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United Methodist Church of Parsippany

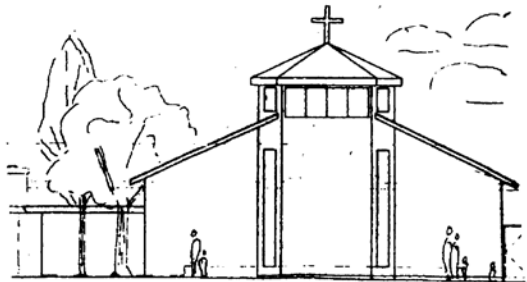
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

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"



SEPTEMBER, 2014

**Beginning September 7th our worship on Sunday mornings
will return to 10:30 a.m.**



*A sermon preached by Pastor Jeff on June 27th, 2014
entitled "Kindness."*

These words of Jesus that we just heard come at the end of an extended section that began with Jesus going about all the villages and towns, announcing that the Kingdom of God was at hand, and curing every disease and sickness. When he encounters the crowds of people, he has compassion on them, because they are harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd. He says to his disciples, *"The harvest is plentiful, but the laborers are few; therefore ask the Lord of the harvest to send out laborers into his harvest."*

Jesus sends out his twelve disciples to announce the kingdom, giving them authority over unclean spirit to cast them out, and to cure every disease and sickness. But before they leave, he gives them a sermon that covers a lot of ground.

As a preacher I know that the last words I speak in a sermon may well be the most important ones, because they very likely may be the ones people will remember.

So the words we heard are the ones Jesus chose to end his rather long-winded sermon.



He says that whoever welcomes them will in fact be welcoming Jesus, and in welcoming Jesus they are welcoming God, the one who sent Jesus.

And then his finishing line – the one he hopes people will remember, “*whoever gives even a cup of cold water to one of these little ones, truly I tell you, none of these will lose their reward.*”

Two things caught my attention in these words:

First, after so many words – words easily lost in abstractions, Jesus brings our attention down to something oh, so down-to-earth, so practical, something seemingly small in the scale of things, but nonetheless essential: a simple act of kindness meeting a very basic, bodily need. He focuses our attention on a cup of cold water given to a thirsty person.

Several years ago when we were trying to write our mission statement, we made a point of trying to keep it down-to-earth. Religious words are often misunderstood. They can carry a lot of baggage that get in the way of hearing what is being said. They can seem disconnected from where real life is lived. So in our mission statement we spoke of simple kindness: “*In a hostile, hurting world, we reach out with kindness...*”



We all know what kindness is, and deep down inside, we all long for kindness.

And yet kindness isn't always a priority item in this world.

I read about this study that interviewed 10,000 school children regarding what they thought was important to their parents. A consistent theme was that the children reported that their parents appreciated achievement more than happiness or

kindness. Three out of four children agreed with this statement: “My parents are prouder if I get good grades in my classes than if I'm a caring community member.”

The second thing that caught my attention is that although the followers of Jesus are given the authority to cast out demons – the power to heal peoples' broken lives and are generally thought of as the ones doing the “giving”, in this particular instance, the act of kindness of which Jesus is speaking is one that they will be receiving – it is kindness done unto them. They are the “little ones” of whom Jesus speaks.

Jesus sent them out into the world without money, weapons. He sent them out in a state of vulnerability, intent that they would have to rely on the kindness of strangers.

Kindness is a two way street; it flows in both directions.

If we are out somewhere, and someone pulls their car up to us, and with a confused look on their face asks us if we can help them find the place they're trying to get to, and we are able to do so, we feel good inside, right?

What is that good feeling? We might say it's a matter of being able to pat ourselves on the back and say, “look at me, I'm such a good person!” But I think it goes deeper than that.



The act of kindness gets us out of the prison cell that we often live inside where we get all wrapped up in our own self-absorbed thoughts; we suffocate under the same old preoccupations.

This is how Frederick Buechner puts it: *“The best moments any of us have as human beings are those moments when for a little while it is possible to escape the squirrel-cage of being **me** into the landscape of being **us**.”*

But the opportunity to help someone also awakens something deep inside all of us that longs to be of service – to have a higher purpose, to say, *“Here I am, Lord, send me.”* And we **need** that – we need to be put in touch with that.

Those bumper stickers that are paw prints, with the words, *“Who rescued who?”* about adopting, or “rescuing,” dogs from the pound, makes this point: Who exactly got helped here?

