



HILLTOPICS –OCTOBER 2017

WILSON MEMORIAL UNION CHURCH WATCHUNG, NJ 07069 (908) 755-5020

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

Before you read any further, please do me a favor. Answer this question for yourself: Do I believe human beings are naturally and inherently empathetic? Take a minute to think about it. Have you got your answer? Still thinking? Just go ahead and make a “yes” or “no” decision, even if it’s a cautious one (remember, there are no “right answer” police looking over your shoulder!). Now that you have answered that important question for yourself, I invite you to read on.

Several years ago, a group of neurobiologists from the University of Chicago developed a series of experiments to study the roots of empathy and the results were published in the journal, *Science*. Using rats, they came up with a test to see if a rat would actually help another rat in distress. They took two rats who knew each other (cage mates) and proceeded to trap one of them in a narrow Plexiglass tube. The researchers observed that the free rat understood the distress of the trapped rat and worked to free it by crawling on the tube and biting it. And, researcher Peggy Mason says that if the trapped rat had a tail poking out, the free rat would actually grab the tail and pull on it. All this culminated in the free rat accidentally triggering a door open. In repeated experiments, the free rat learned to purposely open the door and help the buddy in need.

Here is where things got even more interesting. They put rats into a cage that held two different clear plastic traps. One contained chocolate chips. The other contained the trapped cage mate. Of course, to my way of thinking, I would have wondered if the free rat would go right for liberating the chocolate (we are talking about *chocolate* after all). I can just picture that rat scarfing it all up and then maybe thinking, “hey, I should let my friend go free!” (After all, we know rats use English, right?) What actually happened is astounding to me. Time and time again, rats that were free quickly opened both cages, in no particular order. And they did not eat all the chocolate — instead, they shared it with their fellow rat! Now, when they do an experiment where they teach rats to bake chocolate chip cookies for each other, well, remember where you first heard about these kinds of experiments!

I guess neurobiologists can safely say that rodents show traits of empathy. You see where I am going with this. If rats naturally exhibit empathetic behavior, I can’t imagine saying human beings are less evolved in this way. True, at certain times we wish we would see more altruism around. But, as I see it, caring behavior has to generally get unlearned and often bad, even evil influences provide such dismal instruction. Because empathy and compassion come naturally, isn’t our job one to encourage and foster a benevolent attitude at every opportunity we get? And if our innate biology isn’t enough of a motivator, my guess is the words of Jesus have always rung true for us, “Do unto others as you would have others do unto you.”

I know you, like me, welcome specific and timely opportunities to share as a way of expressing who you are as a human being and, even more importantly, who you are as a follower of Jesus’ way. I want to applaud our Executive Board and our Memorial Endowment Committee for partnering together and providing us

with a concrete way to express empathy and compassion to those who right now are experiencing such hard challenges due to the recovery from recent, devastating hurricanes. Please read carefully below about the designation of October as Disaster Relief Month at Wilson Memorial. I encourage you to donate generously from your financial resources. We can’t imagine the amount of hardship so many are still facing. In the past we have rallied together for particular causes with generous spirits and I know this time will be no exception. Thank you in advance for your contribution. Let’s hear it for empathy and compassion – values that are part of our DNA, that never ever go out of style, and that are exactly what following Jesus is all about!
Faithfully Yours, Barbara

OCTOBER is DISASTER RELIEF MONTH!

Donate to Wilson Memorial’s Disaster Relief Effort in the month of October and the **WMC Memorial Endowment Fund will MATCH your donation***

Wilson Memorial will be collecting tax-deductible donations the ENTIRE MONTH OF OCTOBER for disaster relief efforts. We are focusing our donations to provide disaster relief in the US and its territories through two organizations we have worked with through the years: Habitat for Humanity & Church World Service.

Great News!

The Memorial Endowment Committee and the Board have approved doubling of all of our donations up to a *total match of \$5,000 using Memorial Endowment funds.

How do I donate?

