

HILLTOPPER

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

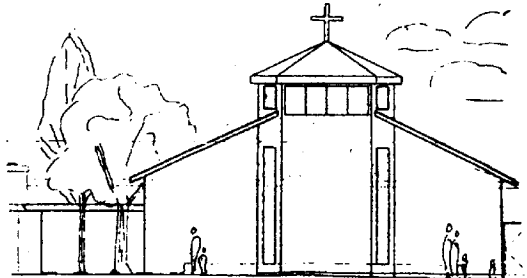
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

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

Sunday Worship Celebration: 10:30 a.m.

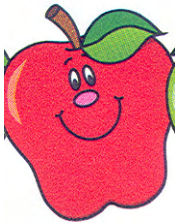
In a hostile, hurting world we reach out to share kindness and laughter. Our spirituality is based on Jesus and his love and compassion. We provide a community of support and healing where all are welcomed and valued regardless of race, age, sexual orientation, disability, gender, or economic status. 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"



NOVEMBER, 2016

HAPPY APPLE BAZAAR – Saturday, November 5th --- 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.



We're planning to have our usual jewelry, scarves and hats, homemade bakery, and books. The rest will be garage sale, hopefully by a few members who would like to sell some stuff!

We'll need homemade bakery for this event – pies, cakes, cookies, fudge, bars, etc. Please bring your bakery to church the morning of the bazaar.

Gently used jewelry can be given to Laurie Wilken or Connie Wallace, ASAP.

If you have small items you would like to sell at the garage sale, please bring them to church the Friday before the bazaar only (Nov. 13). Books will also be accepted that Friday.

This year, we are happy to have **American Gold Buyers** with us from 10 a.m. til noon. They will be onsite to buy any gold or silver items you might have. They will take things besides jewelry (tea sets, silverware, etc.). If you do not agree with the price they offer, you are under no obligation to sell your items. The church will receive 10% of the sales. So, start looking through you things now!



Lunch (hot dogs, chips, sodas, popcorn) will also be available



It seems impossible that Advent is 1 month away. This year's HANGING OF THE GREENS will be **Saturday Nov. 26** starting at **10:00 AM**.

This is the day that we decorate the sanctuary, narthex, fellowship hall and the outside of the church for the Christmas season. There's plenty to do. If we have enough people we can put up 3 Christmas trees.

We sing Christmas carols while we work, like little elves and make it fun!

Everyone is welcome, Morning refreshments will be available too. If you have any questions or decorating ideas, please speak to Connie Keller.

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Pastor Jeff **has written another Christmas play and rehearsals are about to begin**. The performances are tentatively scheduled for December 9 – 11. Behind the scenes help is needed in a variety of capacities. Children who are interested in being dancers in the play are invited to speak to Pastor Jeff.

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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. Check with friends and co-workers as well for boxes. 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 13th**. 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.

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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, December 8th**. If you would like to take a turn in helping with this outreach, or if you would like to donate money towards the expenses, please speak to Laurie Wilken or Connie Wallace.

OUR
Stewardship
CAMPAIGN

I want to first thank all those who have supported the life and ministry of our church this year with their generous pledges and donations. While financial stewardship is not the only way in which we give to and support our church, it is important. As you prepare to make your financial pledge to our church for the coming year, I would ask you to think about why you give to support our church.

In researching about why people give, I found several lists of reasons, often similar. The following is one list of five reasons why people give to their church to stimulate your thinking.

1. Relationship: People will give money to a larger organization because of the relationship they have with the people there. People are connected to the church through participation in church activities and give money to the church because it is impacting them personally.

2. Vision: Strong vision inspires people to give. Proverbs 29:18 (KJV) states: "Where there is no vision, the people perish..." Clear vision helps people understand the key next steps that God wants for your church, and connects them to the amount of money it will take to be funded.

3. Need: We have heard it said that "people give to vision, not to need." This is simply not the case! When disasters strike like earth quakes, floods, and hurricanes or when the church needs a new boiler, people will give. People will give to need when clearly defined.

