



# The Open Door

November/December 2015



## *Happiness in the Most Wonderful Time of the Year*

*submitted by Pastor Brian Neville*

**Hillsdale  
United Methodist Church  
is a faith community,  
offering opportunities  
to all people seeking  
to know God,  
advance God's kingdom,  
and do God's will,  
by following  
Jesus Christ.**

**Hillsdale  
United Methodist Church**

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Please submit articles  
for the *Jan/Feb Open Door* to  
Lisa.Schoelles@hotmail.com  
by than **December 15th**

So often the season turning from fall to winter can make people unhappy. Folks get cold, head indoors, get each other sick, have to dig their cars out of snow and can't travel to friends and family like they would like to. Sometimes winter can make us downright miserable!

I heard a radio program recently that talked about people being happy. The main point was that happiness is directly correlated to our minds wandering. If we think about far away things, or really, anything other than what we are currently doing, we are infinitely less happy than when we stay focused on what is right in front of us. How crazy is that! As our church transitions through the major holidays of Thanksgiving and Christmas, I wonder if we will stay focused on what is right in front of us. It's easy to think of past years, loved ones far away, and presents that might be under the Christmas tree, but all of those things take our mind off of what really makes us happy – what's right here!

I am often nostalgic around Christmastime. I remember one year my mother declared Santa "evil" despite his true origins being that of 'Saint Nicholas,' a church bishop living in Myra in the 4<sup>th</sup> century. We decided to collect every Santa we could find and display them all together in the living room as a playful way to poke fun at our mother's declaration. Somehow we still managed to get Christmas presents that year. Christmas was also filled with memorable foods in our house. Homemade peanut butter cups and Brach's peppermint nuggets were always huge hits. But just writing about these things has made me wistful! Really, I need to be focused on this year, this Thanksgiving and this Christmas. What will my two boys experience? What can I do to make this year special? How can I share with family living across the country that I love them? Those are the thoughts that ground me in today and help bring me happiness.



As we look at where we are going as a church I want to take a moment to celebrate a recent accomplishment. The new Stempel Memorial Library is completed and I am so excited to see this project come to fruition. Our Trustees and the Library Committee deserve our thanks and gratitude as we see this new ministry launch. I also look forward to our current goals of hiring a new youth minister and launching a new Saturday evening worship service.

Continued on page 9

## *From Your Lay Leader ...*

*submitted by Joanna Good*

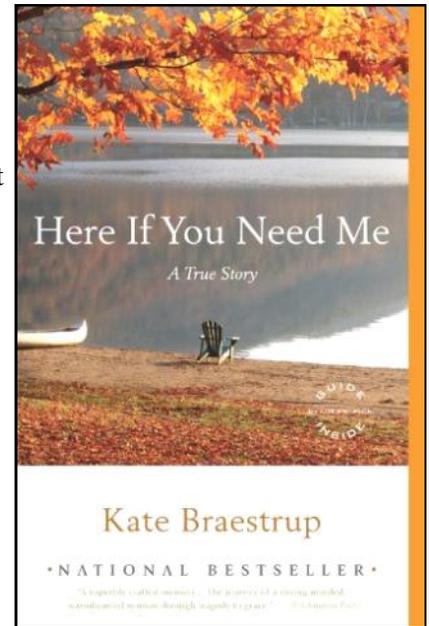
In preparation for the holiday season to come, I have been thinking about miracles. Miracles are those unexpected happenings that defy explanation and point to the divine nature of God and to God's love for us. And, of course, the miracle of love is what the Christmas season is all about. But what about more modest miracles that occur in everyday life that also point to God and to love? I began to think more about daily miracles involving every day people after I read the book, "*Here If You Need Me*", by Kate Braestrup, a chaplain in the Maine (game) Warden Service. Her story is about her journey in faith and her job, as she copes with the death of her husband and raising four children. It is a story filled with humor, Bible teachings to her children, and tales of the grimness of death and the beauty of life that inspires faith. (And the book is available in our new Stempel Memorial Library).

