

2017 and the Passing of Time

Could this date of our new year possibly be right? 2017? I have a hard time believing it. I was born so long ago if this right. I've had many people say that years fly by faster and faster the older we get. Well, I can certainly attest to this now!

Where does the time go? They say that time flies when you're having fun, but I don't remember have THAT much fun!

I suppose time is a relative thing. A child thinks of a year and it seems like longer than forever. They cannot wait for Christmas or their birthday to arrive. Then they cannot wait to turn 12 or 16 or 21. Adults see a year with a different perspective. They wish they were 21, 16, or 12 again!

The Bible speaks about time. There were long periods of waiting for God's people. Then we read how God's time is different than our time. Perhaps the most reflective passage about time in the Bible is Ecclesiastes 3:1-8:

"For everything there is a season, and a time for every matter under heaven: a time to be born, and a time to die;" (Ecclesiastes 3:1-2a)

This passage continues to outline other seasons and times for every matter under heaven. A time to plant, to kill, to break down, to weep, to mourn, to throw away stones, to embrace, to keep, to tear, to love, etc.

This reflective passage is also great to read as we enter a new year. Reflect on how you spent your time and what you did in the past year. Then look forward and contemplate how you will spend your time in this brand new year. Is there something you want to change in how you spend time? Is there a vacation you've been talking about for years but have never taken? What about time spent with loved ones or dear friends?

Time is a precious commodity, much more precious than money. Once time slips away there is no getting it back. If we do not use our time wisely there are only regrets. Time and how we use our time is of critical importance.

Some of us are nostalgic and think back to former times. We tend to romanticize the past and say things like "Back in the good ole days." The fact of the matter is, when we begin to unfold the details of those "good ole days" they weren't always so good after all!

Choose today, right now, how you will spend your time. Spend your time wisely. Reflect on the past, but live in the present. Live for today and be sure to cherish the time you have now in this new year!



Bob Shank

Daily Scripture Readings

January 1
Psalm 35

January 2
Psalm 36

January 3
Psalm 37

January 4
Psalm 38

January 5
Psalm 39

January 6
Psalm 40

January 7
Psalm 41

January 8
Psalm 42

January 9
Psalm 43

January 10
Psalm 44

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January 12
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January 14
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Psalm 58

January 25
Psalm 59

January 26
Psalm 60

January 27
Psalm 61

January 28
Psalm 62

January 29
Psalm 63

January 30
Psalm 64

January 31
Psalm 65

Gather! Grow! Make a Difference!

JANUARY 2017

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
1 8:30 AM Worship/Communion Sanctuary 9:45 AM Sunday School-Children through Adult 11:00 AM Worship/Communion Sanctuary 4:00 PM Soup Kitchen-Dining Room	2 1:15 PM Monday Tea Time-Nancy Haase's home 7:00 PM Cherub Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Nar Anon - Dining Room	3	4 2:00 PM Stitch & Pray Small Group-Lounge 6:00 PM Cub Scouts 7:00 PM Handbell Rehearsal	5 10:00 AM My Brothers' Keepers Quilting & Little Quilts-Downstairs 7:00 PM Scouts 7:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal-Sanctuary	6	7 9:00 AM Monroe County Farmer's Market
8 8:30 AM Worship-Sanctuary 9:45 AM Sunday School-Children through Adult 11:00 AM Worship/Sanctuary 4:00 PM Soup Kitchen-Dining Room	9 1:15 PM Monday Tea Time-Nancy Haase's home 7:00 PM Cherub Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Nar Anon - Dining Room	10 7:00 PM Digging Deeper Small Group-Conference Room	11 6:00 PM Cub Scouts 7:00 PM Handbell Rehearsal	12 10:00 AM My Brothers' Keepers Quilting & Little Quilts-Downstairs 7:00 PM Scouts 7:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal-Sanctuary	13	14 9:00 AM Monroe County Farmer's Market 5:30 PM Second Saturday Dinner Covered Dish-Dining Room
15 Family Promise 8:30 AM Worship-Sanctuary 9:45 AM Sunday School-Children through Adult 11:00 AM Worship/Sanctuary 4:00 PM Soup Kitchen-Dining Room	16 Family Promise 1:15 PM Monday Tea Time-Nancy Haase's home 7:00 PM Cherub Choir Rehearsal 7:00 PM Nar Anon - Dining Room	17 Family Promise 7:00 PM Digging Deeper Small Group-Conference Room	18 Family Promise 6:00 PM Cub Scouts 7:00 PM Handbell Rehearsal	19 Family Promise 10:00 AM My Brothers' Keepers Quilting & Little Quilts-Downstairs 7:00 PM Scouts 7:00 PM Youth Group 7:30 PM Choir Rehearsal-Sanctuary	20 Family Promise	21 Family Promise 9:00 AM Monroe County Farmer's Market
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The Membership and Evangelism Team
invites everyone to our January