4. Obedience: Many people give because they are living lives that are obedient to God's Word. They understand that God is an incredible giver (He gave His only Son!), and they are grateful to have been blessed with some money. They also understand the God has asked us to be generous givers.

5. Education: People give because they have been educated about what God's Word says about money, and have been taught practical tools that helped them put their desire to give into action.

Why do you give? Maybe these reasons sound familiar or perhaps you have other reasons. As we prepare for our annual stewardship campaign in November, please begin to prayerfully consider giving generously in the coming year. On **Stewardship Sunday, November 13, 2015**, we will dedicate our pledges of financial support to the work of God through our church. Pledge cards will be given out prior and returned on Stewardship Sunday. Leading up to Stewardship Sunday, the stewardship committee will be highlighting the ministry of our church and the impact it has on people.

Paul Adams
Stewardship Chair

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Our **Youth Fellowship** will be meeting every other Sunday evening. All youth 8th through 12th grade are invited to attend. Please speak to Pastor Jeff if you have any questions.



A sermon preached on September 25th, 2016 based upon Luke 16:19 – 31, entitled “Encountering Lazarus”.

The primary objection to the belief in the existence of a loving and powerful God is the presence of people in this world like the man in this morning’s parable named Lazarus. How, for instance could a good God allow there to be orphaned, refugee children whose short life ends with starvation? Such awful, undeserved suffering defies the very notion of a just

God being in control of the universe.

The only way divine justice ultimately could prevail is if there is an unseen world beyond this one in which the wrongs of this world are made right. And in this sense, the parable we just heard is deeply comforting for it implies that God is in charge and those who get an altogether raw deal in this world, who suffer unrelenting suffering in life will find justice in the great by and by. That there is a blessedness, a glory to be revealed that, as the Apostle Paul declares far outweighs the suffering this age.

A man died recently in Parsippany, a homeless man whose body was found behind the old Path Mark shopping center. The article I read didn’t even have a name for the man. But the parable tells us that though he may have gone nameless and forgotten in this world, God always knew his name, and he was never forgotten by God. In all of the parables Jesus told, this poor, homeless man is the only person who is ever given a name: “Lazarus,” which means, “God helps.”

But that proposition, comforting though it is, could easily be a prescription for neglect, a justification for the view that religion is nothing more than, as Karl Marx put it, “the opiate of the masses.” If we convince ourselves the downtrodden will get their “pie in the sky in the great by and by”, than we need not be in a hurry to do our part to relieve their suffering in this world. It is similar to the potential abuse of the notion of karma and reincarnation — that the “untouchables” of this world at the bottom of the social order ended up there because of sins they committed in previous lives, and so to help raise them up would be to interfere with the justice God has knit into creation.



But the comfort of this parable defies such an interpretation, because as comforting as it can be on one level, on another level the parable is deeply distressing. It declares that we really do have a responsibility for the people who get a raw deal in this life, and that there are severe consequences to the neglect of those suffering about us. It asserts that we really are all connected, and if we deny this connection, we endanger what we think of as our “eternal souls”.

The rich man is severely punished because he fails to help Lazarus, whose suffering he could not help but have seen as he lay there outside his gate. I want to defend myself against the distress of this parable. I’m not rich! And yet we live in a world where every 3.6 seconds somebody dies of starvation, and so all of us here today in comparison to a great many people on this earth who go hungry – we indeed are to be counted among the rich.

I try to keep the disturbance of the parable at bay by reminding myself of multiple instances in which I did stop to lend a helping hand to someone who was suffering. But in most instances those I have helped have been — if not family members — friends, members of my tribe, my church. And one of the distressing details of this parable is that it seems as though the rich man was capable of a certain kind of compassion, even of altruism towards his brothers. Though there seems there can be no relief for himself in his torment, he asks Father Abraham to send Lazarus back to warn his brothers about the consequences of neglecting the poor so that they may not end up suffering in the manner in which he is destined to suffer.



