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United Methodist Church of Parsippany

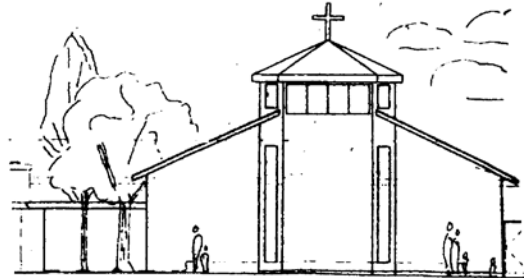
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

http://www.parsippanyumc.org E-Mail: 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"



JANUARY, 2020



Fire House where Bob was a long time member.

Our faithful friend Bob Keller departed this world on Saturday, December 21st.

Bob's great struggle with his earthly body is over. He has received his resurrection body to soar in the everlasting light and love of heaven.

But we will miss Bob. His courage, his love, his faithfulness was an inspiration to us all.

Please keep Connie and their sons, Jonathan and Michael in your prayers as they grieve for Bob.

The memorial Service for Bob Keller has been set for 10 a.m. on Saturday, January 11th in our sanctuary. Following the service the celebration of Bob's life will continue at the Lake Parsippany

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A sermon preached on December 15th, 2019 based upon Matthew 12:2-12 entitled "John the Baptist's Despair and the Joy that is Present in Sorrow"

This is a striking little story. Last week we heard how John the Baptist commanded the stage immediately before Jesus' first appearance in the Gospel in his adult ministry. John appears out in the wilderness proclaiming that the Kingdom of Heaven is at hand. There is no uncertainty in that appearance. The crowds flock to the river to be baptized in preparation for what John has no doubt is on the verge of taking place. He speaks of the fire that is coming; an axe that will chop down the perpetrators on injustice. He lets the self-righteous Pharisees and Sadducees have it, calling them a "brood of vipers". And when

Jesus came down to the River Jordan there was no doubt for John as to who it was that stood

before him – the one whose sandals he was unworthy to carry. This was the Messiah, the Christ, the one for whom he is preparing the way, the one who with a holy fire and righteous judgment will fulfill what John has prophesied.

That day by the River Jordan there was only one moment when the slightest bit of confusion and uncertainty arose for John: when he realized that this Jesus was standing in line with all the other waiting in utter humility to take his turn to be baptized by John – just like all the others. He tried to stop him, but the messiah had insisted. Perhaps that moment should have clued John into the fact that he didn't necessarily have a clear understanding of what God was up to.



In this morning's story some time has passed and John's life has taken a distressing turn, though not a surprising one for somebody who dares speak truth to power. King Herod has had him arrested and placed in a dark prison cell. In short order, it will be John who meets the axe when Herod has him beheaded.

John's disciples have kept him informed about what's been happening in the outside world. Although Jesus' ministry has drawn much attention, it hasn't brought about what John had prophesied. The people perpetrating injustice – both the Roman oppressors and the corrupt religious leaders – are still in power.

In the darkness of his prison cell, John has begun to have serious doubts. Had he been mistaken regarding what he had once been so certain about – that this Jesus was the long awaited messiah? He is tempted to despair. And so he sends a delegation of his followers to Jesus with a simple, understated question: "Are you the one who is to come (as I have been telling anybody who would listen), or are we to wait for another?"

Who among us has not known something of the despair that is expressed in John's question?

We have a vision of the future, of how things we think will work out -- **should** work out. And for a time it seems like they are doing just that. The sun is shining brightly. And then things begin to fall apart. The hope we had collapses and we descend into the deep darkness.

Despair comes. It can happen in so many forms.

So John speaks for all of us in such times as he asks that question of Jesus.

Jesus answers John's question by pointing out the things that are taking place in Jesus' ministry. In contrast to the big things John was looking for – the full coming of God's reign on earth – the driving out of the perpetrators of injustice – the things Jesus points to are relatively small things, though large in individual lives. People are receiving healing and hope – signs spoken of long ago by the prophet Isaiah.



One lesson to take away from John's despair in his prison cell is to recognize that we are setting ourselves up for despair when we claim to know exactly what God should be up to in our lives and in our world. John had it right when he saw that the old order of things was terribly corrupt and that everybody had a hand in this brokenness and all needed to repent -- turn toward the light and away from the darkness.

But he had it wrong in imagining that new order would emerge through the mighty hand of God burning up all the chaff.

There is a parable Jesus tells elsewhere about servants of a farmer who come to him upset that though the farmer planted good seed in his fields, lo and behold weeds are growing side by side with the wheat. The servants offer to yank the weeds out for their master, but he tells them to chill. In their zealous passion to pull out the weeds they likely will pull out wheat in the process. Let God sort it all out in the end.



We often aren't a good judge of what are weeds and what is wheat.

Perhaps you've had the experience of looking back on a time in your life that was deeply distressing – a time when if you had had one you would have waved a magic wand and had the circumstances contributing to your hard time instantly removed. Later though, looking back you realized that things happened in your life that wouldn't have happened otherwise – good things – perhaps in particular things that happened inside you – changing you in important ways for the better.