She believes miracles are not just defined by extraordinary events, but also by gratitude. She prays that her children's hearts will grow in gratitude, that their lives will be filled with an abundance of miracles. While miracles are temporary events that change lives for a certain time, she thinks most miracles "can only be the resurrection of love beside the unchanged fact of death."

And after her poetic and theological explanation of miracles, Chaplain Braestrup ends the book with a miracle experience, which I'll summarize. An elderly woman has wandered off in the backwoods country of Maine and cannot be found. Her son is worried and the state troopers are called in, the local police are there, as are the Wardens. Community citizens volunteer to help: those experienced in hunting and outdoor life and those not so experienced, but full of energy -- high school soccer players, college students with piercings, Army recruits waiting for deployment, convicts from a local correctional facility, stained glass artists, equestrians, old coots, a state Senator and his teenaged daughter. They all search in their assigned areas for hours, return to the command center for food supplied by townspeople, and share their stories, their lives, and food. The woman's son walks in, downhearted at the lack of success in finding his mother. He surveys the room and a smile comes to his face. "This is incredible", he says. The disparate bunch of people he saw gathered there were united together in community, preparing to go on with their search, together in their common purpose, a purpose filled with love. And the lost woman's son exclaims, "Everyone in the world is here. It is a miracle!"

For me, this is a story of how, in the midst of a life-draining and possibly life-lost experience, gratitude was expressed and love reigned. I think of this story often, on difficult days and during busy times. I try to be aware of community, of the ways big and small that others are reaching out, in caring, in respect for life, and in love. Small acts, temporary acts, but all point me to the miracle of love, love that originates in God's creative powers and love for us. Particularly during this holiday time, when gathered together with friends, family, with those like us and with those very different than us, it is my wish that we can let our hearts expand in gratitude and experience an abundance of the miracle of love.

*May the miracle of God's love, fill you at Christmas Joanna*



## *The Season of Giving Offers many Opportunities to be Generous ...*

### **Helping Hand Food Pantry**

**Turkey Drive** - please drop off frozen turkeys and/or grocery gift cards Saturday, Nov 21 between 9 am- Noon at the food pantry.

**Coat Drive** - Hillsdale Helping Hillsdale is having a coat drive for our neighbors in need. New & gently used coats can be dropped off at the Hillsdale Borough Hall, 380 Hillsdale Ave, from Nov 16-Dec 16 from 8 am-4 pm.

**White Gifts Drive** - Hillsdale Helping Hillsdale will collect gifts for anyone in our area who needs a gift - not just for children. Wrap your gift in white paper with a descriptive word discretely written on the wrapper. For example "adult" or "child". Gifts will be collected on Sunday, Dec 13 as part of the Children's Christmas Play.





## Welcome to our Newest Members

Cari Windt  
Rich Lam & Christina Tarasenko  
Ebony Shaaf  
Jay Ford

*"We give thanks for all that God has already given you and we welcome you in Christian love."*

**A**re you interested in becoming a member? Hillsdale United Methodist Church typically holds a two class session in September for new members, meant to help get you oriented to our church. The process is the same for transfer of membership. Call the church office and speak with Pastor Brian for more information.

## Upcoming Sermon Series

*submitted by Pastor Brian Neville*

Please invite your friends and family to join us this Holiday Season, Sundays at 10 am

Thanksgiving and Christmas services will be announced in our weekly bulletin and at HillsdaleNJumc.org

**All Saints Day, Veteran's Day, and Thanksgiving Services,**

**Advent Services including the Children's Pageant and the Cantata, followed by our Christmas Eve Services**



## Administrative Committee Summaries

**Nominations:** We are in need of a Connections Ministry lead, Emergency Response Coordinator, First Friends coordinator, Worship Committee co-chair, & Sunday School teachers. These roles can be as simple or as creative as you wish & can be shared! Please contact Pastor Brian to help our church fulfill our mission.

**Finance:** Finance is preparing for the Fall Stewardship campaign which will lead us to Stewardship Sunday on Nov 22. Look for our Stewardship letter in your mailbox and note that we are continuing our third (and final) year of *A Future with Hope* in our Campaign. Also, on page 9 of this newsletter, please note the final delivery dates for 2015 donations.