But it's not enough. The parable implies that what is demanded of the rich man is a compassion that extends beyond his tribe, to the suffering stranger he encounters as he goes out into the world. The parable seems particularly threatening in the modern world in which we can not help but be aware through electronic media of the suffering going on in far away places. To what extent are we being held accountable by God to ease some of this suffering that appears on our TV screens?

So the parable troubles me, and I suspect you as well. We would argue our defense in the face of the parable's accusations: How is it possible to live our lives without putting up at



least some walls between our selves and the suffering of others? Without the protection of some kind of blinders to keep the agony of others out of sight what chance would there be of any smidgen of happiness or contentment? Even Jesus himself did not devote every moment of his life healing the sick and feeding the hungry. He attended parties. He retreated for times of solitude to pray in the midst of the beauty of the natural world.

This is how I believe it is with parables. They are not meant to be stories we hear once and immediately we get the message and then move on. We are invited to struggle with them, argue with them, be challenged by them.

There is another level in which I am troubled by the parable, and that is that even though the place the rich man finds himself is not called "hell" in the story, that is clearly what is portrayed here: a place where sinners are eternally tormented. How could there be a heaven if there is a hell? Imagine heaven – imagine a beautiful Caribbean Island where the weather is always perfect and there's always good things to eat and drink and kind and loving people to keep you company. But imagine if somewhere on that beautiful island there was a barbed wired concentration camp where you know night and day people are being tortured without end. How could you feel happy and content knowing this was going on?

Like last week, as I wrestle with the meaning of the parable, I listen for other parables that might engage this parable in a conversation. I think of the shepherd who searches for his lost sheep, a shepherd who never gives up. The parable doesn't say and "if he finds" the lost sheep; rather it says, "when" he finds it the great celebration begins. And so I believe in a God revealed to us in Jesus who never abandons the search, and if the search needs to continue in some incomprehensible way beyond death, that is what I trust God to do.

There is a detail in this morning's parable that is easily overlooked. It is subtle. In the afterlife, the rich man continues to view Lazarus not as his equal, but rather as his inferior. He speaks not to Lazarus, but to Father Abraham, asking him to order Lazarus to do certain tasks:



first to bring him a drop of water to cool his tongue, and then to return to the land of the living to warn his brothers. He assumes Lazarus is his go-for. The rich man maintains his prideful posture. He has not come to see Lazarus as what he is in fact — a member of his family – the family of God.

Perhaps the chasm between him and the blessedness where Abraham and Lazarus dwell is a creation of the rich man himself. Perhaps the chasm could disappear in the moment he surrendered his pride. It wouldn't be easy for the rich man to do. He would have to bear the searing pain of extreme guilt for having neglected his brother Lazarus — for the chasm he himself created between them in their earthly life. But the guilt would not be an eternal burden. Once he owned that guilt, would not Jesus — the one who said on the cross, "Father, forgiven them, for they know not what they do" — set the rich man free of his burden of sin and guilt?

In the end, for me the story comes down to being a reflection upon hardened hearts. This is a common Biblical image for what sin is about: it is to be hard-hearted. It is an image

that holds special significance to we Methodists. John Wesley, when he finally experienced the love of Jesus infuse his heart with forgiveness for his sins, described the experience as being as though “his heart was strangely warmed.” Wesley would go on from this experience to spend the next fifty years of his life reaching out with the Gospel of Jesus Christ to the Lazaruses of his land – to the working poor of England whose lives had been crushed under the wheels of the Industrial Revolution.

How do we come to have hardened hearts? We aren’t born this way. Our hearts get hardened over time.

A couple of verses before telling this parable, Jesus declared, “You cannot serve two masters. You will love the one, and hate the other. You cannot love God and money.”

Idolatry and addiction are two words describing the same phenomenon. What happens when a person becomes addicted to alcohol, or to heroin? They take on a kind of tunnel vision — the only thing they can take in is the challenge of how to get the next drink, the next fix. With their hearts hardened by their addiction, nothing else matters. They are oblivious to the sufferings of others.

