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United Methodist Church of Parsippany

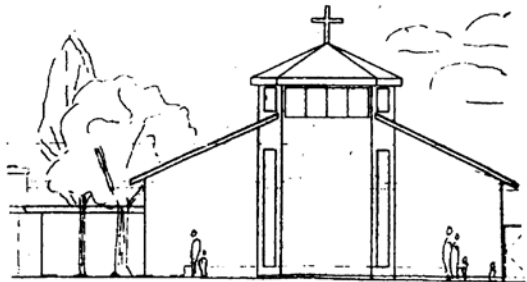
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

<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"



OCTOBER, 2014



Ham Dinner - Saturday - October 11, 4 to 7 p.m. We'll need help for this major fundraiser. Help is needed to set up, serve, work in the kitchen and clean up. Please see Barb Bradley or Connie Keller if you're interested in lending a hand. **We also need homemade CAKES to serve for dessert.**

Prices are:

Adults: \$14, Sr. Citizens: \$11, Children 6-12 - \$6

Doris Bradley has tickets you can buy, or tickets you can sell to your friends!

If you have any ideas for advertising and ways to get more people to our dinner, please speak to Barb or Connie.



HAPPY APPLE BAZAAR – Saturday, October 25th --- 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.

We're planning to have our usual jewelry, scarves and hats, bakery, and books. **The rest will be garage sale, hopefully by a few members who would like to sell some stuff!** Our garage sale event in the spring was a big success, so we're hoping we can combine the best of both worlds. Look for further info at church and next month's newsletter. Speak to Barb or Connie if you would like to participate. **We'll need homemade bakery for this event as well.**

From the
PASTOR



A sermon preached by Pastor Jeff on August 17th, 2014 based upon Matthew 15:22-28, entitled, "On Robin Williams, Mental Illness, and a Very Human Jesus."

If we are attached to a notion of Jesus that says he could do no wrong — that as God incarnate, there can be no sin in anything he does — then this is a story, because it is hard not to Jesus acts as being anything

very troubling see the way that other than downright cruel. A desperate woman comes to him asking him for help with her sick daughter. Initially Jesus gives her a cold shoulder. Then he tells her, "I don't treat your kind." And finally he calls her a dog — less than fully human. Some commentators try to get around this idea: Jesus always intended to heal the child, he just wanted to test her metal, or teach the disciple a lesson, or some nonsense like that.

But what we have here on display is the humanity of Jesus. If he was a human being, that means he got tired, physically and emotionally, and this is one very tired Jesus. You may recall the story we had two weeks ago in which Jesus hears about the beheading of his friend John the Baptist and then tries to go off by himself to grieve, to rest his body and soul. But circumstances don't allow that to happen; the crowd of 5000 needy people, like sheep without a shepherd, follow him along the shore, and he has compassion upon them, which means he opens his heart — he enters their pain.

And soon after that there was Peter's sinking in the dark water to attend to, and then the sick people of Gennesaret begging him to heal them. So everywhere he looked there were people with needs, and the work of healing took a lot out of him. The only people that weren't asking him for help — the scribes and the Pharisees — were fighting with him.

So Jesus needs to get away, and he travels by foot 30 miles to cross over into Gentile territory, an exhausting journey in itself, but he is willing to make the journey in the hope that as a Jew among Gentiles, people will leave him alone here, allow him to rest, to find some peace. But even here there is human need crying out to him for help in the form of this Gentile woman begging him to heal her daughter.

And he says no!!! Enough already!!! Leave me alone!!!

Who among us can't identify with Jesus; our limits of what we can handle are far less than his, but he has his limits, too. This is the man Jesus we're talking about — an extraordinary man for sure through whom the power and wisdom of God moved in an extraordinary fashion, but a human being nonetheless, and there are times when the exhaustion that is part of being a human being gets in the way of his fully accessing that wisdom and that power, and this is such a time.

So when the Gentile woman comes to this exhausted Jesus to ask him to help her daughter, at first he tries ignoring her, hoping she'll go away and when that doesn't work, he tries to justify his refusal to open his heart to this woman and her pain by appealing to some kind of divine ruling by God, saying "I have come only for the lost sheep of the house of Israel," which sounds good, but the problem is there is at least one precedent already of him responding to a Gentile and that was when the Roman Centurion had come to him asking him to heal his beloved servant, and the truth of the matter is that he simply feels too tired to open his heart again to another person's pain, and he's grasping at straws to justify the rejection of this woman. And who can blame him?