**Trustees:** The Trustees have enjoyed preparing the room for the new library/resource center. Thanks to all who helped to make that project a reality.

**SPRC:** The pastor and staff reviews are complete, and salary recommendations have been submitted. After an extensive search, we have hired a youth minister, who will be introduced to our church soon.

## Our New Library is Open for Business!



The Stempel Memorial Library was officially dedicated on October 18th. It was made possible by a generous donation from an anonymous benefactor to honor the memory of Ted and Joyce Stempel, long time Hillsdale UMC members who were avid readers and educators.

The Library's mission is to provide the congregation with materials to inspire and enhance their relationship with God. Come browse some Sunday morning during the coffee hour and learn how you can adopt a book (or two) to help the library be a self-sustaining ministry.



We continue to seek Christians called into a variety of ministries within our church. Currently, we seek: **Connections Ministry lead, Emergency Response coordinator, First Friends coordinator, Worship Committee co-chair, Sunday School Teachers & Substitutes, Ushers, Collection Counters, Choir Members (especially tenors)**. Please contact the church office with your ideas and your support, and help our church fulfill our mission.

**Be A Go-For!** From time to time we need to call upon volunteers to help out with various situations. If you can help, please contact Cathy D'Eletto at 201-664-5231 to join.

**Stay In Touch!** Let us know if your **Contact Information has changed** Please let the Church Office know of any changes to your contact information (name, address, home or mobile phone number, and/or email address).



We honor the recent passing of our beloved ones, and keep their families and friends in our prayers.

Robert ("Bob") V. Nixdorf

Helen J. Mueller

Betty Follansbee

Richard ("Dick") H. Englander

Allan Edward Atchison

## Happy Birthday!

11/01 James Suessmann	12/01 Marina Mehta
11/02 Madison McCausland	12/01 Jeffrey Berger
11/03 Michael Koons	12/03 Joseph Gemignani
11/03 Melody Atkinson	12/03 Leah Fox
11/04 Abigail Fox	12/03 Lana Pinon
11/04 Dean Bauer	12/04 Pamela Pierce
11/05 Ann Lahm	12/04 Holly Bosley
11/05 Christina Fanelli	12/04 Jack Ussher-Keushkerian
11/06 Chad Griffeth	12/05 Kenneth Porter
11/08 Meredith Martin	12/06 Jeffrey Ross
11/10 Jacki Stewart	12/07 Jennifer Fanelli
11/10 Raymond Kohan	12/08 Lucille Kramer
11/11 Madison Rausch	12/08 Carolyn Vezza
11/13 Vicki Brentnall	12/08 Michelle Schaffner
11/14 Ashleigh Chang	12/10 Ryan Friend
11/15 Jeffrey Brentnall	12/12 Nicholas Benoit
11/15 Donna Porter	12/13 Garren Pflueger
11/18 Brooklyn Bujas	12/15 Elizabeth Janssen
11/19 Donna Koeniges	12/16 Noelle Hoffman
11/19 Christopher Conti	12/16 Lilyanna Catalano
11/19 Myron Theilmeier	12/18 Ryan Drisgula
11/20 Richard Landau	12/18 Hailee Dapolito
11/20 Anna Rizzie	12/20 Lois Nacinovich
11/20 Steven Rizzie	12/21 Nicholas Pescatore
11/21 Michelle Rausch	12/23 Elijah Torres
11/21 Ashley Unger	12/23 Amelia Martin
11/22 Gordon Blinn	12/24 Cathy Bailey
11/23 Florence Finger	12/24 Anita Joseph
11/23 Samuel Porter	12/24 Lorraine Loew
11/23 Emily Keizer	12/24 Alyssa Martin
11/24 A. Marguerite Torres	12/30 Bradon Davila
11/25 Joan Kartan	12/31 Charlie Hill
11/25 Jeanne Kohan	
11/25 Addison Capogna	
11/27 Bob Salvati	
11/27 Derek Pflueger	
11/30 Ava Kohan	

### *RADA CUTLERY - Great Gift Ideas for College Students, Housewarmings, and Christmas!*

Rada Cutlery is 100% Made in the USA and Lifetime Guaranteed, and the proceeds from this ongoing fundraiser support our UMW missions.

