

# HILLTOPPER

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

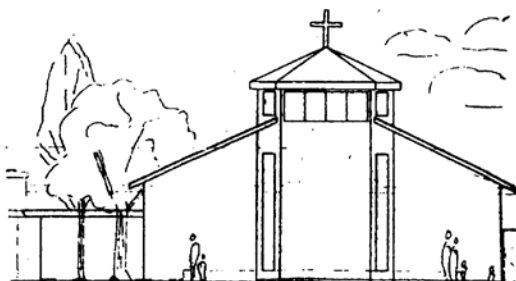
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

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

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

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

*"Making Room in the Circle"*

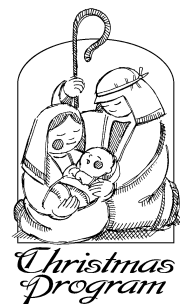


**DECEMBER, 2014**



**Hanging of the Greens – Saturday, Nov. 29 at 10:00 am**

**The Great Christmas Pageant**, written by Pastor Jeff and the Confirmation Adventure Students, will be performed in the fellowship hall under the lights on **Saturday, December 13<sup>th</sup> at 7:30**. Any children who would like to be a part of the angel chorus are invited to speak to Pastor Jeff. There is always room in the circle!



**Adopt A Family** – Amy Gripp has been given a list of families from Social Services for whom we are invited to provide gifts for Christmas. If you would like to be a part of this outreach to those in need in our own local community, please speak to Amy.

Sunday morning, **December 21<sup>st</sup>**, the **choir** will be performing their cantata/pageant during worship.

There will be a **Christmas Eve** Candlelight Communion Service – time to be announced. Join us as we celebrate the birth of our savior!





This year Connie Keller will be taking orders for poinsettias **until Dec. 14**. Order forms will be included in the bulletins for the first 3 Sundays of Advent. The poinsettias are placed on the altar Dec. 21 and traditionally stay on the altar until after the Christmas Eve service. If you would like to make a monetary donation (instead of ordering poinsettias) that will be used to provide flowers for the Christmas season, please call me. Connie Keller 973-887-4384.

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*A portion of Pastor Jeff's sermon delivered on November 16, 2014 and based upon Matthew 25:14 - 30.*

Thirty years ago in one of my first churches I was leading a youth group, and the youth were going to walk in a CROP Walk to raise money for the hungry of the world. I was stopping by the homes of the youth to drop off the papers on which they were to get pledges. At this one home the father let me know he didn't approve of giving money to the hungry. "I work for a living," he said irritably. The thing that stood out to me was that this man was not a happy man, nor was his home a happy home, and I believe there was a connection between this unhappiness and the fact that the man felt no responsibility to anybody except himself and his family.



There is a law of love with which God has knit the human race together, and when we defy this law true happiness and joy will evade us. The happiest people I know are people for whom giving love away has become second nature. God designed us for love. Scientists are discovering this in their study of human beings: people are healthier when the network of who they love and are loved by is larger. There are changes in body chemistry that ward off disease when we are actively involved in loving others, or simply having loving thoughts.

So this is my "stewardship" sermon. Next week you'll be getting your pledge card, and two weeks later you will be asked to bring the pledge card to the altar.

Stewardship isn't just about money. It's about the gift of our whole life. Our very life itself is a gift of love from God. What will we do with this love? Will we hold it tightly like the third servant? Or will we give it away like the first two servants, and in doing so reap a mighty harvest of love?

But part of love is generosity in what we have been given, and that includes our money.

Often when people talk about why people don't give more money to the church, the reasoning goes something like this: People don't appreciate how important the

church truly is. Or, people don't appreciate all the expenses that a church has. In order to get people to give more to the church, they need to be reminded how important church is, or of all the expenses the church has.

But I think we do know how important the church is. Why else would we keep coming back here, Sunday after Sunday, year after year, when we all have a whole host of other things we could be doing with our Sunday mornings and whatever other time we give to the church? We could be using this time to sleep in, or simply relax and do something fun, or we could be using this time to get something done on the endless "to do" lists we all have.



We come because we know how good and important it is to be here.

We really do value the way worship reminds us of what matters and what doesn't and the opportunity it provides to redirect our attention back to God.

We know that something happens here when the choir sings or the bells ring that transports us momentarily into the heavenly realm giving us rest for our souls. We know that something happens when we're in the presence of the little children in their innocence and playfulness, showing us the way to the kingdom.

We know we are blessed by our contact with those who have lived long lives and are coming down the home stretch.

We know how important it is to have a spiritual community to share our joys and comfort us in our struggles; to have faith for us when our faith falters.

We know how important it is to have a community where we are truly known and accepted for who we are with all our imperfections, a place where there truly is room in the circle.