- ✂ Send a check made out to Wilson Memorial Church 7 Valley Rd, Watchung, NJ 07069. Mark your check with Disaster Relief and if you have a preferred charity, mark either Habitat or CWS. Otherwise we will split your donation and the match between these two worthy charities
- ✂ Simply fill in this form and wrap check or cash in form and deposit in collection plate.

NAME: _____

HABITAT FOR HUMANITY: _____ CHURCH WORLD SERVICE: _____

Please indicate method of payment:

CASH: _____ CHECK #: _____ TOTAL AMOUNT: _____

October 1st, World Communion Sunday
The Sacrament of Communion
The Sacrament of Communion will be celebrated in our Sanctuary as well as at Family Camp. If you are wondering whether or not to participate, be assured that you are invited and encouraged to share in Communion as one who loves Christ and seeks to walk with Him.

“What’s Brewing?”
October 8th and November 12th
11:20am in the Sanctuary

“What’s Brewing?” returns October 8! Join us for our second Sunday of the month program. Together we will view the film, ***Girl Rising***. As the film’s description states, “more than a film, ***Girl Rising*** is the heart of a movement that is spreading around the world spreading this powerful truth: educating girls in the developing world can transform families, communities, entire countries and break the cycle of poverty in just one generation.” Watching this beautifully filmed documentary will move you! At our **“What’s Brewing?”** program on **November 12th**, we will be hosting a very special guest: Alex Myrl, Principle Director of Children’s Academy and Learning Center of Haiti Partners. Join us as we learn first-hand about a wonderful program we have been supporting through onsite volunteerism (through the Haiti young adult trip led by Michael last January) and financial support!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

Second Sunday is Coming Back! Our Second Sunday youth program is Back and the **WHOLE FAMILY** is invited to our Homecoming Sunday on Oct. 15th @ 5 P.M. Ok, yes, we know it’s technically the **THIRD** Sunday this time, but we want all of you to enjoy the long holiday weekend, so we moved to the 15th for our **TACO IN A BAG** dinner, some fun with the whole family, and an introduction to Second Sunday’s this year! So come to Second-ish Sunday, Oct. 15th, 5 P.M. in Fisher Hall!

Trunk or Treat is now...The Forest of FUN! This past winter, the Boy Scouts gave us a gift of blazing a trail in our back woods. We thought there is no better way of introducing our new path to our community than by filling it with fun characters and spooky decorations! This could be the start of an **AMAZING** new tradition at Wilson, but we need a little help to get our forest ready! For three Sunday’s in October (8th, 15th, 22nd) we will be inviting people to stay after church for about 30-40 min to walk the trail with us and clear away sticks or any growth that happened over the summer so that our forest is ready for all the fun! Then on October 29th, instead of decorating your car, we will have a portion of the forest that is all yours to decorate and inhabit! It’s a great opportunity to work together for something truly unique! Forest of Fun will run from 12:30pm to 2:00pm.

Sunday Opportunities for Teens: Our teens have some unique opportunities to grow in their faith and as members of our congregation. There will be a “class” for 7th and 8th graders every 1st and 4th Sundays of the month and one just for high school every 3rd during the Sunday school hour. Alternating Sundays we will be welcoming our teens into various avenues of service. We are excited about this new venture for our teenagers. Blessings, Michael

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

October and fall bring mixed feelings – the end of summer, earlier sunsets (and later sunrises), back to school, back to regular schedules, but it also brings about warm feelings of

gathering the last of the vegetables and fruits from the garden, tailgating before a game day, cheering for teams with family and friends, perhaps a camping or hiking trip to enjoy the crisp autumn air. For me, I enjoy getting back together with our choir, where we enjoy singing along with the companionship and laughter that comes with friendship and the love of music to honor God. While there may not be many of us in the choir right now, we have such fun while we work hard to put our best into an anthem with the guidance of Jim and Roberta. It truly is a blessing to be part of the choir. Bell choir is an option for those that can’t sing, but can read music. Pam works with us to encourage the best we can be. Music is such an integral part of the church, and we would love to share the fun with anyone that would like to join with us. You do not even have to be a member of the church – just love music! Many Blessings, Lorri Monetti

BOARD BRIEFS...

