The True You

At this time of year, we imagine ourselves into the fullest or truest expressions that we hope to be. Goals are set, resolutions are made, and the journey begins yet again with the turning of a calendar year. Happy New Year!

But this year, I wonder if we might discover not who we hope to be but, in fact, who we truly are. What if our "Imaginary Me" were actually based on who we really are? This is often referred to as the search for our true selves. This concept has been unpacked by mystics, contemplatives, and other theology nerds since the time of Jesus. Talk to any searcher — in fact, just talk to any person — and you will see this is a part of what we all struggle with.

Thomas Merton shares,

"Every one of us is shadowed by an illusory person: a false self. This is the person that I want myself to be but who cannot truly exist... My false and private self is the one who wants to exist outside the reach of God’s will and..."
God’s love—outside of reality and outside of life. And such a self cannot help but be an illusion. We are not very good at recognizing illusions, least of all the ones we cherish most about ourselves.” (portions taken from “New Seeds of Contemplation”)

In our January series, we will try to discover our truest selves. My recommendation is that you not try it alone. In fact, groups are the perfect opportunity to find grace, love, friendship, and peace. We will share our hopes, dive into Scripture and the life of Jesus (Matthew chapters 3 & 4), and offer our prayers for each other.

Be part of a circle this New Year. You can join a group by going to our website www.sentforothers.org or through our church app. You may also contact Melissa Nyoni at 484-883-2774 for more information.

Be known. Let others help you on the journey of discovering the true you.

Rev. Michael P. Smith, Senior Pastor
michael@sentforothers.org
908-735-7025 Ext. 1

Sermon Series: Imaginary Me

Who are you really? Who did God create you to be? Join us on a journey to discover our truest selves.

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<th>January 7</th>
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December was a fun month at The JYM! Our group attended the presentation for the 2017 Honduras mission trip – which several of our advisers went on! We also had guest artists come bless us with their musical talents and ministry story.

Oh, and we had an amazingly fun Christmas party full of crazy games and lots of delicious snacks. This has been a life-changing, Spirit-filled year for our youth program, and we are excited to see what the Lord has in store for 2018.

January Events

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~ Mecan Payne, Director of Youth Ministries
mecan@sentforothers.org 908.-735-.7025

Is getting organized on your to-do list for 2018? Online giving is a great way to simplify your life. From your app, click on the “Give” icon in the middle of the screen, left-hand side. From your laptop, go to sentforothers.org and open the “Give” tab at the top right corner of your screen. Select “Make a recurring gift” if you’d like to schedule your gifts weekly or monthly. Thank you for your generosity.
Sunday School News

Christmas was a wonderful season for our kids in Sunday School! We spent most of the month preparing for our Christmas Pageant and learning about the first Christmas. This year’s pageant, “Come to the Manger,” was a huge success! Thank you to all of the Sunday School teachers and parents who made it possible. Thank you also to our amazing children, who did a great job singing and telling the story of Jesus’ birth!

In January, the children will be learning about “Commitment – making a plan and putting it into action.” If we want to know God better, we need to practice our faith. But this isn’t something that comes naturally to any of us. That’s why we need a plan to put into practice. And the best place to start is with faith skills. Throughout the month, we will learn about four faith skills – hear, pray, talk, and live. Kids will get a chance to see these skills in the Bible and learn how to apply them to their lives in a practical way.

Thank you again for your support of the children and our Sunday School program. If you have any questions about Sunday School or would like to volunteer for this important ministry, please Contact Melissa Nyoni at melissa@sentforothers.org.

Moms’ Group

Our Moms’ Group meets one Saturday a month from 9:00 a.m. to 11:00 a.m. in the church social hall. The next meeting date is:

**Saturday, January 13, from 9 a.m. to 11 a.m.**

Babysitting is available but must be reserved in advance.
All moms are welcome!

Want to learn more? Contact Jill Puleo at 908-455-0706 or jill.puleo@merck.com.
Starting this month, our Administrative Council will break into two separate bodies:

- Council on Ministries (Chair: Kelly Dunn)
- Administrative Board (Chair: Nick Tonzetich)

This graphic describes the new leadership model.
Clinton United Methodist Church is a community of people sent for others. We hear that every week but have you ever stopped to think about how that works?

Consider that in 2017:

• 76 people spent 106 hours serving guests from Family Promise
• 15 people spent 4 hours working at Raritan Valley Habitat for Humanity
• 23 people spent 6 days in service at The Philadelphia Project
• 4 people spent 7 days in service at LAMB Institute
• 4 people (average, per week) spent 30 hours total volunteering at the Norwescap food bank

That’s a lot of people and a lot of hours!

But those estimates do not include the countless hours that others spent in service last year.

Add in:

• All the hours and people collecting supplies to pack and ship 20 flood buckets
• All the people who spent one Sunday afternoon a month visiting folks at Rolling Hills Nursing Home
• All the people who shopped for and delivered shoeboxes for Operation Christmas Child and gifts for the CUMAC Angel Tree

And that’s not all. Think about all the people who cooked a meal for someone who was sick or shut in, went to visit a friend in the hospital or at home, volunteered through work or simply served on their own because, well, they know they are sent for others.

