

# HILLTOPPER

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

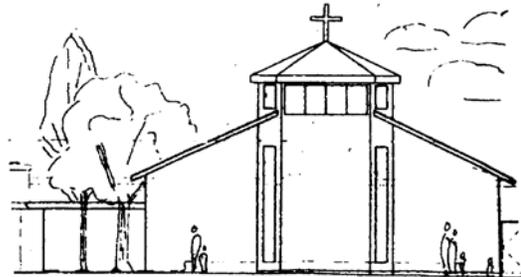
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<http://www.parsippanyumc.org> E-Mail: [jeffedwards1955@gmail.com](mailto:jeffedwards1955@gmail.com)

*Sunday Worship Celebration: 10:00 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, gender identity, disability 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, 2019



**HAPPY APPLE BAZAAR – Saturday, November 2nd --- 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! Small things can be contributed and will be sold at the church table.** Look for further info at church. Speak to Barb or Connie if you would like to participate. **We'll need homemade bakery and gently used jewelry for this event as well.**

On **Sunday, November 3<sup>rd</sup>** we will once again be visited by Mehmet and his family, our Turkish-American friends who hosted some of us at their house for a Ramadan fast-breaking meal. Once again, they will bring us Ashure, or "Noah's Pudding" as a special treat during coffee hour.



On **Sunday, November 17<sup>th</sup>** join us as we rejoice in the **baptism of LilyAnn Bryant**, daughter of Heather and Steve Bryant, and great-granddaughter of Anna and Michael Weiss.



**HANGING OF THE GREENS** - We will be decorating the church building and grounds for the Christmas season on **Saturday, Nov 30 beginning at 10:00 am.** We will be decorating outside the front of the church, the narthex, fellowship hall, and the sanctuary. So please join us, for a morning of Christmas caroling and decorating. Morning refreshments will be provided! If you have any questions, please reach out to me, Connie Keller 973-568-5404 or [connie@mhmlender.com](mailto:connie@mhmlender.com)

From the



A sermon preached on October 6<sup>th</sup>, 2019 – World Communion Sunday – based upon Luke 17:5-20 entitled, “What Jesus Meant by Faith.”

There are at least two potentially distracting pieces of this short passage we just heard.

The first is where Jesus says, “If you had faith the size of a mustard seed, you could say this mulberry tree, ‘Be uprooted and planted in the sea,’ and it would obey you.” It can sound as if possessing true faith endows a person with magical powers, and some preachers have taken this idea and run with it because, I mean who wouldn’t like to possess magical powers? Struggling financially? Just believe and don’t doubt and God will make you a millionaire. The doctor diagnosed a cancer tumor? Just have enough faith and pray, and you can be assured that the tumor will disappear.



Although things we call miracles do sometimes occur when people pray, faith isn’t a magical power that suddenly allows us to control all aspects of our fate. The particularly dangerous part of such an interpretation is that the person whose prayers do not get the result hoped for is left feeling as if it were somehow their fault. They didn’t have enough faith. “The tumor is spreading? I must have failed to believe hard enough.”

The Bible is full of “faithful” people who pour out their soul with doubts and questions. Struggling with uncertainty is a part of what it means to be a human being – it’s not a failure on our part.

The other problematic piece is the second half of what Jesus said – Jesus using the image of a Master and slave to talk about the life of discipleship. When there were slaves in this country working plantations, I am certain there were “Christian” slaveholders who quoted this passage to justify their abuse of their slaves, telling them misery was God’s will for their lives.

So what was Jesus trying to say in this passage?

First, we have to ask what Jesus meant by faith, and that isn’t altogether easy to answer because he never gave a “definition” and uses the word in a variety of contexts. He used parables to talk about it, and identified faith in certain people he met.

What IS clear is what Jesus didn’t mean by “faith.” It’s not mental assent to certain creeds or dogmas. He saw faith in action in all kinds of surprising people well before his death and resurrection, so for Jesus, faith certainly did not mean what certain preachers will tell you, which is that faith is believing that Jesus was God’s son sent to die for your sins – a belief required to have your passport stamped for heaven. “Faith” for Jesus certainly isn’t believing that the Bible is the inerrant word of God. He never said any such thing.

For Jesus faith is connected to three words: Trust, persistence and obedience.