Second Saturday Supper
January 14th at 5:30 pm

We'll provide:

Plates, utensils, and beverages

(iced tea, punch, and coffee)

Our Program will be:



*Come find out about this program that is
one of the local ministries we support.*

**Besides a covered dish to share,
if possible, we'd like you to bring one of the
following items that this program is always in need of:**
Cleaning supplies, laundry detergent, toilet paper,
tall kitchen or large heavy duty garbage bags, dish towels.

Help us plan: Please sign up in the back of the sanctuary or call the
church office (570-421-6020) and let us know how many will be
coming and what type of dish you plan to bring.

Questions?? Contact Peggy Stewart
570-424-0625 or bpstew@juno.com

January

To Serve You in January

Greeters 8:30

Jackie Herrero (all month)

11:00

1 Joni Singer

8 Sue & Bill Weitzmann

15 Sue & Charles Armitage

22 Joanne Reed

29 BJ Bachman

Ushers 8:30

Brad Hildabrant

Sue Scarborough

Kirsten Lee

Walter Roeckendorf

11:00

C.J. Penwell

Counters

Lynn Seip & Doris Philips

Altar Guild

Joni Singer & Betty Michelin

Soup Kitchen

Sunday Afternoons at 4:00 pm

1 Brian Dwinal, Jackie Herrero & Volunteers

8

15 Stroudsburg HS Key Club

22 McMichael UMC

29 First Baptist Church



OUR CHURCH STAFF:

Ministers	Everyone
Pastors	Bob Shank & Ted Good
Pastor Emeritus	Tom Anderman
Church Secretary	Jackie Herrero
Choir Director	David Lantz
Organist	Marti Lantz
Youth Leader	Bill Hardy
Handbell Director	Lynn Seip
Custodian	Matt Parton

OUR CHURCH LEADERS:

Daniel's Dream Team

Chairperson, Sue Scarborough

admin@poconoymca.org

Worship

Chairperson, Pastor Bob Shank

bobshank@stroudsburgumc.com

Property & Building

Chairperson, Dick Seip

relseip@ptd.net

Servant Resource Team

Chairperson, C. J. Penwell

cjpen53@ptd.net

Stewardship

Chairperson, Paul Edinger

paul.edinger@stroudsburgumc.com

Missions

Chairpersons, Ruth Weber & Kathy Cook

Membership & Evangelism

Chairperson, Peggy Stewart bpstew@juno.com

Lay Leader

Beryl Hellgren

bykoh@verizon.net



January Birthdays

- 5 Christopher Cook
- 5 Elizabeth Miller
- 6 Kevin Kopec
- 8 DeAnn Harris
- 17 Karen & Pete Vaughn
- 17 Vivian Cobbs
- 21 Dan Herrero
- 22 Carole Everitt
- 25 Marina Maroney
- 25 Cathy Doane

**If you would like a card on
your special day,
please call the church
office - 570-421-6020**

thank you!

Rosemary Levy would like to thank everyone who sent cards the week she was our Special Member of the Week. Your thoughtfulness is much appreciated.

The staff at PMC/VNA Hospice would like to express thanks to SUMC for the use of our church for their service of remembrance on November 20, 2016. "The facility and warm welcome we received was a very great blessing for our program. Please convey out gratitude to your church and pastor for the rich blessing we received. Again thank you all so much."

Rev. Dr. Dean D. Frey, Hospice Chaplain PMC/
VNA Hospice of Monroe County

Thank you everyone for the contributions to our Sunday Soup Kitchen & PATH. All your gifts will be used to help families in both groups. The Sunday Soup Kitchen is going into its winter season and the number of guests has already increased.

A special thank you to Audrey Weber and Kelly Edinger and their team for bringing everything downstairs to be sorted and placed in the soup kitchen pantry. The presorting and organizing Audrey and Kelly do is a big job and much appreciated.

