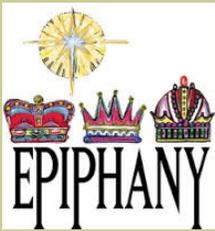




MERCER ISLAND
UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

Events This Month

January 6



January 13
Ad Council
7pm

January 18



Passing It On

January 2016

From Pastor John



Philippians 3:12-16

Happy New Year! I would like to say thank you for your faithfulness, passion and time for the ministry of Mercer Island United Methodist Church. It is a meaningful, blessed time for us to work and pray together. As we enter 2016 we need to reflect on Paul's spiritual wisdom: "Forget what is behind and reach to whatever lies ahead." As we start this New Year, we, too, should learn to forget what is behind us.

In Genesis 19, Lot's wife was told, "Don't look back at your old life. Look ahead. Move forward to your new life with God." God wanted Lot's family to go forward on a new journey, but she couldn't resist; she looked back and became a pillar of salt. People can easily become "a pillar of salt," frozen in place and unable to move forward because they are constantly looking back. They miss the joys of a new adventure with God.

Paul had many successes in his work and life through his mission. Many churches were made, and he was successful. But he confessed, "Not that I had already obtained, or had become perfect." He was humble and realized that the real value is in what lies ahead. He needed to forget what was behind him, and not bask in past successes, but instead press forward to gain God's prize which is more valuable.

We also have to forget our failures in the past and free ourselves from the pattern of self blaming. No one is perfect. Everyone has failures and makes mistakes in their life. These may be big or small. Forget your own past mistakes and failures; continuing to remember them is poisonous to your life.

We must trust and use our gifts in ways that fulfill the potential God gave us. We have to look ahead. We believe that God provides new opportunities. We believe that God uses our weaknesses and transforms us into stronger people. Those who have contributed to the well being of others were not perfect, but they overcame those imperfections and used their gifts by contributing to the welfare of other people.

This is Paul's spiritual wisdom for us: to forget what is behind and reach out to whatever lies ahead. Let's continue to draw a new picture for ourselves with God's help in 2016, as we stretch our hands out to whatever lies ahead with new eyes of faith.

*Peace and Grace,
Pastor John*