Faith means trusting that God loves us and wants only good for us. The night Jesus was out in a boat with his disciples and a storm suddenly arose, scaring the bejesus out of them, he rebukes them for allowing their fear to totally wipe out their trust in God.

Faith means persisting on the journey of life even when the road is rough and the path dimly lit. Jesus told a story about a poor widow who kept knocking at the door of an unjust judge – evidently for years and years – never giving up until finally justice was rendered.

And finally faith means obedience. Faith involves the willingness to do God’s will – essentially, to love like Jesus.

In this particular context, obedience seems to be the aspect of faith that is being emphasized here, because the disciples’ cry of, “Increase our faith!” comes immediately after Jesus commands them to forgive people who have wounded them, letting go of that hard place in their hearts, and to do this over and over and over again. Jesus says this, and his disciples are thinking to themselves, “I don’t think I have the faith to obey the Lord in this way. I’m too attached to my hurt, my anger.”



And it is obedience that Jesus is emphasizing when he goes on to talk about the servant obeying the commands of the master.

So if in this instance, when Jesus says, *“If you have faith the size of a mustard seed” then anything becomes possible*, he’s not saying, *“Hey, have a little faith and you can have whatever you want,”* rather, he’s saying, *“have a little faith and you will discover the love of God moving in your heart in ways that seem unimaginable to you now.”*

Faith is better understood as a verb: It’s trusting, persevering, obeying. It is something we do.

The disciples are thinking of faith more as a noun. They cry out to Jesus to give them some sort of permanent, unshakeable possession that they’re calling “faith,” and Jesus answer is challenging their premise.

At this given moment you may not be trusting, or persevering, or obeying. But that doesn’t mean that in that in the future, perhaps in some small, mustard seed-like way, you **will** trust, persevere, and obey.



A seed can be planted in the earth and on the surface there can be no indication that the seed is there. In arid places such as where Jesus lived a seed could remain in the earth for a very long time without cracking open, without sprouting until finally the rains come and suddenly the seed kicks into action and does what a seed was created to do.

So I think Jesus was giving his disciples some reassurance. *“Chill, guys. You do faith, which is to say that contrary to outward appearances at the moment you have a profound capacity for trust, for perseverance, and for obedience to my commands. Right now this capacity may seem absent, but it’s there.”*

As a preacher, I’m in the business of sowing seeds, and most of the time I have no idea whether those seeds ever get planted, let alone break open and sprout. Sometimes this inability to see what the seeds are doing is discouraging, raising questions in my mind regarding my own faith.

Consequently, one of the most heartening things anybody ever told me was said by a member of our congregation who told me that for years she had been estranged from her now elderly father. She hadn’t spoken to him for years, and for very understandable reasons: growing up her father had been truly cruel to both her mother and to herself.

But she said that after the drip, drip, drip of listening to me preach about God’s love and how God intends to soften our hardened hearts she went home one day and in obedience to the command of Jesus to forgive, she called her father on the phone, reconnecting with him, which in turn led to reconciliation for other family members as well – including a sister who made peace with her father before not long afterwards departing from this earth.

When she told me this story, I was given grace to persevere in my calling, trusting that seeds are getting planted.

If faith is better understood as a verb than a noun, than perhaps mustard seed faith can be understood as taking baby steps of faith.

What might a baby step of faith look like for you?

If you feel like fear has altogether overtaken you, what would be a small step in expressing trust in God? A deep breath of letting go? A simple word of prayer? In what small way might I take action in spite of my fear?

If you feel like giving up, what would be a baby step in keeping going? *“Can I do the dishes? Yes, I can do the dishes. Can I call a friend? Yes, I can call a friend.”*

If you feel overwhelmed with feelings that seem distinctly unloving – feelings that lead you to harden your heart -- what small thing might you do that moves in the direction of love? Sometimes might be just holding your tongue -- sometimes a simple kind word.



Part of what I think Jesus is saying with the image of the servant working the fields, tending the sheep, serving supper is that faithfulness is most often lived out in fairly mundane ways. Doing the tasks assigned to us with a spirit of love.

Mother Teresa said, "We can do no great things, only small things with great love."

