



HILLTOPICS – JANUARY 2019

WILSON MEMORIAL UNION CHURCH WATCHUNG, NJ 07069 (908) 755-5020
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MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

I know there are many things all of us would love to carry into the New Year from the holiday season. Top on my list is gift giving, but not gift giving in the usual way we think about it. I'm thinking more about how great it would be if the spirit of generosity lived on and on and on.

Recently I learned about a concept that makes generosity central. It's called the "gift economy". Have you heard about this idea? Admittedly, it's a challenging one for us to wrap our minds around because it turns the tables on what we normally think of as the main way of relating to the world. A gift economy is where goods and services are given with no strings attached. Agenda-less service is also another way of thinking about it (think, Jesus!). The idea hinges on the understanding that wealth means far more than anything that can be defined by financial capital. Wealth is created when the gifts and abilities of both the giver and receiver are given the space to blossom forth and cause a beautiful ripple effect that takes on a life of its own. As a quote of unknown origin puts it so beautifully, "service doesn't start when we have something to give – it blossoms naturally when we have nothing left to take."

A real life example of what a gift economy looks like is the meal sharing space of Karma Kitchen in Berkeley, California. Before dismissing it as such a "California thing to do" (I was tempted to do that when I first heard about it), think about how this model is far from location sensitive. What is Karma Kitchen all about? Picture going into a restaurant that has a menu with no prices on it, and when you get the check, it says you "owe" \$0.00. There is a footnote which reads, "Your meal was a gift from someone who came before you. To keep the chain of gifts alive, we invite you to pay it forward for those who dine after you." As a business model, one would think this was doomed to failure. Yet, the workers at Karma Kitchen volunteer their time simply because they can and they love the joy of it. And, a study at UC Berkeley's Haas School of Business found that people pay more when paying for others. Here is a wonderful description of the purpose of Karma Kitchen

Karma Kitchen is a space that shifts our cultural paradigm from one of consumption to contribution, from transaction to trust, from isolation to community, and from scarcity to abundance. In a market economy, the assumption is that we go into situations looking at what we can get out of it. But a gift economy experiment like Karma Kitchen flips that assumption on its head. The gift economy creates a container for selfless service to flow through – and when people walk into that circle of giving, they find themselves moved to find a way to contribute.

New Year's resolutions come and go. Generous, qualitative ways of being in the world that speak to human flourishing are timeless. As for me, and as I look at the privilege of beginning yet another year on this planet earth, I want to recommit myself to the basic life-giving values of a gift economy.

They include: supporting agenda-less service in myself and others; making contribution the goal rather than consumption the goal, allowing trust to be the motivator rather than transaction the motivator in relationships; celebrating community over any and all structures and systems that isolate people; having a mindset of abundance and not a mindset of scarcity. All of this is a tall order to be sure, but we don't have to get it all right. We won't get it all right. But, we can do our best at being faithful to these more than worthwhile principles and know we are being transformed in the process!

Happy New Year! May generosity be what fills your life to the brim so that the abundant nature of all that you have been given, and all that God is, shines forth in you!

Faithfully Yours, Barbara

Communion Sunday The Sacrament of Communion, January 6, 2019



*The Sacrament of Communion
will be celebrated in our Sanctuary.*

What's Brewing? January 13th, 2019, 11:20am

One of the original founders of Waves of Health, Dr. Chris Boni, will join us for What's Brewing on January 13th.

Waves of Health started in 2007 as an idea of a doctor in his last year of residency at St. Michael's Medical Center in Newark, NJ when he began to think about bringing medical care to underserved areas. With the help of 5 other doctors and a local clergyman who put them in touch with a group of nuns operating a small clinic in a rural town in the Dominican Republic, Waves of Health made its first mission trip. On November 3rd, 2018 a Waves of Health team returned to Dajabon for the 20th time. The team evaluated and treated over 1200 patients at 3 different local clinics providing medication, reading glasses, vitamins, school supplies and flip-flops! Our own Angela DellaVentura went on the trip. Grab a cup of coffee and see you in the Sanctuary.