As an aside: There are a lot of churches in this world where you will not find a single openly gay person, and there are a lot of a Christians who don't really know in any significant

way a single gay person, which in turn makes it easy for them to condemn gay people. And maybe the thing that is behind this condemnation is something similar to what is going on here in our story: If you can convince yourself that God rejects gay people, then it provides you with a convenient out: you don't have to open your heart to them — be in relationship with them — you don't have to have compassion for them — which means letting yourself feel something of what it feels to be gay and the pain of the rejection they experience — you don't have to face the discomfort that might arise inside you from getting to know a gay person.

Now the torment that was afflicting the woman's daughter would appear to be what we today would call "mental illness." The woman speaks of a demon that had presumably taken away her daughter's pleasure, her joy, her very desire to be alive, taken away her capacity to make choices, filling her instead with a sense of horrid dread she is powerless to resist.

Mental illness is on our minds this week because of the suicide of Robin Williams. This uniquely gifted comedian and actor who had entertained and touched the hearts of all of us who we now know struggled with his own dark, demons of depression, reaching finally that place where he could not go on anymore.

Mental illness is commonly misunderstood. Though less so than in times past, mental illness still carries a stigma. When it strikes close at hand we tend to avoid talking about it, as though it were something of which to be ashamed. There were commentators who viewed Robin William's suicide as a kind of moral weakness, referring to it as an act of selfishness — that what he did showed a lack of courage. This sort of reaction is understandable, particularly in light of the fact that every suicide invariably leaves in its wake years of suffering — grief, guilt, anger, you name it — in the lives of those who are left behind.



And yet, when people suffer through a period of severe depression, oftentimes the only thing that keeps them going — holds them back from doing what they really want to do, which is to end their pain — is the knowledge that in taking their own life they will cause great pain for the people they love. This alone keeps them alive, and as such their endurance of their pain is an unheralded act of courage — a sacrificial act of great

love. But there can come a point when the pain cannot be endured any longer, the same way a dentist drilling on you without Novacane would become unendurable.

We want to believe that there always is a choice, which is another way of saying we want to believe that we really can be in control of our lives if only we try hard enough, and so it is easier to view someone who is severely depressed and suicidal as simply someone who hasn't stepped up to the plate and taken responsibility for their lives.

But there are some things in life we simply can't control.

Or perhaps we seek to comfort ourselves with the thought that people in the grips of mental illness are altogether different from ourselves, and in a certain sense this is true in that some people were born with DNA that destined them to suffer from mental illness pretty much regardless of how their lives are live out. But it's not true in that we all live on a continuum of mental health and illness, and there is that truth of "there but for the grace of



God go I” — that given enough turmoil in our lives — enough things going terribly wrong — any one of us is capable of doing things that we would prefer to think we would never be capable of doing, including take our own lives.

And maybe the desire to see Jesus as incapable of ever breaking under the stress of life comes from the hope that we could likewise be incapable of breaking if we belong to him.

But we all have our breaking points.

A remarkable thing happens in the course of the story. The woman gets through to Jesus by virtue of her humble persistence. She reconnects Jesus to the infinite size and scope of the divine love. We are told that her daughter is healed, and what exactly that means we do not know: if she was mentally ill, imprisoned by severe depression or schizophrenia, was she permanently set free from the torment of these diseases?

If so, she is surely the exception. Most people afflicted with mental illness, though helped by medications and therapies, never fully leave it behind. It remains an ongoing battle.

What of Robin Williams, who finally gave in to the darkness? Or for that matter, my maternal grandfather, who I never got to meet, who also took his life? Or Sarah’s beloved Aunt Jane? What does this story say about them?

There is a form of Christianity that preaches the necessity of giving ourselves to Jesus as Lord and savior before we die, with the idea being that if we don’t do it in the prescribed way before we take our last breath, we are condemned to hell for eternity. If this were so, then people who take their own lives would surely seem doomed.

But I don’t believe that the God revealed through the man Jesus would be so cruel.

I think the story speaks of the ultimate intention of God — that in the Kingdom of God all will be welcomed regardless of all those lines we would draw to separate us, and that all we be finally made whole.

And if that wholeness isn’t experienced on this side of death, I believe it can yet be found on the far side. So I hope to meet my grandfather and Aunt Jane in heaven; and I hope to laugh with Robin Williams there too.