We know all this. And though it is not something we necessarily like thinking about, we also know that there are lots of bills to be paid to make it possible for this church to be here.

We know these things.

So what is it that holds us back from giving more? It's expressed in our parable. What held the third servant back from investing his talent in the world? He tells us. He was afraid.



Fear, plain and simple. Unless you are uncommonly rich, we all have a lot of fear tied up with our money. What if I lose my job? What if I get sick, or a loved one gets sick and can't work? Will I have the money I need in the future to pay my bills -- to keep me and my loved ones safe?

We're not sure we will. We're afraid, and that's what keeps us from giving more. I know that's how it is with me.

We think to ourselves that we'll be truly generous when our ship comes in, when we win the lottery. (But we're all good Methodists and we don't play the lottery!)

But we can't afford to be generous now. It's too risky.

What does the parable say about all this? It says that if we let our fear be the determining factor in our lives -- if it holds us back from being generous -- we will miss out on something very important. We will miss out on the kingdom of God.

There is this theme that I've been noticing in the Gospels. Jesus repeatedly has the disciples take risks in part because he wants them to find out that God is indeed trustworthy. He sends them out in a boat at night when a storm was coming. He sends them out two by two without any money, or weapons, or pretty much anything, as if to say, "Go out and put your trust of God on the line!" When the 500 poor people follow along the shore, he tells his disciples to give away the little bit of food they brought with them.



It's as though we can't really know how trustworthy God is until as long as we're playing it safe. God's trustworthiness is only revealed when we take some risks in following him, the very thing the third servant is unwilling to do.

So be aware of your fear when it becomes time to make your pledge. I invite you to let your pledge be an act of faith, an expression of trust and your desire to truly give yourself away in love.

In the kindness of Jesus,  
Pastor Jeff

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United Methodist  
Women

Looking back...the business meeting moved along briskly. The budget passed and programs planned and 2015 officers nominated. And the snacks were good too!

ALL women are welcome, and bring a friend....

**WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 3 – 6:30 p.m.**  
**Pot Luck Dinner – bring a dish to feed 6-8**  
**(tell Karen Wilk or Doris Bradley what your dish will be)**  
**PROGRAM: 2015 Officer Installation, Christmas Party**  
**and Gift Exchange Game**  
**(bring a wrapped gift [~\$5] with your name on the tag.**  
**The recipient will pray for you all year.)**  
**RSVP to Karen or Doris**

Dec 1 – World AIDS Day  
Dec 7 – Pearl Harbor Day  
Dec 21 – 1<sup>st</sup> Day of Winter

Dec 25 – Christmas Day  
Dec 31 – New Years' Eve  
Dec 31 – Cakes to Morris View Nursing Home

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

God Bless,  
Doris Bradley

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

On the second Thursday of every other month our congregation provides dinner for the families at **Homeless Solutions**. Our next scheduled dinner is **December 11<sup>th</sup>**. 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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*Stewardship*— Stewardship is discipleship. Update on Stewardship Sunday. Stewardship Sunday will be on **Sunday, December 7, 2014**. Stewardship Sunday is the day we will dedicate our pledges of financial support to continue God's work through our church in 2015. The next step in our campaign is to hand out the pledge cards on **Sunday, November 23, 2014**. If you

are not at church that Sunday, the card will be sent to you in the mail. Please continue to think, plan and pray about what PUMC means to you, the work of God through our church and your pledge of financial support for 2015.

Paul Adams, Stewardship Chair

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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.

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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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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!



## 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 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](http://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](mailto:connie@mhmlender.com)



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.

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**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)

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**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR DECEMBER**

