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United Methodist Church of Parsippany

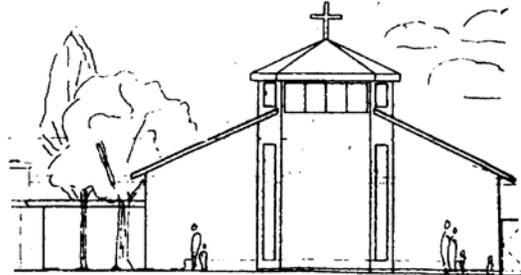
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

<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"



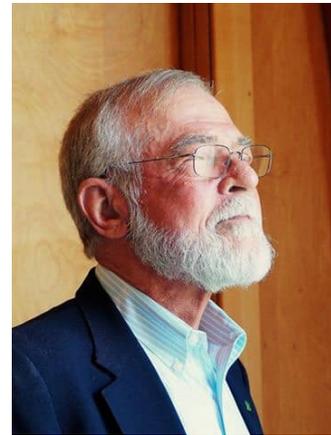
FEBRUARY, 2020

From the



The following is adapted from Pastor Jeff's eulogy for Bob Keller (July 31, 1952 – December 21, 2019), who served for many years as our congregation's beloved Lay Leader.

As the years passed it became increasingly clear to Bob that many of the things he had once thought important – money and prestige, for instance – really weren't very important after all. What mattered, Bob now realized, was being a servant – doing whatever he could to help others and make a difference in this world. Bob told me a story once about a young man connected with the Fire Department who had taken the time to express his gratitude to Bob regarding the positive influence he had made in the course his life had taken. The young man's words had touched Bob deeply. (*Side note: take the time to tell people how much you appreciate them. It's so easy to do and it means so much.*) There were times earlier in Bob's life when he often dined in elegant restaurants at banquet tables in the company of the movers and shakers of the oil industry.



They had been pretty heady times for Bob. But listening to Bob talk about how much it meant for him to hear the young man testify to the difference his life made for him, it was clear memories of fine dining with the upper crust paled in comparison. There are countless others who feel a similar gratitude for Bob.

Bob often talked with me about how as much as he grieved the loss of his health that had forced him into an early retirement, he doubts he would have come to see what really matters in life without having had the experience of being brought low in this way. He was beginning to see life with new eyes – the eyes, I would suggest, of Jesus. Bob became increasingly concerned with the plight of people he hadn't given a whole lot of thought to before – people, for instance struggling to feed their kids and keep a roof over their heads. People rejected by their families and their churches for their sexual orientation. Bob came to see that the banquet table that really matters is the Lord's table, and at that table all are welcome and all are cared for.

And we were all moved and inspired by the extraordinary love Connie and Bob had for one another – the way they walked hand in hand together in trust of God facing the challenges life threw at them. When seventeen years ago Bob's kidneys failed Bob found dialysis to be for himself almost unbearable. When it was determined that Connie's kidneys were a match for Bob, we prayed for them as they prepared to enter the hospital to take a kidney from the body of Connie and attach it to that of Bob's. And we rejoiced with them as the operation was a total success giving Bob a new lease on life. From that point onward they were quite literally one flesh.



Bob spoke often of the spiritual lessons derived from this time of trial and ultimate triumph. The serenity prayer says it well: *"God grant me the serenity to accept that which I cannot change."* It was during this time that Bob began to embrace a concept Connie introduced him to, that they had to *"Let God drive the bus."* It was the recognition that in life there is a great deal over which we simply don't have any control, and that peace of mind can only be found in willingly handing the driver's wheel over to God, trusting that God will lead us where we need to go.

Bob had always been more comfortable in the role of the helper than in that of the one being helped. During this experience he began to learn how to follow the leadings of God's Spirit to let go of his pride and receive the help of others.

The serenity prayer speaks of asking God to help us *accept that which we cannot change*, but it also goes on to ask God for *"the courage to change that which I can change."*

For many of us we'd be hard pressed to find somebody who exemplified the quality of courage more than Bob. His physical challenges (which included diabetes that led to continual fluctuations in his blood sugar, the loss of eyesight, neuropathy in his legs and feet, emphysema and heart issues) were more extensive than most people knew.

With so much to deal with, most of us can imagine ourselves being tempted to crawl into the fetal position and just giving up, and although there were times when such feelings could roll over Bob, he never *did* give up. His will to live was extraordinary. His perseverance was awe-inspiring.



Bob educated himself regarding his various diseases. Invariably, the treatments doctors prescribed had repercussions in dimensions of his health that was beyond their specialties. Frequently the doctors didn't communicate with each other, and often it was Bob who knew the most about the delicate balancing act required in his treatment. Sometimes Bob's passionate strong will came in conflict with that of his doctors.

One thing Bob understood that his doctors didn't always appreciate was that his extraordinary will to live that repeatedly brought him back from the brink when his doctors were ready to count him out – this will to live was directly related to the powerful calling Bob felt to continue to make a positive difference in his community. What was unbearable to Bob about the idea of going on dialysis was that in his mind it conjured up the intolerable image of somebody wrapped in an afghan locked in his home all day watching television. His passion for life wasn't ready to go there.

And so year after year -- in spite of being a night owl -- Bob kept getting out of bed early every Tuesday and Thursday to head down to the Empire Diner for breakfast with Methodist Men and Kiwanians. He needed to stay connected to people – to life.



There were so many things he found to devote himself to. There were fundraisers such as Touch-a-Truck – his personal vision – to organize to raise money for various worthy causes, such as the Sharing Network and Camp Nejedra for children living with diabetes. There were dinners to put on, and political causes to support, and dogs to pet and to advocate for. There were our Friday afternoon men’s discussion group to attend in which we argued over how to solve the problems of the world. There was Santa to play at Christmastime for children.. There were sermons to write and deliver to young and old alike. They were parades to attend and planning board meetings to preside over -- his final one taking place just five days before he died – an absolutely astonishing act of courage.

Through it all Connie was there by his side, driving Bob to all his doctors’ appointments and keeping track of his multitude of medications and sharing in the battle with the healthcare establishment. They were extraordinary team together, and Bob would never have made it as far as he did nor have the same impact on his community without Connie’s remarkable faith, hope and love at his side. Connie, on behalf of your church family and your community, I want to thank you for loving Bob so well.



Bob’s sons have carried on their fathers’ legacy of commitment to service; Michael as a soldier serving his country, and Jonathan as a firefighter. He was so proud of both of you.

I asked Jonathan what came to mind when he thought of his Dad, and he responded with tears in his eyes by describing his father as a “beacon of light.” He touched so many lives.

A couple of months ago when Bob’s declining health seemed to be closing door after door for Bob, he asked if I would invite people to pray over him following our Sunday worship service. It was an indication regarding how far Bob had come in his willingness to reach out for help – to acknowledge how rough the road he travelled could be. I extended the invitation to the congregation – saying we’d gather together on the altar in about ten minutes after the benediction. Pretty much the whole congregation hung around as we sat Bob down in a chair facing the cross and laid our hands upon him, offering ourselves as vessels through which God could pour out God’s loving Spirit to bless our beloved Bob. His heart wide open, Bob wept openly – tears of joy. He told me afterwards that he had felt enveloped in a love to carry him through whatever darkness lay ahead.

On the night before Jesus died, he said to his disciples, *“I will not leave you orphaned; I will come to you.”* I was struck by the story of Bob and Connie travelling all the way from New Jersey to Caracas, Venezuela so that a little baby boy need not be left orphaned. They came for him, and here Jonathan is now, and here we all are. And the gracious one did not leave Bob orphaned, he has taken Bob to that place where he is and is far more beautiful than we have the capacity to imagine.



So what I would hope we could come away with this morning is encouragement to live out the lessons Bob learned in the course of this journey – that love really is the thing. We were created out of love in order to give and receive love – and in the end nothing else lasts except love and nothing else matters. And in the end we are received into a wondrous love.

So in the meantime, let us find the courage to use our gifts be a servant in the manner in which Bob used his gifts, for that is the reason for which we were born.