I was struck recently by some words of personal insight and wisdom spoken to me by a young man who has some familiarity with the world of drug addiction, who has passed through a difficult dark road to enter into a realm of light. He said that he had come to recognize that the central addiction of his life was to money, to the enticements money can bring: power, status, comfort and pleasure.

The central addiction and idolatry of our culture is money. Did you see on the video of the CEO of Wells Fargo squirming before a Senate hearing, refusing to truly take responsibility for the coercive actions of his bank employees who earned him his bonus of a hundred million dollars – money he had no intention of giving back. For the money addict, the next fix always has to be bigger than the previous fix, so no amount of money is enough.

The competition to acquire money – our great national addiction – is all about the survival of the fittest. If you don’t harden your heart to the sufferings of others you will be left behind.

“What does it profit a man,” Jesus said, “to gain the whole world, but to lose his soul?” If money is our god, than over time our souls will get lost.

The parable of Jesus that most resembles this one is from Matthew 25. All the people of the earth are gathered together for a final judgment before the King, who is Jesus, who will divide the sheep and the goats – the sheep to enter the Kingdom of heaven, the goats to be cast out into the darkness. The surprise of the parable is that everybody – the sheep and the goats – are surprised. *When you fed the hungry, welcomed the stranger, visited the prisoner you did it unto me,* said Jesus. No one knew. The Sheep weren’t doing it for a reward. It was simply the natural act of someone whose heart was not hardened – whose heart was capable of feeling the pain of others. A heart through which love could flow.



On the Podcast, “On Being” a heard an old French man named Xavier Le Pichon describe his spiritual journey. He acquired a Phd in geology in the highly competitive and privileged world of academia. At the age of 35 his life was turned around when he spent time in Mother Teresa’s home for the dying in Calcutta, India. He was given a dying, little boy, curled up in a fetal position, to care for. *Try to get him to eat something.* Something happened to him as he cared for the boy. The boy became the most important person in his life. He encountered none other than Jesus himself in the dying boy.

When he returned to France, he joined a L’Arche Community, in which able bodied people live together in Christian community with people disabled in body and mind. In embracing one another’s frailty, the kingdom of God is experienced.

I mentioned earlier the homeless man who was found dead behind the Path Mark shopping center. A few years back on a certain Sunday I gave you all five dollars and challenged you to use it in some fashion for God. (I won’t be doing that today.) Karen Wilk described how after worship she went to Path Mark, and there was this man she had seen before hanging

around by the entrance, an unkempt, lost-looking man, perhaps homeless. Uncertain, she approached the man and described how her pastor had given her five dollars and the direction to follow the leading of the Holy Spirit. She told him she wanted to give the money to him. Their eyes met. He smiled, grateful. Moved deeply, Karen felt her heart strangely warmed, and caught a glimpse of God's kingdom.

This parable is about salvation, but where does Jesus the savior occur in it? Jesus is found in none other than Lazarus.

When we call Jesus "savior", we blaspheme his name unless we honor him as the One who always saw those the world is inclined to overlook, who always cared for the ones the world counts as unworthy of attention. We are on a journey to become like this Jesus.

In the kindness of Jesus,
Pastor Jeff

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Looking back... we missed Betsy and her program. She was ill. Members brought items important to them and told us about those items as Show and Tell.

Next – join us on....



United Methodist
Women

Wed., Nov. 2nd – 7:00 p.m.
PROGRAM: Planning/Nominations
Refreshments will be served

Nov. 5 – Happy Apple Bazaar
Nov. 6 – Daylight Savings Ends
Nov. 8 – Election Day

Nov. 11 – Veteran's Day
Nov. 24 – Thanksgiving Day
Nov. 26 – Hanging of the Greens
Nov. 27 – 1st Sunday of Advent

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

God Bless,
Doris Bradley

Prov. 17:17 "A friend loves at all times."