This story is a kind of parable, and the place in this parable where perhaps God can best be found is in this mother who refuses to give up on her daughter. Perhaps you mothers among us can identify: she may be a shrinking violet in other areas of her life, but when her daughter’s affliction reaches a certain point she is willing to go wherever required in search of a cure for her daughter, even to go where she is distinctly unwelcome, as she did as a Gentile woman among a group of Jewish men. God is like this woman, and we are all God’s children.

Jesus came to seek and to save lost sheep, and in this interchange with this mother, he comes to realize that it is not only for the lost sheep of Israel that he has come, but for all God’s children, wherever they are found. And as in the parable he told, the good shepherd seeks the lost sheep, UNTIL he finds him — and WHEN he finds him — not IF but WHEN — he lifts that lamb up on his shoulders and invites the angels to dance with him. And so if the “finding” hasn’t happened before the death comes, then the searching will go on after death.



In the kindness of Jesus,
Pastor Jeff



United Methodist
Women

Looking back...Engineer Maidie Erikson wowed us with video and stories of tunnels she has worked on. We were so impressed, and men would also have enjoyed her program. She's returning next September – don't miss this enthusiastic speaker!

Moving on.... Come and bring a friend on....

WEDNESDAY, OCTOBER 1 – 7:00 p.m.
PROGRAM: Speaker, our own Anita Laux
“The Story of a Dancer”
Refreshments will be served – Join us!

Oct. 11 – Ham Dinner
Oct. 13 – Columbus Day (obs)
Oct. 25 – Happy Apple Bazaar

Oct. 29 – Pie Day – Morris View N.H.
Oct. 31 – Halloween

GET WELL wishes to those of you who are ill, and
HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you celebrating this month with Diane Anastasi.

God Bless,
Doris Bradley

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

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LaitY Sunday Celebration – We will be celebrating LaitY Sunday on **October 26.**

LaitY Sunday focuses on the celebration of the ministry of all lay Christians and is observed by having members of the congregation lead all parts of the worship service.

If you would like to be one of the ‘worship leaders’ for this special service, please contact Bob Keller. He can be reached by phone at 201-207-7503 or by email at keller4383@aol.com

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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.



November 22 – Barb and Darryl in Concert
November 29 - Hanging of the Greens!!!! - 10 am – 12:30 pm

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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.

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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!



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.

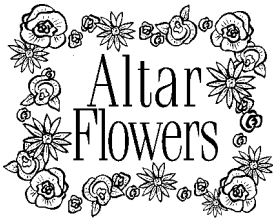
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CHURCH CALENDAR and SCHEDULING EVENTS

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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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 OCTOBER

<u>Oct. 5</u> Exodus 20:1-4,7-9 Philippians 3:4b-14 Matthew 21:33-46	<u>Oct. 12</u> Exodus 32:1-14 Philippians 4:1-9 Matthew 22:1-14	<u>Oct. 19</u> Exodus 33:12-23 1 Thess. 1:1-10 Matthew 22:15-22	<u>Oct. 26</u> Deuteronomy 34:1-12 1 Thess. 2:1-8 Matthew 22:34-46
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OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS

1 st Betsy O'Grady	12 th Abigail Dadaian
1 st Tyler Mortensen	12 th Madilynn Dadaian
3 rd Linda Routhier	14 th Jahn Schnetzer
5 th Spandan Patel	16 th Mark Chauhan
6 th Diane Anastasi	18 th Donroy Gounaud
8 th June Schnetzer	19 th Brenden Laux
9 th Jean Montecuollo	21 st Gordon Routhier
9 th Charles Nye	24 th Carrie Correale
10 th Keith Hawkins	25 th Kathy Isaacks
10 th Mae Lange	26 th Muriel Christal
11 th Bert Morris	27 th Jeanne Weintraub
12 th Nicole Dadaian	30 th Alyssa Letsch

OCTOBER ANNIVERSARIES

9 th Gordon & Linda Routhier
10 th Kathy & Henry Isaacks
17 th Rev. Jeff & Sarah Edwards
19 th Jim & Karen Steen

Our church was blessed with the gift of four new members who pledged themselves to Jesus and this church on September 14th:



Muriel N. Christal was born on October 26th, 1933 in Dublin, Ireland. She grew up in Ballymote, Ireland where she attended secondary school and then moved to Dublin to work. Muriel came to the United States on May 1st, 1958 and made her home in New Jersey, mainly in Parsippany. She worked mainly in the hospitality industry and in retail before retiring. The important people in Muriel's life are her daughter Anna, her son and daughter-in-law, Paul and Kitty, and a second son and daughter-in-law, Mark and Jennifer. She especially enjoys her grandchildren Danielle, Paul, Michael and Shannon. Muriel also enjoys visiting friends, going out to lunch and to the movies, and listening to music. She appreciates the friendliness of our church is not too "imposing." She enjoys Pastor Jeff's sermons and the music Barb plays on the piano and organ. Muriel especially likes it when Barb sings. Her advice to a young person would be, "BE YOURSELF!"