It is interesting to listen to that part about the "unworthy" slave and the master's table in relation to Holy Communion. What gets us invited to the Master's Table? Here in the United Methodist Church we invite little children to share in Holy Communion. Some people are troubled by this. "They haven't learned what this means!"

The primary way you can screw up Holy Communion is not by failing to understand the Biblical roots and its various meaning rather it's thinking that somehow you've earned your place at the Master's table. Holy Communion is screwed up when we think our knowledge, or our seeming good and faithful lives have somehow made us worthy of coming to the table, which implies more worthy than others.

No, none of us earn the invitation to come to the table. The invitation is pure grace. Jesus welcomes all of us, in spite of the various ways we are broken, the ways we have failed and sinned and struggled with the dark powers. We are all in this together.

In the kindness of Jesus,  
Pastor Jeff

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Looking back... Our very own Bob Keller spoke to us about his experience with the Parsippany Fire Department. October is fire prevention month and Bob also gave us tips about home safety.

Next..... All women in the church family are invited to join us.....

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**Wednesday, November 6, 7:00 p.m.**  
**PROGRAM: Budget/Pledge/  
Program Planning/Nominations**  
Refreshments will be served

Nov. 2 – Happy Apple Bazaar	Nov. 11 – Veteran's Day
Nov. 3 – Daylight Savings Time Ends	Nov. 28 – Thanksgiving
Nov. 5 – Election Day	Nov. 30 – Hanging of the Greens

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

God Bless,  
Betsy Adams

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A **small group experience** entitled "**Twenty Touchstones for Traveling the Road of our Soul's Journey**" has begun meeting in the sanctuary on the **first and third Tuesdays of each month from 7:30 to 9 p.m.** and has sixteen participants. The program is developed by our own Fred Mendez as a tool to grow as followers of Jesus. Fred leads the group with assistance from Pastor Jeff. If you would like to find out more about the group please speak to Fred or Pastor Jeff. In November the meetings are **November 5 and 19.**

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Pastor Jeff has written another **Christmas play** and this month rehearsals get underway. The performances will be **December 13<sup>th</sup> and 14<sup>th</sup> at 7 p.m. and December 15<sup>th</sup> at 6 p.m.** There are a multitude of ways to help with the production. If you can help, please speak to Pastor Jeff.



Anyone interested in becoming a member of the Parsippany United Methodist Church where there's always room in the circle is invited to speak to Pastor Jeff.

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**CHURCH CALENDAR and SCHEDULING EVENTS**

The church calendar on our website [www.parsippanyumc.org](http://www.parsippanyumc.org) 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.

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Anyone aware of a **Prayer Concern** is invited to contact Doris Bradley at 973-887-3219 who will put the **Prayer Chain** into action. If Doris 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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**Our church website** is at ParsippanyUMC.org. There you can find all of Pastor Jeff's sermons and eulogies, as well as the sermons of Bob Keller. You can also find all the newsletters, as well as a calendar that gives the times of events held at the church. You can also find a little church history, a listing of all the plays we've produced at the church, and a summary of the various church fellowship and mission groups.

If you aren't presently on **Facebook**, consider joining with a secret identity so you can be a member of the Parsippany United Methodist Church Congregation Group and received day by day prayer concerns and announcements and other postings regarding the life of our church.

**FACEBOOK LIVE** – Pastor Jeff has recently done a few Facebook Live broadcasts of the service. We are looking for someone interested in helping with this endeavor. If you are interested in furthering the ministries of our church through Live broadcasts, please reach out to Pastor Jeff.

Anyone interested in taking a turn videotaping our anthems and sermons for Facebook Live is invited to speak to Pastor Jeff.



Parsippany United Methodist Church is now on Instagram. To find us, search - Parsippany\_umc

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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 gathering of men** from our church meet together **every Tuesday at 7:30 a.m. at the Empire Diner** with Pastor Jeff for breakfast, conversation, and a concluding prayer. All men are welcome.

## Our Outreach to Those in Need

Our Sunday morning **Children's Offering** is going to support various mission outreaches. In recent weeks we've raised money for the Parsippany Food Pantry, Morris Habitat for Humanity, our church's outreach to Homeless Solutions, a local family in desperate straits, and to support Dawn Kiemel in her medical mission trip to help 500 children in the jungles of Peru who have never been to a dentist before. *If you have ideas regarding mission projects to support, please speak to Tracy Booth, Anna Christal or Pastor Jeff.*



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On the second Thursday of every other month our church provides a meal for the people living temporarily at **Homeless Solutions**. If you would like to volunteer as a server, please speak to Laurie Wilken or Connie Wallace. If you would like to help cook speak Tom Albert or Justin Cogan. Our next opportunity to serve is **Thursday, December 12th**.

