

Week of December 25, 2022



From Woody: . How do you know it is a new year? Weight loss ads are all over tv and the Y parking lot is full. As human beings and Christians we all recognize that we are far from perfect in either the human or the Christian department. New Year's resolutions are a worthwhile enterprise. Certainly, God is welcoming to our prayers for help in becoming healthier or more loving, patient, kind or compassionate in our daily lives. And with His help we can try to improve ourselves, physically, mentally and spiritually. This is always

for the good whether at the beginning of a new year or any other time of the year. AA teaches us that sobriety is achieved with the help of our higher power and our fellow pilgrims on a journey to recovery. In our efforts we sometimes fail but our faith tells us that the loving God embodied in the life and teachings of Jesus understands and says, "I still love you and am with you. Get back up and try again."

I want to close with how these thoughts also apply to our life as citizens in a democracy. They were uttered by Barack Obama in his acceptance speech at the Democratic Party Convention in 2012. I found them in a wonderful book I received for Christmas by speechwriter Cody Keenan, *GRACE; PRESIDENT OBAMA AND TEN DAYS IN THE BATTLE FOR AMERICA*:

We don't think government can solve all our problems. But we don't think that government is the source of all our problems-any more than are welfare recipients, or corporations, or unions, or immigrants, or gays, or any other group we're told to blame for our troubles. Because we understand that this democracy is ours. We the People recognize that we have responsibilities as well as rights; that our destinies are bound together; that a freedom which only asks what's in it for me, a freedom without a commitment to others, a freedom without love or charity or duty or patriotism, is unworthy of our founding ideals, and those who died in their defense As citizens, we understand that America is not about what can be done for us. It's about what can be done by us, together, through the hard and frustrating but necessary work of self-government.



Annual Meeting will be held after church on **January 22**. This is a time when major decisions are made for the next fiscal year. We encourage everyone to come and bring a dish to share for lunch.



Other Meetings: Session meets on Jan. 10 at 7pm, preceded by a 6pm meeting of the Church Life committee.



Sanctuary Flowers: Volunteers provide flowers for the altar on Sunday. There is a signup list outside the office door at church, or you can email Ellen at andersel@njms.rutgers .

It is a wonderful way to contribute to the service; one can give in memory of someone or some event as well. Just let Ellen know. Flowers can be from your garden, the roadside, or the store. Vases are available in the kitchen if you need one.



Peace Quote: May the God of hope fill you with all joy and peace as you trust in him.....Paul Romans 15:13.