1. **MINISTER’S REPORT** – The summer was busy with activity – Vacation Bible School (otherwise known as VBS), Mission Trip, the ICCC Conference, and our services in Fisher Hall throughout the summer. Now it is time to think fall.
2. We launched our program year with Welcome Home Sunday and the start of our new Sunday School Season. We had good support for the idea of wearing our church shirts. T-shirts were given out. We thank Pam Davis for designing the shirts. She ordered 107, and 27 are left, most are for kids. We also received donation to help defray the cost. The TeeBag in Berkeley Heights gave us a generous price. Hopefully there will be a lot of great and current pictures taken to put on the new website.
3. The choir has lost a number of members due to moving away. Please encourage people to join the choir.
4. Work is happening on the website. I want to say how grateful I am to Lorri, Yvette and Graeme Whitley, and Pam Davis for the hours and dedication put into it so far. In addition, quite a bit of work has gone into an online database called Churchtrac. We are putting in one place all the important information. Thanks goes to Pam Davis for the time she has given to entering the information along with Hugh for guidance.
5. It is the season for new programming. I really want to encourage your participation in the new book group I am leading, ***I Am Malala***. She has been described as “the girl who stood up for education and was shot by the Taliban.” The new book group meetings will be held September 26th, October 10th, and 24th as well as November 7th and 21st at 7pm.
6. In October the “What’s Brewing” programs will begin after the Worship Service on the second Sundays. On October 8th, please stay after church for a viewing of the film ***Girls Rising***, which ties into the theme of the barriers to educating girls in different parts of the world. On November 12th we will have a special guest with us, Alex Myrl from Haiti. He is the Principal Director of Children’s Academy and Learning Center of Haiti Partners.
7. We are planning on doing the Ten Thousand Villages Sale again this year. I think it’s great to support this wonderful organization every other year.
8. Barbara would like to begin in November, the first Wednesday of each month - Chapel Wednesdays, evening 7:15-8, a devotion of music, spoken, guided meditation, and quiet time.

9. YOUTH & FAMILY DIRECTOR'S REPORT – Michael reported on the success of the VBS, with 49 attendees, as well as the youth mission trip, which consisted of 60% new teens. Michael also contributed a workshop at the ICCC while the teens swam at the hotel pool.
10. Michael reviewed the plan for the church youth and family projects for the coming year. Some of these small changes include children's involvement in the worship service, beyond a "children's sermon." Children and Teens as liturgists/musicians/contributors are vital.
11. Socializing for Good includes ideas for Healing Garden, Intergenerational Game Night, Story Telling, Dinner and a Movie, and a Family Tree of Faith.
12. Education – Family Meetings – where we invite families to come and discuss relevant social issues and how to discuss these things as a family. Two other ideas include Take Out Sunday School (for those children who missed Sunday worship but still want to learn and be part of the church learning), and Family Growing Goals.
13. Michael is looking to develop an intergenerational mission trip for next year, perhaps in the Houston area.
14. FACILITIES – Anthony Cito reported for this committee and review the laundry list of projects. They are all being looked into and are at different stages of work being done. He will look into the big potholes in the parking lot and have that taken care prior to the cold weather. The top of the list of repairs is the Exit lighting system.
15. The repair of the garage roof was completed, however it gave them the opportunity to see that additional structural support is required to ensure that the frame is stable.
16. PRESIDENT'S REPORT – Lorri informed the Board of the progress of the website, which required extending the contract of our current site on a month to month basis.
17. The Board voted to support a request to the MEC for matching funds for Disaster Relief Month in October. This request would be to encourage Wilson Memorial pledges for Disaster Relief, to be matched by the MEC, not to exceed \$5000, towards this. The Board decided we should provide support to two relief organizations with which we have had a long-time association, Church World Service and Habitat for Humanity. We propose to offer donors the option to choose either organization or to have their donation split between the two organizations.
18. The Board approved the donation from the MEC for the Peaceworks project for the amount of \$5000 to go toward the development of an aqueduct in the mountain area of communities around Esteli Nicaragua.