Wilson Memorial Church Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of our Congregation will be held **January 27th, 2019** immediately following our Worship Service. Please remember that **all** committees and groups that normally report on their yearly activities in the Annual Report must have these reports in by **January 4th** in order to give the office sufficient time to prepare for the Annual Meeting. Note: Please whenever possible send your report in online to Wilsonchurch@verizon.net

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

Happy New Year! There is often a debate on how long we should still say Happy New Year to people. Is it only in January? The first time you see someone in the New Year? To me, it doesn't matter, why not send blessings to people year round? Imagine in July, looking someone in the eye and saying, "I hope you have a blessed and full 2019!" I think it would be a game changer. We as Christians believe in the power of our blessing. We offer peace, love, kindness, and the fullness of life in God's Spirit. Maybe etiquette might dictate that Merry Christmas, Happy New Year's, or other seasonally tied in phrases have to come down like our Christmas decorations, but offering our blessing is our year round job. Instead of wishing people a Happy New Year, let's help make it so for everyone we meet this year.

As far as blessing one another goes in Youth and Family, there are a few dates to remember in the upcoming month: January 12th is our first Grow Together of the new year at 5:30pm. If you didn't sign up in 2018 for Grow Together, but would like to, reach out to Michael right away. Our theme is entering into the life of Christ. January 13th is our SECOND SUNDAY which means an inclusive service for families and our teens meeting that evening for dinner at 5PM till 7PM. January 20th after the morning service is our Mission Trip EXPLORATION meeting. This is our first year gathering people together and presenting some ideas for our summer mission. We'd love to have all interested parties join us in Fisher Hall to have your input and participation in a summer trip for the family. Blessings, Michael

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

Every time I count my blessings, my LOVE for GOD grows bigger... And every time I count my struggles, my FAITH in GOD grows stronger ~ Janet Realope

I love our church, and I love seeing the love of others grow within it. It has been an honor to serve as Board President for two years, and have received so many blessings by getting to know more of our congregation because of this. There are so many saints in our church, and it has been an honor to learn from all.

So – Who is Susan Sparks, and why is she coming to our church to speak on May 4th?

Early this year the Board was challenged to come up with a fresh idea for fundraising, especially for those non-budgeted items such as paid choir members which enhance our choir greatly, or perhaps the Chapel cupola repairs to name a few items. Rev. Barbara mentioned that she and Tom had seen Susan Sparks speak at Chautauqua, and highly recommended to see if we could get her to speak at our church. The Rev. Susan Sparks is a former trial lawyer who now serves as senior pastor of Madison Avenue Baptist Church in New York, NY. She is also a blogger, standup comedian, TED speaker, and Harley-riding columnist.

Please visit her website for more on her, and to listen to some of her talks. We are so excited, and I hope you will be too. Ticket info and details will be available in the near future. Please chat with friends about this! Her website is <http://susansparks.com>.

*“Do all the good you can,
By all the means you can,
In all the ways you can,
In all the places you can,
At all the times you can,
To all the people you can,
As long as ever you can.”*

— John Wesley, *Letters of John Wesley*

Lorri Monetti, Executive Board President

CHAPEL WEDNESDAYS...

Life is full! There are so many expectations and demands placed on us each and every day, not to mention the problem of information overload. I invite you to take the opportunity to find some stillness and rest in the spaciousness of God. Chapel Wednesdays are just that opportunity. On the first Wednesday of the month (generally) we gather in the beautiful sacred space of our Chapel to still our minds and open our hearts with music, a brief spoken reflection, guided meditation and silent prayer. Join us! Invite someone to come with you! The time is **7:15pm-8:00pm** and upcoming Chapel Wednesday dates are: **January 2, February 6, (no gathering in March or April because of Lent), May 1 and June 5.**

CONFIRMATION CLASS BEGINNING SOON!

Confirmation is a special time when young people in eighth grade, or have reached 13 years old (or older) are invited on a walk of discipleship in which they are encouraged to confirm the vows made at their baptism. If you are planning for your son or daughter to be a member of the year's Confirmation Class, please let Barbara know and she will share with you the details of what is involved. You are welcome to email her at stirlingpeters@verizon.net. Confirmation Sunday will be Palm Sunday, April 14.

NEW EVENING GRIEF GROUP FORMING...

When you experience loss, people say you have to let go and go on with your life, but they don't tell you how. The Grief Recovery Method Support Group experience teaches you how to recover from loss with supportive guidance every step of the way. Remember, time alone will not heal your broken heart. A new evening Grief Recovery Group will begin **February 21st, Thursday, 7:00pm to 9:00pm** and will meet once a week for **8 weeks**. It is highly recommended that you are able to make a commitment for all 8 weeks. This is not a drop-in group. To let Barbara know you may be interested, please email her at stirlingpeters@verizon.net.