And remember, our church tithes; in other words, we allocate 10% of all the funds given every Sunday to missions. Those funds are distributed to about 10 organizations. Those funds support mission work locally and around the world. Through November, missions had a total of $49,612 available for missions. Of that, we allocated $49,590, leaving us a balance of $22.

So as we begin a new year of understanding and learning what it means to be sent for others, the missions team says thank you for your time, your service, your resources and your willingness to say yes when you get the call to serve.

- Greg Crawford, Missions Chair
  gcrawf216@gmail.com
  908-236-0371

Letters of Thanks

Dear CUMC Family,

Thank you for the Christmas gifts! We so appreciate your thoughtfulness and generosity. We are looking forward to another year of serving in Jesus’ name with you, and we can’t wait to see what the new year brings! With love,

- Pastor Michael, Sandi, Mecan, Corbin, Melissa, Beth, Andy, and Karl

Dear CUMC,

At this time of year, it is a joy to pause and thank the many people who have supported us in our mission of aiding in the relief of hunger in our community. Thank you for your support!

- The NORWESCAP Food Bank Staff
Community Groups

Life Is Better Together!

Community Groups Begin Week of
January 14

To join a group, visit www.sentforothers.org
The Guzman family recently returned from a mission to Mexico to work with children and families affected by the recent earthquake there. Clinton UMC supported the effort with gifts and prayers. A letter from Lu follows.

Hello dear people,

Some of you have asked me to share photos from our Sunday School—blessings to the children in the area affected by the September earthquake in México.

Thanks so much for your support, the prayers and especially for all the love. The “monaguillos” (altar boys and girls) are still talking about the children from Clinton, and all the blessings they’ve received from them. They all are covering themselves with their blankets at night; keeping Jesus’ light (the small flashlights) at hand; and of course, remembering the blessings you’ve sent to them (plastic snowflakes) that remind them of your love and prayers.

You have no idea what these mean to those hurt and scared little hearts. Your presence in their lives is now engraved in their memories and hearts. They had a presentation at church on the third Sunday of Advent about how to regain confidence and hope, and continue to talk with the congregation about rebuilding homes, faith and hearts. They will share with the congregation their light, which we concluded at the end, is a very important commitment.

I will never be able to thank you enough for inspiring the little ones, here and there, to let their lights shine!

Sent for others, with love and gratitude,

Lu Guzman
**Discipleship Fund**

At Clinton UMC, we believe that everyone should have access to initiatives that help them grow as disciples. Unfortunately, cost can be a deterrent, and the lack of a formal fund makes it hard for some to seek and receive assistance.

To consistently support Walk to Emmaus scholarships and other discipleship and ministry opportunities, CUMC is creating a new “Discipleship Fund.” This fund would support not only Emmaus but also expenses related to community groups and other ministries that further our walk with Jesus.

You’re invited to support this endeavor by giving through our website, app, mail, or during our regular offering time. Please mark your offering “Discipleship Fund.”

**Show You Care: Share Coffee!**

Every Sunday morning, coffee, tea, and hot chocolate are ready by 8:00 in the social hall for all the early birds; then, during the “fellowship time” between the services, goodies and juices are also available.

A big “thank-you” to our December hosts.

In addition to hosting fellowship time every Sunday, and shopping and maintaining the kitchen and supplies, the Care Committee assists with receptions (including funerals), church picnics, etc. throughout the year. The Care Committee always welcomes help with all events: find out how you can help, even one time a year, by contacting Mary Fitzpatrick at mefitz62@hotmail.com or Rosie Ranauro at roseranauro@embarqmail.com. You can also talk to any Care Committee member.

The host scheduling calendar and calendars for remaining months of 2018 are on the bulletin board in the social hall: choose your Sunday to host by putting your name on that Sunday. If you want someone to host with you, please contact Rosie.
Flower Dedications

1/7/18  Available
1/14/18  Chris & Sandi Graham  
*In honor and memory of*  
Martin Luther King, Jr. and  
Mr. Bill Barber
1/21/18  Available
1/28/18  Rus & Karen Titus  
in honor of their 53rd  
Wedding anniversary

Nursing Home Ministry

On the third Sunday of each month, a group from CUMC visits the Rolling Hills Nursing Home at 2:30 p.m. for a time of song and fellowship. If you speak with Ed Davis or any one of the people from our church family who have been to Rolling Hills for this special ministry, you will hear about the power of love and encouragement between people. We encourage you to consider joining the group any month!

Prayer Chain

We would love to add you to our prayer chain to receive the prayers of our people each week. We appreciate every prayer that is lifted for healing and comfort for those who are in a time of trial. You may also join us in the sanctuary each Thursday at noon to pray for our friends and loved ones. Prayers may be sent to the church office through our app or email.

Prayer is a treasure that is never exhausted.
The church does not receive mail at 12 Halstead Street (the church) or 10 Halstead Street (the church office).

Ensure your mail is not lost: Send mail to the church’s Post Office Box in Clinton:
P.O. Box 5331, Clinton, NJ 08809

Send packages to 10 Halstead Street, Clinton, NJ 08809.

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