Lorraine McKinley was born in Jersey City on August 1, 1946, where she grew up as well as in Paramus and Ridgewood. She was the only child of her parents; her father compelled to leave school after 8th grade. At 21 Lorraine gave birth to a son, David and was compelled to put him up for adoption. She would not see David again until September 28, 2013. David is the most important person in Lorraine's life, and she wishes she could see him more often. Lorraine was married to Greg on May 18th, 1992 in our prayer chapel. Greg died after a long term illness on September 12, 1992. Lorraine has suffered throughout her life from, in her own words, "mental illness, but I'm not dangerous." Lorraine loves literature. Recent books she has read include "Team of Rivals" about Lincoln and his cabinet, and "The Gold Finch." She loves Shakespeare. Lorraine loves the people of our church, and the sermons. She experiences freedom here; "one feels safe." Her advice to a young person would be, "Nothing is more important than time, so use it wisely. Time is more important than money." She adds that "all creative gifts come from God."



Betsy and Sean O'Grady moved to Whippany in 2002. Their twin daughters, Colleen and Kelly were born on the leap year – February 29, 2004. Betsy was born and grew up in Commack, NY and Sean in Brooklyn, NY. Sean works in economic analysis and enjoys sports. Betsy works for an insurance company in Jersey City and enjoys gardening and photography. Both Sean and Betsy enjoy watching their daughters play soccer and softball. Sean appreciates our church's theme of, "There's always room in the circle." Similarly, Betsy values the "all-inclusive nature of our church." Life, they agree on, is about learning. Sean's birthday is December 9th and Betsy's is October 1st.





Over the summer, a revival of Pastor Jeff's play "**Over the Edge**" was produced at the church under the direction of **Kevin Seaver** (seen right). Two full houses enthusiastically received the production starring Maggie Letsch, Tracy Booth, Darryl Sokolowski, Terry Germann, Beth Cogan, Anthony Miceli, Anita Laux and Pastor Jeff. The play is scheduled to be performed next month in a theater in Denver.



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We are collecting shoe boxes (regular size, not large like for sneakers) and items once again this year for Operation Christmas Child.

These boxes are distributed to needy children throughout the world through the organization Samaritan's Purse.

We need your shoe boxes and any items from the list below to be brought to church **by November 9th**. The boxes will be assembled after church on that Sunday. You can stay

and help with that project if you would like. If you have any other questions, speak to Tracy Booth.

It costs \$7 to ship each box, so if you can, please donate \$7 with your empty box.

Remember the size of the box when you purchase your items.

Toys – yo-yos, jump ropes, dolls, toy cars, stuffed animals, kazoos, harmonicas, balls, etc.

School Supplies – pens, pencils, crayons, markers, notebooks, paper, solar calculator, coloring and picture books, etc.

Non-Liquid Hygiene Items – toothbrushes, bar soap, combs, washcloths, etc.

Accessories – t-shirts, socks, hats, sunglasses, hairclips, jewelry, watches, flashlights

Do Not Include – Used or damaged items; war-related items such as toy guns, knives or military figures; chocolate or food; out of date candy; liquids or lotions; meds or vitamins; breakable items; aerosol cans.

October 2014

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																										
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<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">19</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">20</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">21</p> <p>7:15 AM Men's Breakfast</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">22</p> <p>11:00 AM Living in the Light</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">23</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">24</p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">25</p> <p>Happy Apple - Garage Sale 9 am - 2 pm</p>																																																																																										
<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">26</p> <p>10:30 AM Worship</p> <p>Laity Sunday</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">27</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">28</p> <p>7:15 AM Men's Breakfast</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">29</p> <p>11:00 AM Living in the Light</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">30</p> <p>7:00 PM Bell Choir</p> <p>7:45 PM Adult Choir</p>	<p style="color: red; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">31</p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p> <div style="text-align: center;">  </div>																																																																																											