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Interfaith Furnishings - Once every three months our church provides volunteers to assist **Interfaith Furnishings** in transporting donated furniture to people living in Morris County who would not be able to otherwise furnish their homes. **Our next Saturday to serve is Saturday, January 14th.** Please speak to Claudia Bartek or Maidie Erickson if you would like to volunteer

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On Wednesday evening, November 9th, Bishop Schol will be in our region to meet with the laity at 7:00 pm at the Little Falls United Methodist Church. All laity of our church are invited to attend.



To make it easier for the Congregation to keep up with their financial pledges to the Church, a **PayPal link has been added to the PUMC Homepage**. If you've never used PayPal before, it's an easy and secure way to send a payment over the Internet. You can use your bank account or a credit card to make your payment, and PayPal takes a small transaction fee. For more information or a quick demonstration on how to use this new tool, please speak with Justin Cogan.

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On the **third Thursday of every month** Pastor Jeff leads a **worship service at Troy Hills Center at 10:30 a.m.** If you would like to share in this ministry to the people living in a nursing home, please join us. Speak to Pastor Jeff or Pat Winz if you would like more information. Our next service is **Nov. 17th**.

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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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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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CHURCH CALENDAR and SCHEDULING EVENTS

The church calendar on our website www.parsIPPanyumc.com has been 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.



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 Sunday mornings at 10 a.m. 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 NOVEMBER

Nov. 6	Nov. 13	Nov. 20	Nov. 27	
Haggai 1:15b-2:9	Isaiah 65:17-25	Jeremiah 23:1-6	Isaiah 2:1-5	
2 Thess. 3:3-13	2 Thess. 3:6-13	Colossians 1:11-20	Romans 13:11-14	
Luke 20:27-38	Luke 21:5-19	Luke 23:33-43	Matthew 24:36-44	





NOVEMBER BIRTHDAYS			
1 st	Andrew Letsch	20 th	Rachel Elbin
2 nd	Richard Dierbach	20 th	Bob Laux
7 th	Tom Smith	22 nd	Janet Chauhan
7 th	Maya Baretto	23 rd	Shawn Beckler
9 th	George Hawkins, Jr.	24 th	Dan Kinsley
10 th	Shane Petzinger	24 th	David Kinsley
13 th	Carolyn Pasqua	25 th	Navnit Patelia
14 th	Bart Routhier	26 th	Anita Baldwin
16 th	Pastor Jeff Edwards	29 th	Garret Belanus
17 th	Joanne Rich	29 th	Jordan Bradley
18 th	Joshua Gropper	30 th	Russ Schnetzer
19 th	Ann Nye	30 th	Marissa Cogan
19 th	Dawn Barhite		

NOVEMBER ANNIVERSARIES	

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A wonderful group effort led by our lay leader Bob Keller produced a beautiful Lay Sunday Worship service on October 16th. At the right are all the people who helped with the leadership. We



were also grateful for the exquisite musical talent of Paul Larsen who accompanied the choir with their anthem.

November 2016

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																															
		<i>1</i> 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast	<i>2</i> 7:00 PM UMW Meeting	<i>3</i> 7:00 PM Bell Choir 7:45 PM Adult Choir	<i>4</i> 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group 7:00 PM Bazaar Set Up	<i>5</i> Happy Apple Bazaar 9 am to 2 pm																																																																																																															
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		<i>27</i> 10:30 AM Worship	<i>28</i>	<i>29</i> 7:15 AM Men's Breakfast	<i>30</i>	<table border="1"> <thead> <tr> <th colspan="7">Oct 2016</th> <th colspan="7">Dec 2016</th> </tr> <tr> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> <th>S</th><th>M</th><th>T</th><th>W</th><th>T</th><th>F</th><th>S</th> </tr> </thead> <tbody> <tr> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td> <td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td> </tr> <tr> <td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td> <td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td> </tr> <tr> <td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td> <td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td> </tr> <tr> <td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td> <td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td> </tr> <tr> <td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td> <td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td> </tr> <tr> <td>30</td><td>31</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> </tbody> </table>		Oct 2016							Dec 2016							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	31										
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