drafted me into the choir she did not draft me to sing a solo, but is very difficult to dis-robe in public, especially when this whatchamacallit (hold up collar piece) winds up backwards. And speaking of the draft... Uncle Sam's failure to send accident prone lottery number 144 on an all expense paid trip to southeast Asia was very gratifying to me. It probably saved my life.

And does the draft still exist? Fugget about it! Reading in a special service and performing in Pastor Jeff's two Christmas plays was quite enjoyable. It has been an honor and a privilege to be cast – to mention a few – with Betty, Ed, Gail, Jolie, Justin and our late brother Al Booth whom I have grown to know and admire in a short period of time.

But seriously folks... My first gratification from this church is Pastor Jeff, who at the time of my stepfather Russ's hospitalization and passing was there for my family. My mother, sister, and I felt very comfortable grieving and discussing funeral arrangements in Jeff's company. We also appreciate all the work done for the post-funeral service repast.

Pastor Jeff and many caring church members attracted me to accompany my mom to services here. Since then I became a member in September, and look forward to the next draft, which methinks may be teaching Sunday School. Thank you and God bless you all.

### **Kaitlyn and Julia Sklow**

We are thankful to God for this church and all of the Moms who help teach and guide us about how to be a good person. We love to come to church because of all the fun things to do. Our favorite things about church this year are Miss Aimee's Children's Bell Choir, hosting the Watoto Children's Choir, and the Christmas Play.

Church helps us to forgive people who are mean to us. Church teaches us to treat all people the same even though they can be very different from us.

Pastor Jeff helps us by teaching us about God and Jesus. He asks the children to help him with the service. Pastor Jeff also tells GREAT! Stories.

We want to remember our Great Grandma Dot who went to heaven on April 25<sup>th</sup>. We want to pray today for all the Moms, Grandmas, Aunts, Teachers and Ladies who help children.

### **Mariahna Suzan**

I thank our Lord and savior Jesus Christ for giving me this opportunity to say thanks to the church for not only welcoming me and my family with open arms but also making us feel like we belong here.

I can say for sure that after three years of living in the United States of America, my family finally has found a church where not only we love the word of God shared by the pastor but also enjoy the fellowship .

Being a "stranger in a strange land," you not only feel out of place but also depressed. You wish you had someone to share your problems, someone who will listen or may be someone who could help. That is what I have found in this church listening ears and definitely many helpful hands. There is always someone ready to help, like the times I am offered a ride back home when Josh is unable to pick me and Ian. The times when my family was going through tough times not knowing whether we would get the visa we needed to stay in the USA, I found encouragement and peace through the church. I cannot tell you how much that mattered to me and my family.

So I think church is not a place, a building or a denomination, it is the people -- God's children who are the church. They come together not only for the purpose of worshiping and hearing God's word but to also have a fellowship with other members of the church by breaking the bread together, praying for each other and strengthen one another in times of trials and tribulations. And it's all because of these qualities in this church that not only am I glad to be a member of this church – but hey! I got to meet so many nice, loving people under one roof and I will cherish this new relationship I made here always. Thank you.

**If you'd like to schedule a turn to share your moment of gratitude, please speak to our lay leader, Bob Keller or to Pastor Jeff.**

+ + + + +

You can hear Pastor Jeff preach and be interviewed on **Mountain Views**, a cable program aired throughout Northern New Jersey and the New York City Area two times this summer: **Saturday, July 23 and August 13 at 5:30 p.m.**

## ~ Weekday Night at the Movies ~



- WHAT:** A small gathering of friends & members of our church to watch two short, enjoyable “mini-movies.” This will be followed by a discussion, led by David Turner, about how the films relate to our faith and our everyday lives.
- WHO:** For Adults & Teens (age 14 and older)
- WHEN:** Tuesdays, Wednesdays, or Thursdays, 7-9 pm, during July and August.
- WHERE:** In the homes of members of our congregation.
- WHY:** Enjoy an evening out that offers: FUN, FELLOWSHIP, time for thoughtful conversation with FRIENDS—and a great excuse for not cleaning the garage.

### **Weekday Night at the Movies: Q & A**

- **I might like to host a Movie Night in my home. How would that work?** If you are able to welcome 3 or more guests into your home, you may sign up to be a Movie Night host. Hosts will decide how many guests they can accommodate and which night(s) they would like to schedule the event in their homes. All you would be asked to provide is a TV, DVD player, and enough space for your guests.
- **I'd like to attend a Movie Night. How does that work?** We will also have signup sheets for guests. Sign up for a night that is convenient for you. Write down the phone number of your host(s) so you can call them to ask directions—or for any other reason.
- **How many different Movie Nights will be offered during the summer?** David Turner has a selection of 12 mini-movies. This is enough for 6 Movie Nights, each one featuring 2 short films, different from all the others. Come to as many as you like!
- **How will I know when and where Movie Nights will be held—and who the hosts will be?** These and other details about the summer Movie Night schedule will be publicized as they become available.
- **As a host, would I be expected to serve refreshments?** No. But if you wish to, that's entirely up to you.
- **As a host, would I be expected to provide a separate play space and supervision for the younger children of parents who might want to bring their kids with them?** No. All hosts will decide whether or not they are able to provide a separate play space and supervision for younger children. If you wish to do so, you certainly may.
- **It sounds like fun but I have children at home. May I bring them with me?** That depends. Talk with some of the Movie Night hosts ahead of time and ask them. If they are able to accommodate your children, then bring them with you. Please keep in mind that the movies and discussion are intended for youth (age 14 and older) and adults.
- **Who do I talk to if I have questions or want to host a Movie Night?** Please speak to David Turner at church or contact him at: (973) 759-7850 or [psalter103@aol.com](mailto:psalter103@aol.com).