Thanks again, everyone. We couldn't do it without you.

- Beryl Hellgren

Thank you Family Promise Volunteers

As 2016 concludes a big thank you to all the Family Promise volunteers. The efforts of the dependable volunteers who make time during each host week and the new volunteers who stepped up to assist for the first time are appreciated. As a church we pray for the homeless and those in unfortunate situations. The Family Promise program is a way to put hands and feet to our prayers. SUMC hosted six times during 2016. We made it through the January blizzard and the sweltering July heat. A total of 22 volunteers from SUMC and volunteers from Wooddale UMC, Cherry Lane UMC and the Unitarian Universalist Church helped to host 15 families (18 adults, 35 children). The families greatly appreciated having a place to stay, the delicious meals, good fellowship. Our efforts in the Family Promise program helps families stay together while they are working on ways to get back on their feet. Let us recall the words of Jesus, Matthew 25:40 "...truly I tell you, whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters, you did for me". The 2017 SUMC hosting schedule is posted and the sign up sheets are posted for the host week of January 15. Those who are able please consider a way you can help with this program. Dinner meals, overnights and assistance with laundry is always needed. It may be helpful for several people to work together to provide a meal. If you have any questions about this program or ways you may be able to help, please speak with Kathy Cook. Thank you.

God bless you,

Kathy

SUMC Tree of Life

In 2017, we are planning to move the Tree of Life from its current location in the foyer behind the Fellowship Room to the Narthex. Also being planned is having leaves available for purchase and having the leaves dedicated in memory of or in honor of a person or persons.

The cost of leaves is still being decided.

Names will be engraved on the leaves and they will be attached to the tree.

Proceeds from the sale of leaves for the Tree of Life would be put toward the church Bell Tower Repair Fund.

Please watch for updates in weekly bulletins and eNews.

Dry Season is Coming

ON DECEMBER 4, 2016 BY MOLLY MARONEY IN UNCATEGORIZED

In Tanzania there are two main seasons: the rainy season, stretching approximately from mid-November until early May, and the dry season from May until mid-November again. So 6ish months of each. The starting and ending dates vary a bit by region, but in the end everyone gets about half and half.

Each season comes with its magical, joy inducing characteristics such as the obvious addition of water during the rains or the ease of travel when it's dry; but each season comes with its challenges as well.

With the slow, fizzled out end to the rains life does not immediately screech to a halt. This is actually one of our busiest times of year – the corn, millet, sorghum, and sunflowers, our main crops, have all reached their full height thanks to the floods of water we get coming down from the ridge of the valley. This water will continue to leech out of the rocks for another month or two, leaving our farmland moist and fertile even with the absence of rain. The days, which are dry and cool, are spent weeding the farms and tending the garden – produce like tomatoes, spinach, cabbage, and oca – which doesn't get planted until the very last leg of the rains because that is the time when there is the least amount of bug interference. The grains are as high as an elephant's eye, drying in the sun. But this leads to problems. As water sources become fewer and fewer and as the leaves start to dry up the way is paved for hungry, hungry elephants. In the forests around my village resides a nice smattering of wildlife – *Twiga*, giraffe, *Punda milia*, zebra, *Digidigi*, dikdik, water buffalo, *Fisi*, hyena, and *Tembo*, elephants among other smaller animals. Most animals keep to themselves, the giraffe are hunted a little (I've been told 5-8 a year), but the elephants are a problem, coming into the farms as their food runs out to eat the grains setting in the fields. They also know that humans have water and will try to open water collection sources to get a quick drink. Because of this farmers take precaution and use the time during the rains to plant and maintain live, natural fencing. By surrounding the farms with plants such as sisal and acacia that have natural thorns or stickers, the elephants will be discouraged and less like to trample and eat the crops.



Large sisal around a farm

Although the main businesses in my village are honey and livestock there are a few individuals, like my friend Saidi, who have drifted away from subsistence farming and begun dabble in agrobusiness. Vegetables such as sweet potatoes, tomatos, oca, and Chinese lettuce are particularly common.