If we help someone find their way, on one level we were the purveyor of kindness. We offered the directions the lost person needed. But on a deeper level, in their vulnerability, their willingness to ask for directions, they helped us move towards our higher purpose.

That is the reward Jesus was talking about when he spoke of the reward that will not be lost by the person who gives the cup of cold water to a thirsty person.

A couple of stories that express something of these truths:

There is a non-denominational church with several meeting places in Northern New Jersey known as the Liquid Church. I don’t know a lot about them. I probably wouldn’t agree with everything they teach, but the impression I have is that they are intent on stripping away a lot of the stuff that gets in the way of the Gospel message that Jesus sends us out into the world to proclaim, and in doing so, they’ve been successful in reaching young adults.

Eight years ago the church attracted a lot of attention when about 150 of them went to the Gay Pride Parade that happens in the beginning of June in Asbury Park. Now Gay and Lesbian people are accustomed to having Christians show up from time to time to such events. Typically, they come to condemn them — to pass judgment on them.

So the folks from the Liquid Church went there with the singular purpose of being kind: on this hot summer day they passed out cold bottles of water.

The Gay Pride folks were cautious. *“Are you trying to change us?”* they asked.

“No,” the Liquid Church people, *“we’re trying to change ourselves. We’re trying to repent of the awful, sinful way Christians have treated you.”*



A cup of cold water spoke the Gospel.

At the Gay Pride Parade, who was giving, and who was receiving?

God-inspired kindness has a way of flowing in both directions.

A story has stayed with me since I heard it about 35 years ago in a sermon in a church I happened to attend while visiting my mother.

The story reminds me of that quote you may have heard: *Be kind; everyone you meet is fighting a hard battle.*

The story involved an older man who owned an ice cream shop on a board walk at the beach. If you weren’t paying close attention, he might look like he was doing okay, but he was, in fact dying on the inside. Sometime back his wife had left him. His

children had grown up and moved away. He felt all alone and saw no meaning to his life; no worth to himself.

The despair grew deeper until one day he reached a point of clarity. At the end of the day he would close up his shop; put everything in order, lock up the shop, and then walk out into the surf, swim until he could swim no more, and then drown in the depths of the sea.

The day passed like so many other days. Just before it was time to close up shop for the very last time, two little girls came in to order ice cream. Their parents had given them money for a special treat, and they were determined to make the right choice regarding what kind of ice cream cone they would order.

Finally they made their decision. They paid their money and the man served up their cones. Just as one of the girls was beginning to lick her cone, it fell out of her hands and tumbled to the floor. A look of horror filled her face, and tears began to roll down her cheeks.

Suddenly, the man was free of himself; free of his misery: the need of this little girl was all that he could see. Quickly he reassured the little girl that she need not be sad – he would gladly give her a brand new cone, with extra ice cream — which he promptly supplied. The girl's sadness turned to joy.

The girls turned to go, paused to whisper to one another, and then turned back. *"We think you're pretty wonderful,"* they giggled.

After the girls left, the man locked up the shop, but he didn't head to the ocean. He had himself a good, soul-cleansing cry — a cry like he hadn't experienced in a good long time.

Again, who helped who?

Frederick Buchner said *pay attention to the places that move us to tears. God is speaking there.* I noticed years ago that the thing that most often moves me to tears is unexpected kindness. The most common place tears begin to flow for me is when I'm caught up in a movie and get caught off guard by kindness and mercy. In "It's a Wonderful Life," everybody cries when the unexpected kindness redeems George Bailey from the pit of despair.

The soul is opened up, and the dead places come back to life.

The kingdom of God is revealed in such moments – little, down-to-earth gestures of kindness.

The hope of the Gospel is that one day all the tears will be wiped away, all the pain will come to an end. All things will be made new.

In the meantime, every act of kindness is a sign of that hope.



In the kindness of Jesus,
Pastor Jeff

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New members will be received in worship on **Sunday, September 14th**. If you would like to become a member of our church, please speak to Pastor Jeff.



United Methodist
Women

Looking back...some summer fun at 2 Ladies' Nights out. Good food and fellowship at the Brookside Diner and also at Annabella's where we all became Princesses! Bet you're sorry you missed it!

Now to be serious.... ALL WOMEN in the church family are invited to attend – and bring a friend – on....

WEDNESDAY, SEPTEMBER 3 – 7:00 p.m.
PROGRAM: Speaker, Madie Erickson
(of our church family)
Refreshments will be served – Join us!