See Sylvia to look over the catalog or [visit www.RadaCutlery.com/best/kitchen-knives](http://www.RadaCutlery.com/best/kitchen-knives) to preview the selection.

Place your orders with Sylvia Kleister at 201-666-1317



Sept-  
Oct  
@HUMC



## Hillsdale United Nursery School

submitted by Carol Stalter



The nursery school is off to a terrific start! Our 4 Year Old program is full, and our 3 Year Old program has just one spot open. The children are transitioning beautifully to the school routine. All are happy and enjoying their new experiences! Returning parents were impressed with the capital improvements made during the summer. Electric upgrades in the office, newly installed carpeting in the classrooms and office, and wonderful replacement windows throughout the building update our appearance and should prove energy efficient as well.

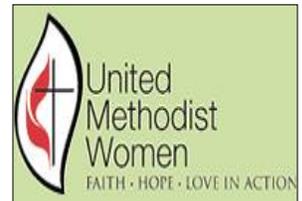
In our classrooms, teachers have introduced the letter "A" with lessons on apples. Jason Degise has generously donated apples and donuts for the "Dads & Donuts" program. Children sorted, graphed and tasted apples. The 4 Year Olds even made apple sauce! Thanks for the treats Jason! We had a "BLOCK" Party for our first Fun Friday. Children ate lunch at school followed by block building play in the Rainy Day Rooms.

We look forward to a wonderful school year filled with friendship and fun!

## United Methodist Women News

submitted by Vicki Brentnall & Sue Moran

Happy fall! The UMW had a busy start to our season this year with a fun evening at our annual meeting, with lively entertainment by Cali Molinelli, Myron Theilmeier and Sam Bennett. Bravo to all! Mission pins, greatly deserved, were given to Jay Ford and Rebecca Gattoni. And of course, there was a tremendous bounty of delicious foods for all to enjoy. Speaking of delicious foods, we made \$290 on our last Blue Moon fundraiser. Thanks to all who participated.



### Upcoming events:

- ◆ Circle meetings, Tuesday, Nov 10 and 17
- ◆ Executive board meeting/budget/planning, Tuesday, Nov 17 at 6:30 pm in the parlor.
- ◆ Taize service at Chatham UMW, Wednesday, Nov 11 at 7:30 pm. If you would like to attend you will need your own transportation or carpool with a friend. Contact Vicki at 201-264-8646 for more information.
- ◆ Bake Sale, Sunday, Nov 22 after service. UMW ladies, please bring your baked goods to fellowship hall before service and we will price them for sale. Please contact Vicki or Sue with questions.
- ◆ Circle meetings, Tuesday, Dec 8 and 15.
- ◆ General meeting and Christmas celebration: Tuesday, Dec 15, at 6:30 pm in Fellowship hall. Come enjoy dessert/tea/coffee and participate (or not) in our cookie swap and ornament exchange. Please contact Vicki or Sue with questions.



We also have an ongoing school supply collection, in conjunction with the Helping Hand Food Pantry. Please bring any new school supplies and place them in the collection bin, year round. Here's what is needed:

*notebooks, marble notebooks, 1" binders, 1-1/2 " binders  
pencils/pens/markers/crayons/highlighters, pencil box,  
folders, Post-Its, tissues/wipes, calculators/advanced calculators*

Our newest circle, the Mary circle, has had a great start with several members attending on the third Friday of each month at 7:30 pm at Emily Neville's home. Please let us know if you are interested in joining or being part of the UMW as a member-at-large.

*Peace and blessings, Sue & Vicki*

## Endowment Update

submitted by Mike Schoelles

It is hard to believe that the endowment fund is now two years old. Thanks to all who have given to start this important fund. Note that this could be an option if you have additional funds you wish to donate before year-end to get the tax breaks. I am including the information from last year as a refresher for everyone.

**What is an endowment fund?** An endowment fund is used to invest the donations in a specified fund or funds (similar to mutual funds) and use the interest from those funds as either operating funds for the church or reinvested for future use, leaving the original donations in the fund for perpetuity. In the beginning we will be reinvesting the dividends until such time that the dividends are substantial or we need to draw on the dividends.