FATHER'S DAY BULLETIN INSERT

Father's Day is right around the corner, and the UMW will be sponsoring their annual special Father's Day insert to appear in the bulletin on June 19th. The UMW offers you the opportunity to honor or memorialize your father, grandfather, uncle, etc. by placing his name on a special bulletin insert. \$1.00 donation per name is requested. Please use the form below and give it, together with your donation, to Doris Bradley by June 12th.

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In HONOR of:

Placed by:

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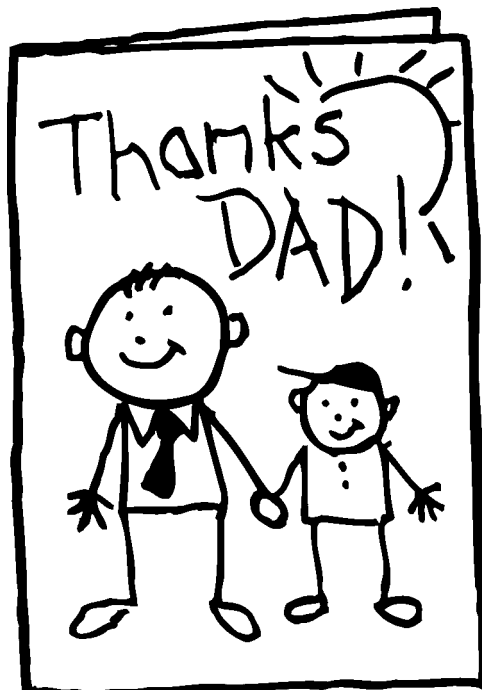
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# Play A Game

**You will need:**

- 68 index cards or construction paper cut into 68 card-sized pieces.
- Marker
- Rubber band to keep your game together
- Bible



**Prepare:**

- Write "Old Testament" on a card. Write "New Testament" on a card.
- Write each of the 39 Old Testament books on a separate card.
- Write the 27 New Testament books on cards.

**Old Testament**

**New Testament**

**To Play:**

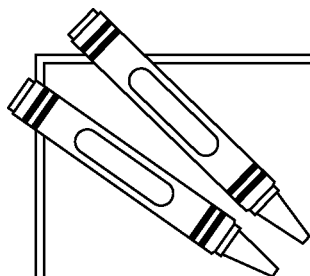
Lay the "Old" and "New" Testament cards on the table. Shuffle the other cards well. Lay them face down on the table.

Draw a card and place it by the correct card – "Old" or "New."

Continue until all cards have been drawn. Check your Bible to see if you were correct!

*For an added challenge – arrange the books in order!*

**Matthew**  
**Psalms**  
**Jonah**



# Just for KIDS

## The Old Testament

The Old Testament of the Bible contains the story of creation, history, words of prophets, God's law, songs, poems, stories of adventure and stories of love.

*Find the books of the Old Testament hidden below. Use your Bible or the list below for the names. There are 39. You will find 3 books are listed 2 times each.*

*Find them* → ← ↓ ↑ ↘ ↙

G	E	N	E	S	I	S	A	A	U	H	S	O	J	B	C
D	X	J	U	D	G	E	S	S	J	O	B	N	D	S	H
E	O	S	A	M	U	E	L	E	A	M	O	S	F	E	R
U	D	R	G	H	B	H	A	C	I	M	J	O	E	L	O
T	U	U	H	O	S	E	A	I	O	E	U	L	C	C	N
E	S	T	H	E	R	L	R	L	D	Z	L	E	C	I	I
R	P	H	J	A	E	Z	O	S	A	R	H	V	L	N	C
O	S	M	A	O	I	S	L	K	N	A	A	I	E	O	L
N	A	U	J	G	F	M	U	M	I	H	I	T	S	R	E
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M	M	A	G	O	K	A	A	R	L	N	E	C	A	C	E
Y	S	N	P	A	Q	H	I	R	E	O	H	U	S	I	Z
S	O	T	B	U	C	V	W	X	Y	J	E	S	T	S	E
S	L	A	M	E	N	T	A	T	I	O	N	S	E	A	K
Z	H	A	Z	E	P	H	A	N	I	A	H	B	S	I	I
K	I	N	G	S	B	R	E	V	O	R	P	C	D	A	E
E	K	I	N	G	S	N	O	O	B	A	D	I	A	H	L
F	J	L	H	M	A	L	A	C	H	I	I	K	P	M	G

Genesis, Exodus, Leviticus, Numbers, Deuteronomy, Joshua, Judges, Ruth, (1) Samuel, (2) Samuel, (1) Kings, (2) Kings, (1) Chronicles, (2) Chronicles, Ezra, Nehemiah, Esther, Job, Psalms, Proverbs, Ecclesiastes, Song of Solomon, Isaiah, Jeremiah, Lamentations, Ezekiel, Daniel, Hosea, Joel, Amos, Obadiah, Jonah, Micah, Nahum, Habakkuk, Zephaniah, Haggai, Zechariah, Malachi

# June 2011

## United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																										
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