Sept. 1 – Labor Day
Sept. 7 – Grandparent's Day

Sept. 11 – Patriot Day
Sept. 23 – 1st Day of Autumn

GET WELL wishes to those of you who are ill, and
HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you celebrating this month with Connie Keller and Pat Winz.

God Bless,
Doris Bradley

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

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Our **annual Church Conference** with Rev. Steve Bechtold, our district superintendent is on **Sunday, September 28th at 7 p.m.** All church members are invited to attend as we celebrate the past year, and elect officers for the church.

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Are you ready for
Sunday School?

Sunday School resumes on **Sunday, September 7th.**
We're excited about a new year together in Sunday School.

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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 **October 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.

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“Living in the Light” meets on **Wednesdays** promptly at **11 a.m.** in Pastor Jeff's office. Pastor Jeff leads a Bible Study of the scripture lesson he will preach on the following Sunday, followed by a guided meditation and prayer. Anybody who is available at that time of day is warmly invited to attend.



PUMC KIDS GOT TALENT - We're looking for all the talented kids to "show off" on **Saturday, Sept. 20!!**

We're planning to kick off the Fall season with a **Family Pot Luck dinner** at **6:00 p.m.** followed by our very own **PUMC KIDS GOT TALENT** show at **7:00 pm.** All "kids" are welcome to perform. All talents are welcome, provided you can perform them in Fellowship Hall – preferably on the stage.

We are showcasing our children for this show, but adults are also welcome to showcase their talents. However, the talent that you present for this show must be something you are not known for. For example: Barb Bradley can not sing or play the piano or organ. (because we all know that she CAN do that)

We will start sign-ups for the show and Pot Luck Dinner on September 1. Connie Keller will be coordinating the event. If you would like to help (and she will need help!) Please reach out to her in person, by email at connie@mhlender.com or text 973-568-5404 or on her home phone 973-887-4384.



Oct. 11 – Ham Dinner
Oct 25 – Happy Apple Bazaar and Garage Sale
November 22 – Barb and Darryl in Concert

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UPDATE YOUR PLEDGE - As we return to our fall schedule, we ask that you remember to bring your pledge up to date after the summer months.

SPARE CHANGE CAMPAIGN - During July and August, you have been searching in your couch, under your chairs, and in all your nook and crannies for that precious spare change. We thank you for all the coins that you have discovered and are putting into your "first class spare change campaign baggie". You can begin turning in your spare change donations on September 7. Please remember to put your name on the bag, if you want credit on your annual giving statement. You can give your bags of change to the ushers when you come into church for Sunday worship or drop it off to the church office during the week. If you have any questions, please speak to Bob Keller.

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A day time men's discussion group with Pastor Jeff that meets on Fridays at 1 p.m. We discuss short readings or videos during the 90 minute sessions. Any men available in the day time are invited to join us.

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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.



WARMTH IN THE WINTER, HOT WATER AND WARM NOSES

We are launching a capital fundraising project over the next year to **replace the 60 year old boiler in our church**. It's running on prayers and patches and we are keeping our fingers crossed that it will be a faithful provider of its services for one more Winter. It will be replaced by a cost and energy efficient model, 1/3 the size of the current boiler that is projected to reduce to our current heating bills.

In the next few months, we will be providing **RED** envelopes for any donations that you would like to make. Red is to help you remember that your "hot" donation is going to this one specific project. Any donation you make over the course of this fund raising campaign will be recorded on your giving statement along with your offering towards the general budget. We will accept any amount, big or small, a single donation, or many over the next year.

In the Fall there will be a chart posted in the narthex showing all of the *HOT* donations to date. We'll be able to watch the thermometer heat up over the Winter and hopefully get us to our **goal of \$40,000 by July 2015**.

Thank you for your consideration and help on this project!!

The PUMC Board of Trustees

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The Cogan's are couponing! We are collecting coupons to help purchase food for the Parsippany Food Pantry. We also have a book of coupons that any church member is welcome to browse and take any coupons that they could use. We plan on getting to church at 10am on Sundays to cut and organize, helpers welcome. Please save your extra Sunday coupons for us!

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The local schools collect both Box Tops and Labels for Education. Anyone interested in saving these off of your general purchases can bring them to church, and one of the families with kids will be GLAD to hand them in. The closest elementary school, Troy Hills, uses the money earned from Box Tops to purchase new books for the school library. Bring them in and give them to Alison Cogan if you have no other school to donate them to.

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CHURCH CALENDAR and SCHEDULING EVENTS

The church calendar on our website www.parsippanyumc.com has been updated. The calendar in the church office is no longer being updated.

