

# HILLTOPPER

United Methodist Church of Parsippany

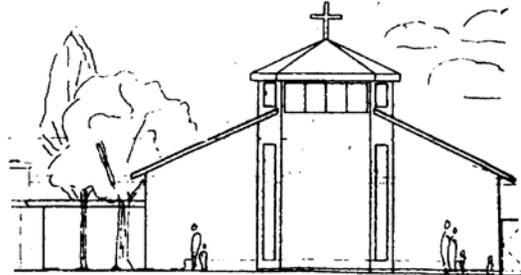
903 So. Beverwyck Road, Parsippany, NJ 07054 (973) 887-4657

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"



## MARCH, 2020



Ash  
Wednesday  
Service

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. In anticipation of Lent, it is helpful for us to ask ourselves, "What spiritual practice might I like to add to my life during the forty day journey that prepares us to enter more fully into the joy of Easter? Is there a habitual behavior I might want to refrain from in a quest for greater

spiritual freedom?

## LENTEN



STUDY GROUP

*During the season of Lent, Pastor Jeff will lead a workshop on three **Tuesdays from 7 to 8:30 p.m. 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.



Musicians from the Allegro Academy provided music for our worship on February 2<sup>nd</sup>. We look forward to their **return on Palm Sunday, April 5<sup>th</sup>**. We are blessed by their music – sometimes youth musicians, sometimes adults – every other month on Communion Sunday.



**A sermon preached on February 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2020 based upon Matthew 5:1-12 entitled, "Acknowledging our Poverty of Spirit."**

In my 38 years of being a pastor, visiting and preaching in nursing homes has always been something I've done on a regular basis. Nursing homes can be rather depressing places, and I'm not looking forward to the possibility of one day finding myself living in one. Nonetheless, I have always appreciated the times I have spent there because of the receptivity I find in the people I meet there to my ministry. They tend to be the people of whom Jesus spoke in his beatitudes: "the poor in spirit", empty, quite clear that they can't fix themselves. They are "the meek", no longer looking to impress anybody. They are those who "mourn" the loss of their homes and their loved ones no longer present. They've given up the battle to come in first, and have space in their hearts for mercy. They are conscious of the fact that death awaits them in the not too distant future; and as such they long to "see God".

There's a story involving visiting in a nursing home that I've told a couple of times before in sermons that has stayed with me for perhaps 35 years. I served two little country churches in Hunterdon County before I came to Parsippany, and once a month I would take my turn leading worship at the little nursing home down the road. It wasn't upscale; I don't remember them offering much rehab – basically just people waiting together for death to come.

I lived next door to one of the two churches I served, so this meant that on Sunday mornings I would get up and drive fifteen minutes to the other church where I would lead worship at 9 am, and right after that service was done and I had greeted everybody on their way out the door I would hop in my car and drive the fifteen minutes back to the other church, arriving just in time to begin worship service there. As you could imagine Sunday mornings could be kind of stressful.



On one particular Sunday for reasons I can't recall, and probably didn't fully understand by the time I finished the second service I felt utterly depleted and exhausted – not so much physically as spiritually. Feeling empty and sad I headed back to the parsonage and crawled into bed. I had no desire to interact with anyone. There was a problem though: I was scheduled that afternoon to go to the nursing home to lead a mid-afternoon service.

Leading worship requires energy. There is a kind of performance involved. It requires having something inside me to offer to those who take the trouble to show up and listen. And the one thing clear to me was that I didn't have such energy – I didn't have anything inside to offer anybody.

But I knew I had to go, and at some point I simply accepted the fact that I would go in the spirit of that old hymn we sang a couple of weeks ago: "*just as I am without one plea.*" There was a kind of letting go that took place – a sense of surrender.

I was one of the "poor in spirit" going to spend the afternoon in the company of some others who were also "poor in spirit." There was no show for me to perform. I went in the simple awareness that we were all in this together.

This internal surrender slowed me down in a way that made me unusually present to the moment. I let go of the worry about what I would say or do beyond the present moment. I remember going around the room of mostly old ladies in wheel chairs, taking time to greet each one, looking into their eyes and clasping their hands. There was a real soul connection that took place. I was conscious of them being particularly beautiful – of a kind of light shining forth from them.