In the kindness of Jesus,
Pastor Jeff



Looking back... There was no meeting in January. See you next at:

Wednesday, February 5th, 7 p.m.
PROGRAM: Bible Study
Bring your own refreshments

Feb. 2 – Ground Hog Day	Feb. 14 – Valentine’s Day
Feb. 17 – President’s Day	Feb. 26 – Ash Wednesday

GET WELL wishes to those of you who are ill, and
HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you celebrating this month with Denise White and Grace Agre, who will turn 101 this year!

God Bless,
Betsy Adams

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The **season of Lent** begins on **Ash Wednesday, February 26th**. We will hold our traditional **contemplative service at 7 p.m.** At the end of the service there will be opportunity to come forward to kneel at the altar to receive **the imposition of ashes.**



Now is the time to begin thinking about the season of Lent. *What spiritual practice might you want to add to your life during this forty day journey that prepares us to enter more fully into the joy of Easter? What habitual behavior might you want to refrain from in a quest for greater spiritual freedom?*

A **small group experience** entitled "**Twenty Touchstones for Traveling the Road of our Soul’s Journey**" has been extended through April. Meetings are held in the prayer chapel on **the first and third Tuesdays of each month from 7:30 to 9 p.m.** The program is developed by our own Fred Mendez invites a deep level of intimacy as fellow pilgrims share the challenges of their lives in an attempt to grow as followers of Jesus. Fred leads the group with assistance from Pastor Jeff. The next meeting is **Tuesday, February 4th**.



During the season of Lent, Pastor Jeff will lead a **workshop on the three Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m.** when Touchstones isn't meeting: **March 10, 24, and 31.** We will address the question, "**How can I be more Christ-like in relation to the people God has given me to interact with?**" Pastor Jeff will lead us into reflections on Bible passages and provide simple exercises to practice active listening skills as we seek to embody the grace of God for others. All are welcome. If parents of children would like to attend, we will make arrangements to provide child care as well.

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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.



We are so very grateful for Fred Schlosshauer who for 56 years served so faithfully as the treasurer of our church. The time has come for Fred to pass the torch. We are grateful to Alison Cogan who on January 12th was officially elected our new church treasurer.



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The **Youth Group** is officially getting back up and running, and there is plenty of room in the circle. All high school youth (and younger when a youth is ready) are invited with their parents to attend an **organizational dinner/meeting on Sunday, February 9th**. A spaghetti dinner will be served at 6:30 p.m. (those who are available are invited to come early at 5:30 p.m. to help prepare the meal.) We will brainstorm ideas of service

projects as well as fun activities. Pastor Jeff, Fred Mendez and Penny Beil will serve as the group's spiritual guides for regular time set apart for reflection on our spiritual lives, in particular in relation to coping with the often intense pressures of the life of a teenager.



The youth will also be making **Super Bowl Subs** for sale on **February 2nd**. All proceeds will go to assist the hungry of our community.

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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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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.



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

Instagram

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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**.



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.

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, February 20th.**

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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@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 FEBRUARY

<u>Feb. 2</u>	<u>Feb. 9</u>	<u>Feb. 16</u>	<u>Jan. 26</u>
Micah 6:1-8	Isaiah 58:1-9a(9b-12)	Deut. 30:15-20	Exodus 24:12-18
1 Corinth 1:18-31	1 Corinth 2:1-12(13-16)	1 Corinth 3:1-9	2 Peter 1:16-21
Matthew 5:1-12	Matthew 5:13-20	Matthew 5:21-37	Matthew 17:1-9



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

2 nd	Mia Savarin	11 th	Julianne Karr
3 rd	Denise White	19 th	Charlotte Romeo
3 rd	Justin Cogan	22 nd	Elizabeth Vance
3 rd	Diane Morgan	22 nd	Kylie Collins
4 th	Susan Valcoff	23 rd	Krista Kempski
5 th	Barbara Munnelly	24 th	Tracy Krisa Shawgo
7 th	Charlotte Vance	25 th	Sarah Edwards
7 th	Likitha Dasari	25 th	Keith Hawkins, Jr.
8 th	Andrew Schnetzer	28 th	Grace Agre (101!)
10 th	Mark Dierbach	29 th	Coleen O'Grady
10 th	TJ Cogan	29 th	Kelly O'Grady
11 th	Valia Hawkins		

FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

19 th	June & Russ Schnetzer
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February 2020

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																				
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