**Who manages these funds?** We have chosen to use the Greater NJ Annual Conference to manage the funds. This will ensure that the funds the money is invested in meet the guidelines that the United Methodist Church has set up.

**Why an Endowment Fund, we have plenty of donation options already?** We wanted to provide an option to those who wish to donate to the church now, that will last in perpetuity. Yes, we ask for your time, talent and donations to sustain the mission of the church each year as part of our annual Stewardship Campaign. The Endowment is a method by which you can donate to the church that will carry us into the future.

**How can I donate?** You can make a donation now by giving a check and writing "Endowment" on the memo line, you can make an electronic donation securely online, you can remember the church in your will. You can also transfer funds from current tax sheltered accounts – Lois Nacinovich, Cindy Griffith or myself can provide you with the details to transfer those funds. You should work with your financial advisor on a strategy that is best for you. If you need an advisor, please keep in mind that Jim Geitz, from our congregation, provides these services and would gladly provide you with a confidential consultation without any obligations.

**What if I have further questions?** Please feel free to contact me at 201-263-1179 or [mschoelles@hotmail.com](mailto:mschoelles@hotmail.com) and I would be happy to answer any further questions you might have.

*Peace and blessings, Mike Schoelles, Finance Chair*



## Trustees Update

submitted by Timmy Hampton

## Green Faith Campaign

As Trustees of this Church, we are responsible for the nuts and bolts, bricks and mortar, and repair and replacement of our building and contents.

Two years ago the Trustees committed to a project to become more energy efficient and environmentally conscious, and in doing so, we will be able to re-direct savings from reduced utility bills to outreach and mission projects.

We had a company analyze our facility, and after much research into grants and programs that were funded by the State and PSE&G, we committed to a \$60,000 project to update and upgrade the large energy consumers in our building. Of that \$60,000, \$35,000 was granted, free money, and we paid the balance of \$25,000.

All the Greenfaith projects have now been completed successfully and should result in a \$5,000 annual savings in our utility bills. These projects included installing energy-efficient lighting throughout the buildings, the replacement of one air conditioning unit, and replacing the original 1954 Sanctuary windows with new energy-efficient windows. Thank you for your generous and continued support!

## Children's Gift Making



Soon it will be time for Christmas preparations. Our children will be able to make gifts for their families on Sunday, December 6 from 2:00-4:00 pm in Fellowship Hall. All they need to bring is a smile and to wear old clothes. Adult and Teen volunteers are needed to help. Please contact Jean Griffin if you would like to help at (201) 722-1135.

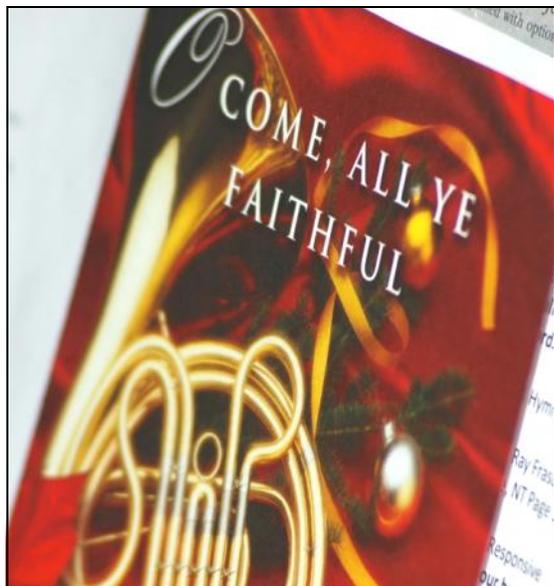
## Happiness in the Most Wonderful Time of the Year

*The Pastor's Open Door Message for November 2015 - continued from page 1*

Our staffing committee is in the midst of interviewing candidates for the position, and our Saturday service team has met several times to do 'test-runs' of our new service. We are staying focused on the goals of our church – to make disciples of Christ. We want people to know God through our worship, whether on Saturday, Sunday or one of our Thursday Evening Christmas Eve services coming up. We want people to bring the Good News of Christ to the world as we seek to advance God's kingdom through missions and outreach. What will you do to bless others in your community in the coming months? Finally, we seek to do God's will through our small groups. It is in our relationships with each other that we are able to encourage one another in our faith. What group do you meet with regularly and invite others to, so you can grow in Christ? Notice that our mission doesn't look at the past; it's about the here and now!