I spoke words -- words that not only they but also I needed to hear – the truths that I believe are at the heart of Jesus’ ministry -- that even when we can’t feel it, God’s love is the deepest reality of our lives. That we are cherished by the one who created us out of love and has knit us all together as one. That a place is prepared for us in the kingdom of heaven, and that afternoon that kingdom touched down for us in that nursing home.



I have preached in nursing homes literally hundreds of times since, and although I am always blessed in some way by the experience, to this day that experience was different than any other. Eternity touched time. Typically I come away from preaching in nursing homes with some degree of fatigue, but strangely that afternoon I

came away feeling replenished. Those old ladies and I had feasted together on soul food.

In a few minutes we will share together the sacrament of Holy Communion. It occurred to me that there could have been some similarity between what I experienced that day in that nursing home and what took place on that night knowing he was about to die Jesus shared a last supper with his friends.

That night Jesus himself would have been one of the “poor in spirit” – exhausted, depleted, mourning the life he was leaving. The next day he would express his utter emptiness when he cried out on the cross, “My God, my God why hast thou forsaken me.”

Together in their shared poverty of spirit, the kingdom of heaven touched down in that upper room.

Let us acknowledge our poverty spirit, and in doing so may we also catch a glimpse of the Kingdom of heaven breaking forth here on earth.

In the kindness of Jesus,  
Pastor Jeff

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Looking back in February - we held our Bible study looking at one woman from the old testament and one from the new testament. Next --- all women are invited to:

**Wednesday, March 4<sup>th</sup>, 7 p.m.**  
PROGRAM: Our very own **Pastor Jeff** will regale us with stories about his family vacation to Ireland.  
Refreshments will be served

March 8 – Daylight Savings Time	March 11 – Girl Scout Sunday
March 17 – St. Patrick’s Day	March 20 <sup>th</sup> – Spring Begins

GET WELL wishes to those of you who are ill, and  
HAPPY BIRTHDAY to those of you celebrating this month with Angela Nolan and Karen Wilk.

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.

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.

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The **Youth Group** is back up and running! A joyful organizational dinner/meeting was held on February 9<sup>th</sup> and enthusiasm was shared for **meeting approximately every other Sunday evening** with a



combination of fun, service project planning and spiritual nurture. **Meetings will begin at 6:30 with a light shared meal and end at 8:30 p.m.** Meetings are set for 2/23, 3/8, 3/22, 3/29, 4/19, 5/3, 5/17 5/31, and 6/14.

There is room in the circle for other youth grades 7 through 12.



Our youth held a successful Super Bowl Sub Sale that raised money for Homeless Solutions.

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**On Sunday, January 26<sup>th</sup> the service of Fred Schlosshauer to our church was gratefully acknowledged with the following proclamation:**

**Fred Schlosshauer** first became the treasurer of the Parsippany United Methodist Church in 1959. With the exception of three years when the role of treasurer was filled by others, Fred has served in this capacity right up until the end of 2019.

As treasurer it was Fred's unending responsibility to oversee multiple church accounts and making sure our bills were paid on time. During his time of service, our church paid for two major building projects that led to the great blessing that is our present building and sanctuary. During these years Fred bore the monthly stress regarding the uncertainty of whether there would be enough money to make both our church's mortgage payments as well as the rest of our church's financial commitments. Last year we rejoiced together as Fred made the final payment on our mortgage.



The work of treasurer is performed outside the limelight, without accolades requiring the quality embodied by Fred -- the humble heart of a servant. For fifty-seven years Fred was entrusted with these responsibilities that are so essential to our church's life and year after year he has proved himself altogether worthy of this trust.

At the age of 92 Fred has decided it is time to pass the torch of this great trust to another. And so on this day, January 26<sup>th</sup>, 2020 we pause to express our profound thanks to Fred Schlosshauer for his extraordinary and immeasurable service to our church and its mission. *"Well done, good and faithful servant."*

***(The symbolic "passing of the torch" was enacted between Fred and our new Treasurer, Alison Cogan.)***



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](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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**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 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

## 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, April 9th**.



**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, March 19th.**

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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. 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](mailto: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!