If you want to schedule an event, you need to look at the website calendar to see if the date is available. All requests for use of the church facilities need to be approved by the trustees, Connie Keller or Amy Gripp.

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On August 22, Jim and Barbara Simmons celebrated their 50th wedding anniversary ---- congratulations to the two on them on this wonderful milestone!

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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. 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

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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 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)

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR SEPTEMBER

Sept 7

Exodus 12:1-14
Romans 13:8-14
Matthew 18:15-20

Sept 14

Exodus 14:19-31
Romans 14:1-12
Matthew 18:21-35

Sept 21

Exodus 16:2-15
Phil. 1:21-30
Matthew 20:1-16

Sept 28

Exodus 17:1-7
Phil. 2:1-13
Matthew 21:23-32



1 st	Anna Larsen	16 th	Ray Steen
1 st	Carissa Bramley	17 th	Sandy Bostwick
5 th	Emma Crowningshield	19 th	Pat Winz
6 th	Anita Laux	22 nd	Jennifer DePietro
7 th	Paul Adams	27 th	Keith Anastasi
8 th	Connie Keller	28 th	Ben Chauhan
8 th	Michael Krisa	28 th	Glen Post
9 th	Greg Elbin	29 th	Vincent Bianchi
9 th	Betsy Adams	29 th	Mariahna Suzan
12 th	Jim Steen, Jr.	30 th	Sarah Wink
12 th	Karina Barreto		

SEPTEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

15th Ann & Charles Nye
28th Susan & Nick Valcoff

“Over the Edge” was produced in August to two packed houses. Written by Pastor Jeff and directed by Kevin Seaver, the cast consisted of Lydia (*Maggie Letsch*), an eight year old girl who sees Jesus (*Darryl Sokolowski*), her stressed out mother (*Tracy Booth*), her dying grandmother (*Anita Laux*), her angry older sister Diane (*Beth Cogan*) the home health aide (*Terry Germann*), Walter Wilson, (*Anthony Miceli*) the homeless man Lydia brings home for a tea party with her Grandma, and the local preacher (*Jeff Edwards*.)



Report of Lay Member - **Greater New Jersey Annual Conference**

Unfortunately, I was unable to attend.

Annual Conference was held May 28-31, 2014 in Wildwood, NJ with over 1,500 people registering and attending.

Voting members passed:

- Agreement to explore and expand mission partnerships in Thailand and Nepal
- Resolution to take a stand against poverty in greater NJ
- Resolution to create a strategic disciple making fund to establish new congregations and faith communities

Highlights included:

- Opening worship lead by Bishop Sally Dyck of the Northern Illinois Annual Conference. The service included a Native American Celebration
- Bishop Moses Young Hun Kim of the Seoul Annual Conference preached the sermon during the Memorial Service
- Rev Olu Brown of Impact Church in Atlanta led teaching times, focusing on how to move from a membership church to a relationship church
- 8 clergy were ordained
- 30 pastors were recognized as they retired this year
- Approximately 200 people participated in mission projects with Stop Hunger Now and A Future with Hope, which:
 - Packed more than 40,000 packets of food to ship to the developing world
 - Built playhouses for 2 families with young children who lost their homes during Superstorm Sandy

The Bishop's Episcopal Address

Centering on Isaiah 6:1 "Arise, shine, for your light has come and the glory of the Lord has risen upon you"

Bishop Shoal recognized the growth of congregations with 208 congregations growing in 2013, and the achievement of 1/3 of the \$12 million goal of A Future With Hope. This has allowed our Sandy Ministry to commit to work on 79 homes this summer.

He also focused on 3 of our most pressing challenges:

- Leadership and specifically what spiritual lay leadership means
- Spiritual adaption – what is needed to adapt to a new spiritual climate where many know less about God, Jesus and the Church. He sees our first adaptive challenge as growing congregations so that worshippers look like people in the community. He noted that our hope is not in who we are but in who God is calling us to be
- Unity – citing his particular concern about the church's inability to find a Christ-like path forward on homosexuality. He called on the conference attendees to honor Jesus in all of us. While he did not ask us to endorse someone else's biblical understanding, he called on us to seek to be those who in the midst of differences, can still be acknowledged by the world as loving each other.

Conference leadership 2013 highlights:

- >40% of churches are growing in attendance
- 14,500 United Methodists from the Greater NJ conference participated in mission
- Conference budget and shared ministry will not increase for 2015
- Focus is on the local church

Respectfully submitted
Donna J Miceli

September 2014

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																															
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