Saidi and his family have worked the same plots of land for decades, farming sweet potatoes and tomatos at the start of the dry season. His plot of land lies in a small valley with a particular ability to retain water long after the surrounding land has gone dry. He says you can tell places where water “gets stuck” by looking for outcroppings of a tall grass, 2+m high, which indicate water is present. Saidi pays some teenage boys at the start of every season to dig shallow wells around his farm then he will use a long stick with a bucket at the end to haul up water for the plants. He'll haul well over 100 20L. buckets a day. *Hapa Kazi Tu* “There is only work here.” The work pays off, and come July/August it will be time to harvest. The money Saidi makes from the thousands of pounds of potatoes he harvests will go toward his family's needs, more livestock, and, he hopes, a generator powered hose so he can stop hauling water by hand every day.

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Tall grass on the edge of the sweet potato farm indicates there is a store of water



Fresh "viazi vitamu" – sweet potatoes



Saidi harvesting sweet potatoes with a djembe, a large hoe

Once August rolls around life starts to slow. The farms have been harvested, grains threshed or hung to dry. The best ears of corn are selected and hung in the sun to save for later when food and money start to run low. The world has slowly turned brown. The cool, crisp weather from May, June, and July is replaced with a constant bombardment of heat. Even the nights, usually cool and quiet, are oppressively hot with winds that whip dust around in whirling tornadoes. This is the time of year when little happens. Any necessary work is done in the early morning and finished before noon, the rest of the day spent searching for a cool place to escape the heat. As the heat rises up from the earth in shimmering waves and all of the moisture is sucked from the air it seems as though nothing productive could possibly be happening. But there's always something going on.



With no crops, the fields lie in wait

Sun streams through the trees on a cool, dry morning



These stifling days are perfect for some very specific kinds of work. With dry air and lots of wind, it's the perfect weather for drying seeds and fruit to save for next year's planting. The vast open spaces of dry farm land also allow for the business of brick making. Giant holes are dug in the ground, water is added, then the mud is formed into bricks. Normal mud bricks sit and dry in the sun, while clay bricks are fired first to make a more weather resistant brick. Once the bricks are dry they'll be used to build houses and other buildings.



Mud bricks drying in the sun

Clay bricks after being fired

October brings around the final and most brutal leg of the dry season. The roaming cattle have cleaned the fields of any possible remaining vegetation and it is hot. Scorching. Like wearing a fleece at the beach in July. Very little is done at this point – most people are just biding their time until the rains come. I like to set a bucket of water in the sun for a few hours so by late evening I have a nice warm bucket bath. Seemingly life has gone dormant. But not everywhere. Starting around early October the trees, which have kept a store of water, tap into their reserves and pump out a proud display of foliage, signaling the rains are not too far off. With the emergence of fresh green, everyone knows it's only a matter of 6-8 weeks before the rains break the heat.



Late dry season. Nothing is left

Empty fields



Dry season survival kit



Calves glean the remaining millet stalks from the fields

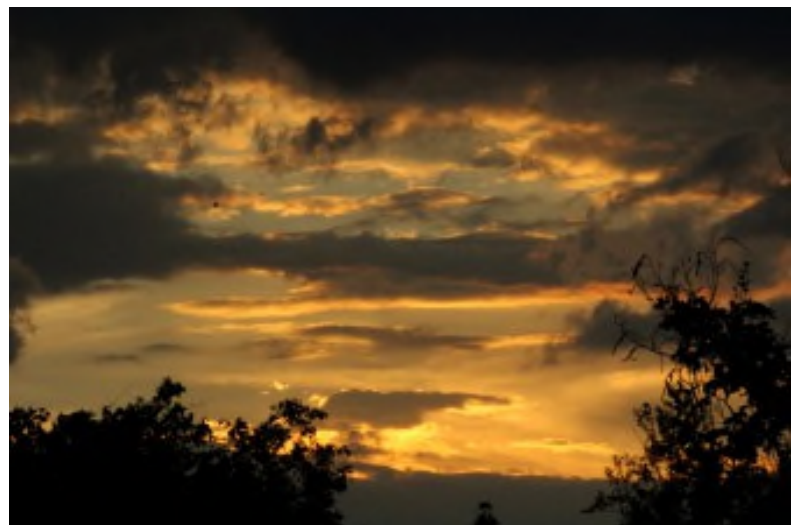


Waiting for a hot bath



A mama collecting firewood

Around mid-November the short rains arrive and almost immediately life returns. Within 3 days the ground is covered with a fine coat of emerald and the farmers are at the fields with their plow teams. The cycle begins again with new joys and new challenges.



Sunset over Unyampana

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January 2017