Dec. 7  
Isaiah 40:1-11  
2 Peter 3:8-15a  
Mark 1:1-8

Dec. 14  
Isaiah 61:1-4, 8-11  
1 Thess. 5:16-24  
John 1:6-8, 19-28

Dec. 21  
2 Samuel 7:1-11,16  
Romans 16:25-27  
Luke 1:26-38

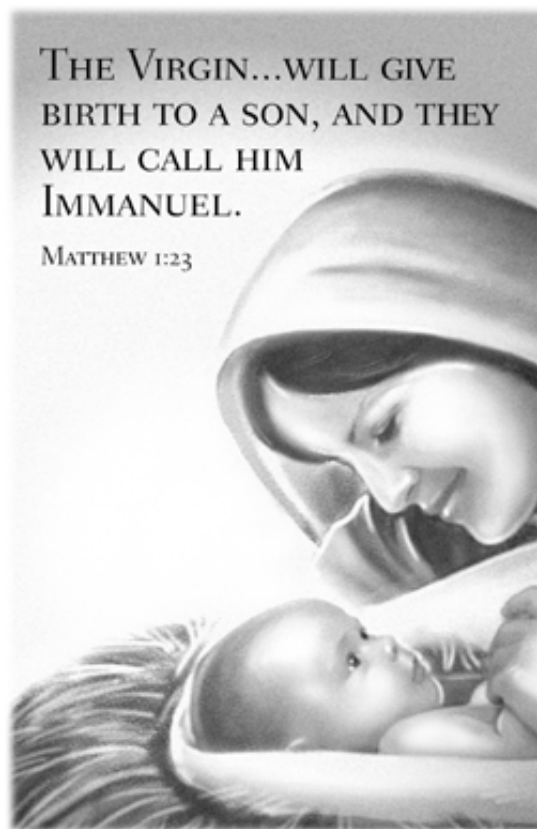
Dec. 28  
Isaiah 61:10-62:3  
Galatians 4:4-7  
Luke 2:22-40

  
**BIRTHDAYS & ANNIVERSARIES**  
**DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS**

4 <sup>th</sup>	Fred Coleman	20 <sup>th</sup>	Marissa Raier
5 <sup>th</sup>	Andrew Edwards	24 <sup>th</sup>	Linda Winz
9 <sup>th</sup>	Sean O'Grady	24 <sup>th</sup>	Deana Larsen
14 <sup>th</sup>	Gloria Gounaud	25 <sup>th</sup>	Keith Sakelakos
14 <sup>th</sup>	Claudia Bartek	26 <sup>th</sup>	Jean Sakelakos
16 <sup>th</sup>	Jessica Colletto	31 <sup>st</sup>	Flora Dierbach
20 <sup>th</sup>	Jennifer Savarin	31 <sup>st</sup>	Kassie Dadian



With the leadership of Tracy Booth, we assembled approximately 45 shoe boxes filled with little gifts for children to send overseas to children living in poverty through **Operation Christmas Child**. Last year the shoe boxes went to the Ukraine and the Philippines.





# December 2014

## United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																																
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7 10:30 AM Worship  Stewardship Sunday	8	9 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast	10 11:00 AM Living in the Light	11 7:00 PM Bell Choir  7:45 PM Adult Choir	12 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group	13 7:30 PM The Great Christmas Pageant																																																																																																																
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28 10:30 AM Worship	29	30 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast	31 New Year's Eve	<table style="margin: auto; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <th colspan="7" style="font-size: 8pt;">Nov 2014</th> <th colspan="7" style="font-size: 8pt;">Jan 2015</th> </tr> <tr> <th style="font-size: 8pt;">S</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">M</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">T</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">W</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">T</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">F</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">S</th> <th style="font-size: 8pt;">S</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">M</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">T</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">W</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">T</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">F</th><th style="font-size: 8pt;">S</th> </tr> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td style="text-align: center;">1</td><td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">2</td><td style="text-align: center;">3</td><td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td> <td style="text-align: center;">4</td><td style="text-align: center;">5</td><td style="text-align: center;">6</td><td style="text-align: center;">7</td><td style="text-align: center;">8</td><td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td style="text-align: center;">10</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">9</td><td style="text-align: center;">10</td><td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td style="text-align: center;">15</td> <td style="text-align: center;">11</td><td style="text-align: center;">12</td><td style="text-align: center;">13</td><td style="text-align: center;">14</td><td style="text-align: center;">15</td><td style="text-align: center;">16</td><td style="text-align: center;">17</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">16</td><td style="text-align: center;">17</td><td style="text-align: center;">18</td><td style="text-align: center;">19</td><td style="text-align: center;">20</td><td style="text-align: center;">21</td><td style="text-align: center;">22</td> <td style="text-align: center;">18</td><td style="text-align: center;">19</td><td style="text-align: center;">20</td><td style="text-align: center;">21</td><td style="text-align: center;">22</td><td style="text-align: center;">23</td><td style="text-align: center;">24</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">23</td><td style="text-align: center;">24</td><td style="text-align: center;">25</td><td style="text-align: center;">26</td><td style="text-align: center;">27</td><td style="text-align: center;">28</td><td style="text-align: center;">29</td> <td style="text-align: center;">25</td><td style="text-align: center;">26</td><td style="text-align: center;">27</td><td style="text-align: center;">28</td><td style="text-align: center;">29</td><td style="text-align: center;">30</td><td style="text-align: center;">31</td> </tr> <tr> <td style="text-align: center;">30</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td> </tr> </table>			Nov 2014							Jan 2015							S	M	T	W	T	F	S	S	M	T	W	T	F	S							1					1	2	3	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	25	26	27	28	29	30	31	30													
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