And finally, Gwen Mayer, our stalwart, dedicated Church Clerk, said goodbye and wished the board well as she leaves to move away. Also she thanked all for their help during her time with them and for the goodies we all enjoyed during the meeting.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS...

Maybe you have noticed our "Pet Food Jug" in Coffee hour. We would like the congregation to join with our Sunday School in collecting change (\$) each week for the animal shelters in our area. They need our help taking care of our furry friends from Texas and Florida. We will pass the "Pet Food Jug" around in Sunday School and it will be in the coffee hour each Sunday. It was a great start to the 2017-2018 Sunday School year.

Oct. 1st This week we conclude the story of "Solomon builds a Temple" and will have a music class related to the story.

Oct. 8th Second Sunday: Kids Church On the second Sunday of each month we will be having "Kids Church".

Oct. 15th The next 3 Sunday School sessions will explore the story of "Daniel and the Lions". This first session will have a creative Art class.

Oct. 22nd We continue the story and lessons of "Daniel and the Lions". With this, the 2nd lesson, the Sunday School teachers will have a cooking class.

Oct. 29th This week we will conclude the story and lessons of "Daniel and the Lions" and the Sunday School teachers finish this session with some creative Bible skills and games. Have you looked at the pictures that are also posted each week on the bulletin board outside the Fellowship Hall? They show what the kids have done that day in Sunday School.

We encourage the children to bring the following to Sunday School each week: Their Bible; Offering – (the Sunday School offering is used towards supplies and the Sunday School curriculum for all classes; Food for Starfish! (We have a container under the hallway "payphone" to collect food each week). We would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the Sunday School.

Sunday School office: (908) 755-5020
(Sunday) Home: (908) 668-0974 (Monday – Saturday)
Love in Christ, Arlene & Roger Seidel

WOMEN'S GUILD...

The Women's Guild will hold their first meeting on Thursday, October 5th at 11:30am in Fisher Hall. The meeting will be followed by "bring your own sandwich" luncheon. Dessert and beverages will be supplied. The program is from 12:30pm-1:30pm. All are welcome.

NEW BOOK GROUP CONTINUES, I AM MALALA...

Our new book group will read and discuss *I Am Malala* by Malala Yousafzai (with Christina Lamb). If you would like to be a part of wonderful and thoughtful discussions with others, consider this your invitation!

The new book group meetings continue on **Tuesday evenings, October 10th and 24th as well as November 7th and 21st at 7:00pm**. The meetings will be in group members' homes or at the church. Please let Barbara know if you would like join the group. **We would love to have you!** *I Am Malala* is available from any major bookseller.

INTRODUCING CHAPEL WEDNESDAYS IN NOVEMBER...

"Everyone of us needs a half hour of prayer a day, except when we are busy. Then we need an hour." St. Frances de Sales

Join Barbara in the Chapel on the **first Wednesday of the month** beginning in November (in March there will be no **Chapel Wednesday** due to our evening Lenten Soup Supper and service). **Chapel Wednesdays** are designed as a way to ground ourselves in prayerful reflection and silence. The time will be **7:15pm-8:00pm** and will begin with music, a very brief reading or spoken reflection on the theme of the night, a guided meditation and then a period of silence which you are welcome to use for your own private prayer practice. Printed instructions will be available for the practice of Centering Prayer. The first **Chapel Wednesday** will be **November 1st** and the theme will be **"Silence"**. Future **Chapel Wednesdays** and themes are as follows: **December 6th**, **"Incarnation"**; **January 3rd**, **"Breath"**; **February 7th**, **"Emptying"**; **April 4th**, **"Identity"**; **May 2nd**, **"Courage"**; and **June 6th**, **"Rest"**. Please take advantage of this monthly mini-retreat intended as an intentional time for refreshment and renewal! In addition, spread the word about **Chapel Wednesdays** with anyone you think might be interested but isn't necessarily connected to Wilson Memorial!

TEN THOUSAND VILLAGES SALE, SATURDAY, DECEMBER 2ND ...

Once again, Wilson Memorial will be hosting a Ten Thousand Villages sale and we need your volunteer help! The official sale, which will be open to the community, will be December 2, 10:00am-2:00pm (approximately). Help is needed with advertising, set-up, selling the day of and eventual packing up of unsold items. If you can give some of your time to this wonderful cause, please speak with Barbara. She needs **YOUR** help! The sale of these handcrafted products, made by artisans from developing nations, help pay for food, education, healthcare and housing for craft persons who would otherwise be unemployed or underemployed. As one of the world's oldest and largest fair trade organizations, Ten Thousand Villages has spent more than 60 years cultivating long-term buying relationships in which artisans receive a fair price for their work and consumers have access to unique gifts, accessories and home decor from around the world.

COVENANT COMMITTEE...

The Covenant Committee is pleased with the results of the August Blood Drive and we greatly appreciate all those who came to give. A total of 55 units were collected and the volunteers were again faithful and helpful. A big thanks to all of you. The next Blood Drive will be this fall- date to follow. The Committee will be meeting to plan the annual Thanksgiving Service which is held the Sunday prior to Thanksgiving. The spring Unity Service is also in the works. New members are always welcome as are suggestions for our unity and ecumenism as believers.

Fran Ellis

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP...

The Frippery is the yellow house in the top parking lot and is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am-12:30pm and first Saturday of the month, through June, also 9:30am-12:30pm.

The Frippery is up and running after a busy summer, come see our new improvements. We have TONS of fall and winter clothing for you and your family (MOST items are \$4, \$2 for children's items) we also have lots of Halloween costumes, WHERE can you get costumes for \$5?? We currently donated \$1 for EVERY CUSTOMER that purchased something during the month of September to donate to The Somerset County Animal Shelter to help with the dogs and cats that were brought in from Texas and Florida shelters during the hurricanes ... We'll have to update you on the total NEXT month since this newsletter goes to press before September is over.

UNITED FAMILY...

GET READY! United Family and Children's Society Christmas gift drive starts the Sunday BEFORE Thanksgivingif you have any NEW items in your home that never got used (Boardwalk stuffed animals, Beanie Babies, children's clothes with the tags still on them , candles, notecards, etc.) this is a great time to recycle them for a good cause, MORE INFO in next month's Hilltopics. Questions? Call Lisa Renaud 908-625-5042.

WHAT WE NEED AT STARFISH...

Those Starfish shelves that were well packed with food in the late spring are nearing empty as we pass from summer into fall. We need your help. We used to designate the first Sunday of the month as Starfish Sunday here at Wilson Memorial. I am asking that you now to make every trip to the grocery store a Starfish trip and that you grab something extra for Starfish.

We are especially depleted on the soup shelves. How about if in addition to October being Disaster Relief Month at Wilson Memorial, we tack on a footnote and make it a Soup for Starfish October as well.

For November and December, in addition to supplying food to needy people on an ongoing basis, Starfish volunteers will prepare holiday meals for about 160 families for Thanksgiving and Christmas. Any holiday fixings you can provide such as instant mashed potatoes, canned sweet potatoes, stuffing, gravy or canned vegetables and fruits would be very helpful.

Thank you all. Hugh Woodruff

SYMPATHY

We extend our sympathy to the family of William Cowperthwait who passed away on August 24th. William is the brother of Cathy Strohmeier. A Memorial Service was held offsite on August 31st.

PERSONAL ITEMS...



We continue to pray for those suffering with health problems: Joan Baylis, Russ Funk, Dot and Howard Beyer, Janet Meeks, Joyce Possien, Ellie Groves, Gladys Andrews, Joy Jurgens, Eva Wehof, Michael Kontra, and Alison Barr.

*Wilson Memorial Church
7 Valley Road
Watchung, New Jersey 07069*

October 2017 Hilltopics

Check out our website: www.wilsonmemorialchurch.com
Email: wilsonchurch@verizon.net