

JANUARY CALENDAR

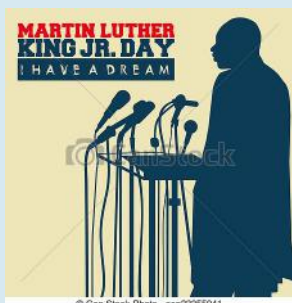
JANUARY 1st



JANUARY 6th
Epiphany



JANUARY 21st
Martin Luther
King, Jr. Day



FROM PASTOR JOHN

Resolutions can be a bummer or seem daunting, but kids have the right attitude about the New Year! Lily, 8 “My New Year’s Resolution is to not eat as much sugar. But I probably won’t keep it.” Joey, 10 “I am going to try new foods this year.” Kate, 8 “My resolution is to stop biting my nails because my mom says she is going to make me wear nail polish that tastes like rotten eggs if I don’t. Jonathan, 9 “My New Year’s Resolution is to not make one.”

As we enter the 2019 New Year, we need to listen to Apostle Paul’s important words of advice, don’t look back. He writes in his letter to the Philippians, “Brethren, I do not consider that I have made it my own, but one thing I do, forgetting what lies behind and straining forward to what lies ahead, I press on toward the goal for the upward call of God in Christ Jesus.” As we start the New Year, like the Apostle Paul we must forget “what lies behind and strain forward to what lies ahead.” There is natural human tendency for us to look back. There can be great value in looking back. We look back to learn. We look back to affirm the places and faces and circumstances from whence we have come. There can be a time for us to look back; the time when looking back carries with it a positive purpose. At the same time Paul tells us to “forget what lies behind.” Paul is saying don’t look back in a way that makes us prisoners of our past, because looking back in the wrong way enslaves us or enslaves others to past mistakes. Looking back in the wrong way does not allow the healing of painful memories. Even looking back at past accomplishments and success can keep us from discovering what lies ahead. “Forgetting the past” and not looking back is a very important wisdom to live our lives. You remember Hester in Hawthorne’s classic, “The Scarlet Letter” that because she was an adulteress, she was made to wear a big scarlet “A” whenever she was in public. She was branded because of a mistake she had made in her past. The townspeople kept looking back. We can never build any lasting relationships, we can never relate to one another like Christ wants us to unless we are willing to “forget what lies behind.” Don’t look back on those words and actions that were spoken in a moment of anger. Don’t look back on those mistakes that we all make. Instead, let us be kind to one another, tenderhearted, forgiving one another, as God in Christ forgave you. “Forget what lies behind.”

Happy New Year!

Pastor John

AROUND THE CHURCH

Therefore, if anyone is in Christ, he is a new creation; the old has passed away, behold the new has come.

2 Corinthians 5:17

2019 CHURCH COUNCIL MEMBERS

Chairperson	Dottie Hughes (Jan-Mar)
	Damon (Apr-Dec)
Pastor	John Chae
Secretary	Carla Corkern
Lay Member of Annual Conference	Carla Corkern
Alternate	Sanny Bold
Lay Leader	Linda Hodge
Finance Chairperson	Donna Dillon
Financial Secretary	Donna Dillon
Financial Committee	Bev Spiegelberg, At Large
Staff-Parish Relations	Carla Corkern
Trustee Chairperson	Caleb Neames
Trust Committee	Jim Maners, At Large
Nominations & Leadership Development	John Chae

The last sentence in the report I wrote for last year's annual charge conference said, "Even with challenges, however, the deep dedication and generosity of our members still supports and inspires us, and we joyfully and thankfully continue to function as a viable church".

Challenges have not gone away, of course, but this congregation continues to be a living example of what a committed, generous, and hard-working group of people can accomplish as we strive to be God's people in the world. This summary of the year's activities bears that out, and the individual committee reports will provide more detail.

One challenge that we began to anticipate a few months ago is the retirement of Pastor John. He has been our spiritual leader for soon-to-be 9 years and plans to retire in June of 2019. We will miss John's inspiring sermons and his gracious shepherding of this flock. Regina's musical talent has enriched many of our worship services, and her counseling work with the homeless has given us insight and opportunities to serve in the area of homelessness. John's retirement is well deserved, and we wish him and Regina happiness and blessings as they reach this milestone in their life journey. May we be in prayer for our district superintendent and for the cabinet and for our church as critical decisions are made about our next pastor.

In addition to Pastor John's inspiring sermons, other opportunities for spiritual enrichment and growth this year have included seasonal devotional studies in Lent and Advent (coming up in December), the Women's Weekly Fellowship, two Bible study groups for men, and the adult Sunday School class. Three guest ministers, including our own Rev. Carol Mariano, brought different insights and perspectives to our Sunday morning worship.



Newsletter Information

Passing It On is published the first working day of the month.

AROUND THE CHURCH (cont'd)

Ad Council Meeting

The Ad Council will meet January 20th after the worship service in the Library.

The annual Easter brunch and Easter egg hunt, which members and often family members from away attend, was followed by the baptism of the Chae's granddaughter, Paige, in the Easter worship celebration.

Another meaningful worship service was the annual All Saints Sunday on November 4th. A long-time member, Hazel Brown, passed away this year, and her family was present to light a candle in her memory. That was followed by a time of remembering and giving thanks as the congregation spoke the names of loved ones who have passed away in previous years,

Mercer Island United Methodist Church has always been a generous, caring congregation, and this attitude and effort continued this year. A contribution was made in January to Emergency Backpack Medics in Myanmar. A Pass-It-On Dinner raised funds for Mary's Place, and a large collection of moving-in supplies was donated to Mary's Place in November. Non-perishable food was regularly delivered to the Seattle-King County Emergency Feeding Program, and children's books were regularly collected for Atlantic Street Center's programs. With Regina Chai's assistance the Women's Group donated furniture for a homeless man's new apartment, and financial contributions were sent to UMCOR to assist in areas affected by hurricanes, flooding, and fires.

Our buildings and grounds are spacious and beautiful, but maintaining them requires a great deal of effort. Fortunately a number of dedicated and hard-working volunteers spend many hours each week doing the tasks that are necessary for the upkeep of our facilities. These tasks include regular cleaning of all parts of the buildings, maintenance and monitoring of equipment, repairs, pruning, weeding, and lawn mowing. We are deeply grateful for these volunteers and for the service they provide.

A generous gift from members provided for the painting of the exterior of the Education Building this year, for which we are very appreciative.

On the evening of November 4th, Pastor John, Rev. Carol Mariano, and I attended a "cluster conference", a gathering with members from three other nearby Methodist churches, for the purpose of gaining understanding of the issues of human sexuality and the church that will be the subject of the special General Conference to be held in February, 2019.

Pending at last year's charge conference was the issue with the former tenant of the parsonage. After much hard work on the part of the ad hoc committee (Chick Hodge, Caleb Neames, and Sanny Bold), the problem was resolved in late December, 2017. While every effort was made to mediate an agreement with him, the former tenant insisted on going to Small Claims Court with the result that the church received a settlement check for \$1,000.

Our district superintendent once told us, "Do not look back to what used to be, but look forward to what can be." The coming year will bring its own challenges and opportunities, and we pray for guidance, wisdom, compassion and inspiration to help us be faithful to our calling as followers of Jesus Christ.

Thanks be to God!

Dorothy Hughes
Administrative Council