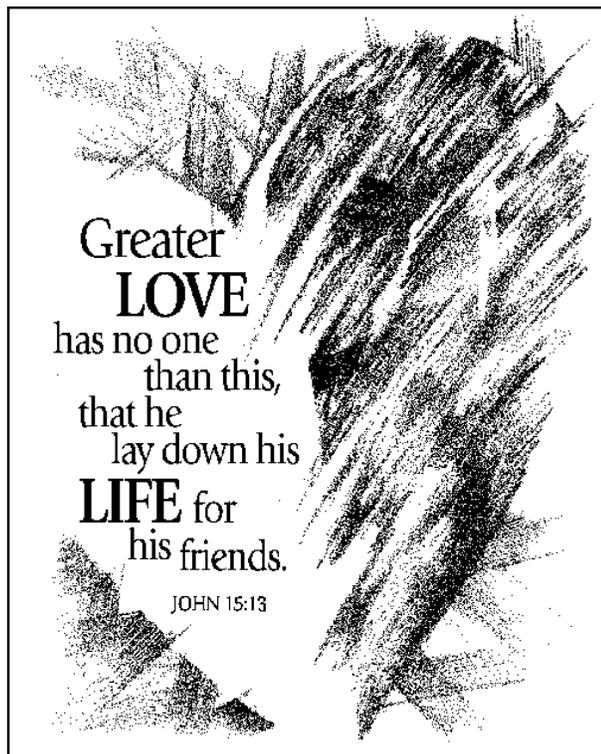
**Choir** – rehearses Thursdays at 7:45 p.m. We always have an "open robe" for anyone who loves to sing. We sing in 4-part harmony, so if you've sung in your high school chorus or any other equivalent, you have a great start! Speak to any choir member or Barb Bradley if you're interested.

**SCRIPTURE READINGS FOR MARCH**

<u>March 1</u>	<u>March 8</u>	<u>March 15</u>	<u>March 22</u>	<u>March 29</u>
Genesis 2:15-17;3:1-7	Genesis 12:1-4a	Exodus 17:1-7	1 Sam 16:1-13	Ezekiel 37:1-14
Romans 5:12-19	Romans 4:1-5,13-17	Romans 5:1-11	Ephesians 5:8-14	Romans 8:6-11
Matthew 4:1-11	John 3:1-17	John 4:5-42	John 9:1-41	John 11:1-45



MARCH BIRTHDAYS			
2 <sup>nd</sup>	Evan Nichols	20 <sup>th</sup>	Len Bostwick
5 <sup>th</sup>	Michael Weiss	20 <sup>th</sup>	Alexa Taylor
7 <sup>th</sup>	Ian Crawford	20 <sup>th</sup>	Rachel Weiss
7 <sup>th</sup>	Christina Sakelakos	21 <sup>st</sup>	Eric Christiango
7 <sup>th</sup>	Kristopher Hawkins	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Jared Gropper
9 <sup>th</sup>	Ryan Laux	22 <sup>nd</sup>	Brianna Laux
10 <sup>th</sup>	Anna Gripp	23 <sup>rd</sup>	Jim Simmons
10 <sup>th</sup>	Maya Roelofs	24 <sup>th</sup>	Karen Wilk
10 <sup>th</sup>	Daniel Duran	24 <sup>th</sup>	Angela Nolan
12 <sup>th</sup>	Alex Hawkins	24 <sup>th</sup>	Glenn Owens
12 <sup>th</sup>	Sue DeJessa	24 <sup>th</sup>	Frances DiPietro
12 <sup>th</sup>	Amy Gripp	25 <sup>th</sup>	Nancy McAllister
14 <sup>th</sup>	Debra Mortensen	26 <sup>th</sup>	Kate Eiring
16 <sup>th</sup>	Paul Larsen Sr.	27 <sup>th</sup>	Amina Thomas
17 <sup>th</sup>	Julia Sklow	28 <sup>th</sup>	Arlene Sklow
17 <sup>th</sup>	Daniel Wallace	29 <sup>th</sup>	Sarah Roberts
18 <sup>th</sup>	Anna Christal	29 <sup>th</sup>	Monica Hawkins
20 <sup>th</sup>	Andy Klekanos	31 <sup>st</sup>	Ron Gounaud



*March 2020*

*United Methodist Church of Parsippany*

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday																																																																																																		
<i>1</i> 10:00 AM Worship	<i>2</i>	<i>3</i> 7:30 AM Men's Breakfast  7:30 PM Twenty Touchstones	<i>4</i> 7:00 PM UMW	<i>5</i> 7:00 PM Bell Choir  7:45 PM Adult Choir	<i>6</i> 1:00 PM Men's Discussion Group	<i>7</i>																																																																																																		
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