The things that Jesus points to in his answer to John are all acts of love. There is this recognition that we are all in this together, and that the solutions to our problems are not found in magic wands but rather in recognizing that deep underlying connection we have together – the love with which God has knit us all together.

There is that old joke: "How do I get to Carnegie Hall?" "Practice, practice, practice."

If the purpose of life isn't to triumph but to learn how to love – to have our hearts softened – then the brokenness of this world is somehow necessary. We are given infinite opportunities to keep practicing love.

The third Sunday in Advent traditionally includes the theme of joy. Joy abounds in this world, but like the weeds and the wheat, it resides side by side with sorrow. The trick in life is not to miss the joy that is there right in the midst of the sorrow.

The great and popular Christian writer, CS Lewis entitled his autobiography, "Surprised by Joy." In it he reflects upon intense experiences of joy that had come unexpectedly to him throughout the course of his life, ever since childhood.

He realized that in a peculiar way joy as he defined it was an unsatisfied desire – a deep, longing of the soul which when we are in touch with it is better than any human happiness. When he asked himself what it was his heart was desiring at such moments who could not find anything in this earth which would provide the satisfaction of this desire. When he asked what it was he was longing for he could not identify any thing within this world that was the object of his desire. A highly rational man, it didn't make sense to Lewis that he could have a desire that for which the object of the desire did not exist. He came to the conclusion that the longing of his heart that was joy was a longing for God.



It is the longing of which we sing in the greatest of Advent hymns:

*O come, O come, Emmanuel.
And ransom captive Israel
That mourns in lonely exile here
Until the son of God appear.
Rejoice! Rejoice! Emmanuel
Shall come to thee, O Israel.*

Notice that the joy of the hymn is referenced as a present possibility even as we are longing for the fulfillment of God's reign in this very broken and tear stained world.

In the kindness of Jesus,
Pastor Jeff



Looking back... The Christmas Pot Luck dinner started off with amazing atmosphere provided by Anna Weiss and the meal was wonderful. We installed our renewing slate of officers and officially welcomed Tracy Booth with her UMW pin. We took our annual group picture and had fun with a continuing new twist on our gift game. Nineteen (19) women have new prayer partners for 2020 and we ended the evening with delicious desserts. Happy New Year to all!!

NO MEETING IN JANUARY

Jan. 1 – New Year’s Day	Jan. 20 – Martin Luther King Day
Jan 6 - Epiphany	

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,
Betsy Adams

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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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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.



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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CHURCH CALENDAR and SCHEDULING EVENTS

The church calendar on our website 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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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.

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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.*



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, February 13th**.

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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, February 29th**. 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, January 16th**.

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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.

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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.



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. 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@mhmlender.com

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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.

SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR JANUARY

Jan. 5	Jan. 12	Jan. 19	Jan. 26
Isaiah 60:1-6	Isaiah 42:1-9	Isaiah 49:1-7	Isaiah 9:1-4
Ephesians 3:1-12	Acts 10:34-43	1 Corinth 1:1-9	1 Corinth 1:10-18
Matthew 2:1-12	Matthew 3:13-17	John 1:29-42	Matthew 4:12-23



HAVE A BLESSED NEW YEAR!



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS			
3 rd	Barbara Bush	23 rd	Joseph Dente
5 th	Barbara Anderson	25 th	Jennifer Trice (Rychlicki)
11 th	Jim Sakelakos	25 th	Chris Salink
11 th	Fred Mendez	25 th	Kathryn Montecucollo
13 th	Olivia Evans	25 th	Mary Keller
16 th	Marissa Cintineo	27 th	Darryl Sokolowski
19 th	Dominick Pesquera	29 th	Michael Weiss, Jr.
20 th	Jim Cochrane	30 th	Chris Payne
22 nd	Heather Bryant	31 st	Joshua Christiango

JANUARY ANNIVERSARIES	
25 th	Ruth & Charles Faulend

Bible Wordsearch

THE GOOD SAMARITAN Luke 10:30-37

N W O A R T X E R J R D O C C
 Y D T U O D L E C D E E K O A
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- AWAY
- BANDAGED
- BEAT
- CAME
- CARE
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- COINS
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- DEAD
- DONKEY
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- JERUSALEM
- JESUS
- LEAVING
- LEVITE
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- OWN
- PASSED
- PITY
- PLACE
- POURING
- PRIEST
- PUT
- REIMBURSE
- REPLY
- RETURN
- ROAD
- ROBBERS
- SAMARITAN
- SAW
- SIDE
- SILVER
- STRIPPED
- TOOK
- TRAVELED
- WENT
- WHERE
- WINE
- WOUNDS

After you find all the hidden words the left over letters spell out a Bible verse reading from the top left to the bottom right

Psalm 31


MORE PUZZLES AT:
<http://biblewordgames.com>

Wordsearch No.170

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January 2020

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

Sunday		Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
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