Stay focused on what is right in front of you, the task at hand, and you'll likely find yourself happy in the most wonderful time of the year. Be blessed as you do your part in helping our church continue to make disciples of Christ. If you need prayer in what is for some a very difficult time of year, be sure to reach out to me. God bless, Happy Thanksgiving and Merry Christmas!

*In Christ!, Pastor Brian Neville*



## Finance Committee Update

*submitted by Mike Schoelles*

Well it is once again time for the holidays to begin. Soon you will be receiving our annual Stewardship Campaign letter. I also want to let everyone know the deadlines for giving in the 2015 year. If you plan to give online electronically please note that if the transaction is processed as a credit card (or debit card) transaction that takes 2 business days to clear. Electronic fund transfers from a checking/savings account take at least 3 business days to clear. If you plan on donating electronically in December, please keep these timelines in mind -- the last day for electronic funds would be 12/28/2015 and the last day for a credit card transaction would be 12/29/2015 in order to ensure the giving is processed in 2015. If you would like to drop off cash or a check at the church, it must be received by noon on 12/31/2015 in the church office in order to be included in your 2015 statement of giving.

We are also in the process of planning budgets for 2016 and I will meet with all mission leads and committees to discuss appropriate budgets for next year. I look forward to talking with everyone and getting their input.

As always, if anyone has any questions regarding the church's financial position or suggestions for the Finance Committee please let me know. I would love to share anything you want to know.

*Peace and blessings, Mike Schoelles, Finance Chair*



## Join us for STEW!

**After Worship Service, STEWardship Sunday, Nov 22**

The Men's Group will be cooking up a variety of stews as a **Thank You** luncheon for our congregation, as we submit our pledges to the continued support of the Hillsdale United Methodist Church, *The Future With Hope* Campaign, and all our missions and ministries. And complete your luncheon with a visit to the UMW Thanksgiving Bake Sale for seasonal baked goods.





# Public Theology Advocates

Our motto is:

"Public Theology is what we do about what we believe."

"What does the Lord require of you?

To act justly and to love mercy and  
to walk humbly with your God." Micah 6:8

"Do your best to present yourself  
to God as one approved by God,  
a worker who has no need to be ashamed,  
rightly explaining the word of truth." 2 Timothy 2:15

This September, Lisa and Mike Schoelles joined *America's Journey for Justice* in Washington DC, and spoke with the offices of Rep. Garrett, Sen. Menendez, and Sen. Booker advocating for specific legislation currently being debated in Congress. Lisa and Pastor Brian produced a video discussing her journey and it is featured on the NAACP.org/ajfj website. In October, Lisa attended the *2015 NJ Anti-Poverty Summit*. And Lauren Brophy and Beth Enriquez joined the ministry becoming our newest advocates. Read more about this vibrant new ministry of our church at [www.HillsdaleNJumc.org/Public-Theology-Blog](http://www.HillsdaleNJumc.org/Public-Theology-Blog) - or contact our church office for hardcopy prints of our weekly posts - or contact Lisa Schoelles at [HillsdaleNJumcPTA@gmail.com](mailto:HillsdaleNJumcPTA@gmail.com) to learn how you can work for Justice in our local community.

# Remembering Christmas Past at Hillsdale United Methodist Church

*Caroling 2002*



*Children's Christmas Play 2012*





**Martin O. Seitz**  
 CFSP  
 Manager



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*Join us Christmas Eve  
 December 24th*

*Family service 7:30 pm*

*Traditional Candlelit hour 11 pm*



**Advertise your business in *The Open Door*.**  
 Call 201-664-5231 or email HillsdaleNJumc@gmail.com for details

***The Open Door***  
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