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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, November 16th**. Please speak to Bruce Letsch or Pastor Jeff if you would like to volunteer.

Newton Barreto offers **free math tutoring to elementary school children** on Thursdays at 5:15 p.m. at the Lake Hiawatha Library and on Wednesdays at 5:45 p.m. at the Van Buren Branch Library in Newark. Please speak to Newton if you would to join him in serving young people in need.

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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, Pat Winz, Andee Mihalko or Charlie Kinsley if you would like more information. Our next service is **Thursday, November 21st**.

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We are grateful for our **two volunteers serving in the church office**. On Tuesdays Betsy Adams is there from 10 a.m. to 2 p.m. and on Wednesdays Pat Winz is there from 10:30 a.m. to 2 p.m. If you have a question about the church, feel free to call them at these times. **Anyone interested in serving** our church by spending a couple of hours on Monday or Thursday in the office to answer the phone and do simple office tasks as they arise are invited to speak to Pastor Jeff or Betsy Adams.

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To make it easier for the Congregation to keep up with their financial pledges to the Church, a **PayPal and Credit Card 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.

**BORROWING CHURCH FURNITURE**

We are very fortunate to have an honest and trusting congregation, and we are fortunate to be able to loan some tables and chairs to our church family as needed. Our supply of chairs is getting smaller and smaller and it is now necessary to keep a more accurate count of our equipment. Going forward if you would like to borrow chairs or tables from the church, please speak to one of the trustees. You will need to tell them what you are borrowing, how many of that item and when you will return the items. Our trustees are: Amy Gripp, Bob Laux, Connie Keller, Steve Blake, Tom Albert, Bill Gripp, and Ian Crawford. Thank you for your cooperation.

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**Parsippany Emergency Food Pantry** - Wes Sitgreaves has called to our attention the ongoing need of the Emergency Food Pantry in Parsippany in these difficult economic times. 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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**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@mhlender.com](mailto:connie@mhlender.com)

**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.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR NOVEMBER**

Nov. 3	Nov. 10	Nov. 17	Nov. 24
Daniel 7:1-3,15-18	Haggai 1:15b-2:9	Isaiah 65:17-25	Jeremiah 23:1-6
Ephesians 1:11-23	2 Thess. 2:1-5,13-17	2 Thess. 3:6-13	Colossians 1:11-20
Luke 6:20-31	Luke 20:27-38	Luke 21:5-19	Luke 23:33-43



OCTOBER BIRTHDAYS			
1 <sup>st</sup>	Andrew Letsch	19 <sup>th</sup>	Dawn Kiemel
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Richard Dierbach	20 <sup>th</sup>	Rachel Elbin
6 <sup>th</sup>	Chip Chaffee	20 <sup>th</sup>	Bob Laux
7 <sup>th</sup>	Tom Smith	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Janet Chauhan
7 <sup>th</sup>	Maya Baretto	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Pauline Vande Vrede
9 <sup>th</sup>	George Hawkins, Jr.	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Shawn Beckler
10 <sup>th</sup>	Shane Petzinger	24 <sup>th</sup>	Dan Kinsley
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sandra Bothe	24 <sup>th</sup>	David Kinsley
13 <sup>th</sup>	Carolyn Pasqua	25 <sup>th</sup>	Navnit Patelia
14 <sup>th</sup>	Bart Routhier	26 <sup>th</sup>	Anita Baldwin
16 <sup>th</sup>	Pastor Jeff Edwards	29 <sup>th</sup>	Garret Belanus
17 <sup>th</sup>	Joanne Rich	30 <sup>th</sup>	Russ Schnetzer
18 <sup>th</sup>	Joshua Gropper	30 <sup>th</sup>	Marissa Cogan
19 <sup>th</sup>	Ann Nye		

## Thanksgiving Challenge

Find the words in the list hidden in the puzzle grid below.

N	O	V	E	M	B	E	R	G	W	D	G	T	F	C	T	E	L	C	B
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P	Q	U	W	Y	K	I	U	W	A	E	A	I	N	O	G	A	N	D	U
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X	C	S	R	E	V	O	T	F	E	L	B	D	V	S	T	R	G	S	I
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|------------|-----------|-----------|--------------|
| Autumn     | Drumstick | Indians   | Separatists  |
| Blessings  | Family    | Leftovers | Squanto      |
| Bounty     | Feast     | Mayflower | Stuffing     |
| Celebrate  | Football  | November  | Thanksgiving |
| Cider      | Friends   | Parade    | Thursday     |
| Cornucopia | Giblets   | Pilgrims  | Tofurkey     |
| Dessert    | Gobble    | Plymouth  | Tradition    |
| Diet       | Gratitude | Prayer    | Turkey       |
| Dinner     | Harvest   | Pumpkin   | Wampanoag    |
| Dressing   | Holiday   | Puritans  | Wishbone     |

November 2019

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
<div style="display: flex; justify-content: space-around;"> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Oct 2019</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td></td><td></td><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td></tr> <tr><td>6</td><td>7</td><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td></tr> <tr><td>13</td><td>14</td><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td></tr> <tr><td>20</td><td>21</td><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td></tr> <tr><td>27</td><td>28</td><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> <div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"> <p style="text-align: center;">Dec 2019</p> <table border="1" style="width: 100%; text-align: center;"> <tr><td>S</td><td>M</td><td>T</td><td>W</td><td>T</td><td>F</td><td>S</td></tr> <tr><td>1</td><td>2</td><td>3</td><td>4</td><td>5</td><td>6</td><td>7</td></tr> <tr><td>8</td><td>9</td><td>10</td><td>11</td><td>12</td><td>13</td><td>14</td></tr> <tr><td>15</td><td>16</td><td>17</td><td>18</td><td>19</td><td>20</td><td>21</td></tr> <tr><td>22</td><td>23</td><td>24</td><td>25</td><td>26</td><td>27</td><td>28</td></tr> <tr><td>29</td><td>30</td><td>31</td><td></td><td></td><td></td><td></td></tr> </table> </div> </div>					S	M	T	W	T	F	S			1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31			S	M	T	W	T	F	S	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26	27	28	29	30	31					<p><i>1</i></p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p> <p>7:00 PM Bazaar Set Up</p>	<p><i>2</i></p> <p>Happy Apple Bazaar 9 a.m. to 2 p.m.</p>
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<p><i>3</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Worship</p>	<p><i>4</i></p>	<p><i>5</i></p> <p>7:30 AM Men's Breakfast</p> <p>7:30 PM Twenty Touchstones</p>	<p><i>6</i></p> <p>7:00 PM UMW</p>	<p><i>7</i></p> <p>7:00 PM Ball Choir</p> <p>7:45 PM Adult Choir</p>	<p><i>8</i></p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p>	<p><i>9</i></p>																																																																																				
<p><i>10</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Worship</p>	<p><i>11</i></p>	<p><i>12</i></p> <p>7:30 AM Men's Breakfast</p>	<p><i>13</i></p>	<p><i>14</i></p> <p>7:00 PM Ball Choir</p> <p>7:45 PM Adult Choir</p>	<p><i>15</i></p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p>	<p><i>16</i></p> <p>Interfaith Furnishings</p>																																																																																				
<p><i>17</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Worship</p>	<p><i>18</i></p>	<p><i>19</i></p> <p>7:30 AM Men's Breakfast</p> <p>7:30 PM Twenty Touchstones</p>	<p><i>20</i></p>	<p><i>21</i></p> <p>10:30 AM Troy Hills Center</p> <p>7:00 PM Ball Choir</p> <p>7:45 PM Adult Choir</p>	<p><i>22</i></p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p>	<p><i>23</i></p>																																																																																				
<p><i>24</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Worship</p>	<p><i>25</i></p>	<p><i>26</i></p> <p>7:30 AM Men's Breakfast</p>	<p><i>27</i></p>	<p><i>28</i></p> 	<p><i>29</i></p> <p>1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group</p>	<p><i>30</i></p> <p>10:00 AM Hanging of the Greens</p>																																																																																				