WE WELCOME OUR NEWEST MEMBER!

On December 16th Nancy Scott officially joined our congregation. Welcome, Nancy!

FINANCIAL FACTS-NOTE FROM YOUR TREASURER...

Happy New Year!

As I write this report on January 2nd, I am still working through the numbers for December and year end. As is traditionally the case, year-end finances are a nail biter until the very end. As of this writing our year-end numbers look pretty good.

Thank you to all for your continued support as I complete my first year as Treasurer, trying to fill Hugh's size 13 shoes. We have some exciting fund raising efforts this spring, specifically the Susan Sparks event on May 4th. Let's make 2019 our best year ever!

With gratitude, Pam Davis

WOMAN'S GUILD...

The next Women's Guild meeting will be Thursday, **March 7, 2019**. Happy New Year!

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP ...

The Frippery is the yellow house in the upper church parking lot. It is Open Tues/Thurs 9:30-12:30 (and the FIRST Sat. Oct-June). Mark your calendars! It's our WORLD FAMOUS "Fill a LEVEL Kings paper grocery bag for *\$10!!!" when we re-open Thursday, January 3, 2019! *Donate \$1 to our Starfish food pantry and receive China, crystal, frames, electronics, books, DVDs (limit 5 Per person), CDs (limit 5 per person), kitchen items, decor, Xmas items, craft items, candles, toys and SO much more! Anything TOO large for a bag AND our JEWELRY area will be 1/2 price. Our designer handbags will be \$10.00 off each. CLOTHING, winding down the winter items (we need to get SPRING clothing out around 2/14/19) EACH item will be \$1.00 OR FILL A LEVEL BAG for just \$5!!! If you plan on losing/gaining weight in 2019, NOW is the time to get a bag of clothing!! Time to stock up for growing children too! Specially tagged items will be 1/2 price. THE \$10.00 household bag sale lasts only 3 days: Thursday, January 3rd, Saturday, January 5th and Tuesday, January 8th. Clothing sale continues thru January with further discounts in February.

STARFISH ...

New Years makes us think of New Babies... lets all pick up ONE ITEM EACH WEEK for a new baby in the month of January, Baby food (in pouches), lotion, wipes, diapers, pacifiers, baby bath items. If we ALL brought just 1 ITEM each week we could help so many babies in need.

MARY ANN'S MITTENS...

We will be collecting new mittens, gloves, hats, scarves, men's underwear and heavy socks thru January 15th (after the tree comes down there will be a place on a table outside of Fisher Hall) Mary Ann Ingram's family will start us out with 87 items (Our mom's age when she passed in 2015) The final items will be divided between Starfish (children's items) and The Somerset County Homeless Project (Adult items) Questions? Feel free to call or text Lisa Ingram Renaud (908)-625-5042



SYMPATHY...

We extend our sympathy to the family of Gordon Whitley. Gordon passed away on December 17, 2018. Our thoughts and prayers are with his parents, Yvette and Graeme, and his brothers Owen and Stuart. A Memorial Service for Gordon was held at our church, December 29, 2018.



PERSONAL ITEMS...

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

January 2019

Wilson Memorial Church Monthly Activities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
		1	2 Boy Scouts Meeting 7:30pm Library Chapel Wed. 7:15- 8:00pm	3 Frippery 9:30am- 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	4	5 Memorial Service 10:00am Frippery 9:30am- 12:30pm
6 Worship Service 10am Communion AA 8:00pm	7 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	8 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	9	10 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	11 AA 8:30pm	12 Wedding 3:00pm Grow Together 5:30pm
13 Worship Service 10am "What's Brewing?" AA 8:00pm	14 Executive Board Meeting 7:30pm Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	15 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	16	17 Frippery 9:30am -12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	18 Men's Breakfast Country Squire 9:00am AA 8:30pm	15
19 Worship Service 10am AA 8:00pm	20 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	22 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	23	24 Frippery 9:30am -12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	25 AA 8:30pm	26
27 Worship Service 10am Annual Meeting AA 8:00pm	28 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	29 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	30	31 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm		