



HILLTOPICS –MARCH 2019

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MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

I've always been fascinated by the practice of creating colorful sand mandalas done by Tibetan Buddhist monks. The art of making sand mandalas has been in existence for thousands of years. Over a period of several days, color sand is used to make exact geometric shapes within the interior of a circle that can be quite large in diameter. It is an exacting process done by the specially trained who use only a grated metal rod and a traditional metal funnel. The work requires laser-focused concentration and even when created in very public spaces, the monks are not disturbed by people talking, walking around them and taking pictures. While the creation of such beautiful and spiritually evocative designs is in itself amazing, the really mind-blowing part is that after days of such patient and precise dedication, the monks don't sit around admiring their handiwork. Soon after the last grain is placed, the masterpiece is ritually swept away. Wouldn't you or I have an incredibly difficult time doing that (to put it mildly!)?

The point of sweeping away the mandala is to align the experience with what is a very real and true part of life: life is impermanent. To use biblical language, "the grass fades and the flower withers". I have never known a blade of grass to not fade or the bloom of a flower to not wither, have you? As it's been said, the only thing permanent is change. We live under the illusion that things will stay as they are, or that we can possibly even turn back the hands of time in age-defying ways. But, you and I know, the reality is far different. You only have to experience the scenario where one minute things are going along just fine, and then the phone rings, and all of the sudden your world feels like a far different world than the one you woke up to that morning. Life is fragile. In part, that is also what makes life so very, very precious. The old hymn goes, "count your blessings, name them one by one...". We count our blessings, knowing that even our blessings may not always be there for us to count in the same exact way. This holds true for the people we love, our health, or simply all the things that make us feel secure in life.

Annually, the church sets aside one day to remind us of the utter temporal nature of life. That day of course is Ash Wednesday when certain words echo throughout the many and varied places the witness of Christ is made known. Those words are: "Remember you are dust, and to dust you shall return." They are not morbid words nor depressing words. They are simply truthful words which acknowledge, just like the gorgeous sand mandalas, the beauty of existence is only for a season of time. Because of this, Ash Wednesday is such an appropriate way to begin the Lenten season. Lent is a concentrated period inviting us to ponder what we are about and who we want to be. The best way to do that is to keep ever mindful of the fact that eventually time does run out, and isn't a luxury we always and forever will have. When the colors of meaning are celebrated in each moment, we can say with joy, "this is the day the Lord has made!" I'm looking forward to this journey through Lent with you!

Faithfully Yours, Barbara

Communion Sunday **The Sacrament of Communion,** **March 3rd, 2019**



The Sacrament of Communion will be celebrated in our Sanctuary. 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?" **March 10th, 11:20 am, Fisher Hall**

Be sure to join us for the next "What's Brewing?" program which will be held in Fisher Hall during the Coffee Hour (please note the change in location.) Barbara will present a program on **What Is Spiritual Direction and Why I Became a Spiritual Director**. Please stay for "What's Brewing?"

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper **March 5th, 6:00 pm, Fisher Hall**

Our Pancake Supper is a Wilson tradition and will be hosted by our youth and their families. Please join us! Come as you are and invite others for a wonderful time of food and fellowship.



March 6th, 2019 **7:30 pm Chapel Service**

SOUP SUPPERS AND CHAPEL **SERVICES DURING LENT!**

Join us for a delicious supper of homemade soup followed by a simple service in our Chapel. The suppers all begin at **6:30pm** in Fisher Hall and the Chapel Service at **7:30pm** in our Chapel. The dates are **Wednesdays, March 20th, March 27th, April 3rd and April 10th**. You are welcome to come for just the supper or just the service, too! The theme for the services this year will be **Sabbath**. Invite family, friends, and neighbors. All are welcome! If you like to make soup or want to help out with any of the suppers, please contact Barbara.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

Have you done any “Konodoing” lately? Marie Kondo has written an organizational book that has become part of our cultural conversation. You sort through your belongings asking what might be bringing you joy and what might just be a burden that you are carrying around. I’ve read some articles, watched a few episodes of her show “Tidying Up” and I couldn’t help think about it as we move into Lent. I did some Konodoing of my belongings and it felt good. So many things that I just stuffed into drawers or overcrowded closets got sent to a place where they can really be of service instead of being something I just had to live around. The question she asks is: “does this thing bring me joy?” and, “Do I want to bring this into the future?”

Sounds like Lent to me. Lent is that time we reduce ourselves back again to those things that fill our lives with life. “What do I want to bring into my future?” is such a vital question for this season of the church calendar. The things we plan here at Wilson are designed to help us to ask that question well and to discern the answer. Each Lenten season we try to offer something different that you can use as a tool. This season, we are offering some things that we are quite excited about:

Prayer Mosaic at Grow Together and Second Sunday: A prayer mosaic is just a different way of practicing prayer by helping participants “experience” prayer through some hands on experiences. These experiences, spread across multiple stations, help us understand various aspects of prayer (praise, confession, intercession, etc.) with visuals and activities that help it come to life for us in unique ways. March 2nd’s Grow Together will feature the mosaic as well as March 10th’s Second Sunday. If you would like to participate, we invite you to join us at these connecting points.

Got Questions?: On Soup Supper Wednesdays, I will be offering an opportunity for people who have spiritual questions. If we are clearing out our spiritual house, sometimes there are big questions in the way. This is a time to let some of those go in a safe and non-judgment environment. Join me after our soup suppers at one of the tables for a time of letting go of some of the hard questions. Together we will seek wisdom.

Discover Your Call: Marianne Williamson said: “Our deepest fear is not that we are inadequate. Our deepest fear is that we are powerful beyond measure. It is our light, not our darkness that most frightens us.” It’s easy to say we aren’t good or gifted as a reason to not get involved in what we might feel called to do. Maybe we are so disconnected with our call that we don’t even know where to begin. Sunday school teachers and other leaders will be going through a process called Discover Your Call. It’s a combination of some “homework”, online work, and chatting with friends to help you communicate your special place in this world. The work is not overtaxing, but the impact is significant. It’s one of the reasons that led me to Wilson. If you would like more information on how to be part of this year’s cohort of discoverers, email me at wilsonyouthandfamily@gmail.com

As always, we have lots of places to plug in. Mark your calendars for July 8-12 for VBS (note change from the announcement last month) and for August 4-9 for our Summer Mission Trip. Information for both can be found on our website. Blessings, Michael

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

At this time it seems appropriate to introduce myself as 2019’s newly elected Board President. I appreciate the gracious warm welcome to the position that I have already received from the other board members and from many in the congregation. I shall do my best to earn your vote of confidence. Not quite a month has passed, yet I feel that with the right attitude and the support of those more experienced than I, we can all anticipate a successful year together in God’s love. I look forward to sharing the church’s many colors with you.

In faith, Angela Della Ventura

BOARD BRIEFS...

Keith McNally, VP, lead the meeting until the motion and vote for President was made for Angela Della Ventura to be elected. Angela then took over the meeting.

MINISTER’S REPORT – Barbara thanked all those involved in the Annual Meeting.

- The Unity service was lovely. It will most likely be held here for the future, since we have more space. Florence Larkin honored Al and Fran Ellis for leading the blood drives for years, as they go so smoothly. Next drive will be in April.
- The new sound system really helped, and thanks to the MEC for funding it.
- Confirmation has started for Jenna Maziekien, Matteus Fontes, and Robert Nunn. Mentors are Lisa Shpunder. Randy Stefanovic DJ Hunsinger.
- A new Grief Recovery series to begin, starting Feb. 21, for 8 weeks.
- Staying in Fisher Hall for “What’s Brewing?” seems to work well, and will continue. Barbara to be presenter on March 10, “Spiritual Direction, and Why”.
- Shrove Tuesday, March 5th, Doyle and crew to be cooking for it.
- March 6th, Ash Wednesday, 7:30pm in Chapel. Barbara reminded the Board to come out for this meaningful service.
- Soup Suppers and Chapel Services, March 20, 27, April 3 & 10th. The Board will be hosting on March 27th. The theme of the services is Sabbath.
- No Chapel Wednesday in March & April.
- Barbara to be away April 26-29 for additional Grief Recovery training.

YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE REPORT – Michael says thanks personally to Blake, and to the Board for taking on this experiment of having a youth on the Board. It is core to the life of our church.

- VBS is in planning stage. Michael is thrilled that Carol will be our VBS Director. She plans a woodland scene – (using the Kindness Trail) – spraying for ticks etc., to be done ahead of time.
- Mission trip is August 4-9, last week of Urban Promise camp. Urban Promise is in Camden. Open to all, but Michael needs to know who and what days so he can make sure there are enough beds.

- Grow Together happened this past month without Michael, who was out of town to support the Whitley family – He thanks Barbara for taking over.
- To be working on Outreach – Keep Connected – program of middle school and parents – a 6 week workshop. To reach out both in and outside of church.

Scout Project Review - Alex Ruta reviewed his Eagle project in depth for fencing by the southeast corner of Fisher Hall as well as planters and benches. Facilities requested it be composite wood, so that maintenance would be minimal. Explained the bench legs to be out of recycled plastic.

- Michael mentioned that it is a project that would benefit not just the VB School but could also be used by young adults for volley ball games etc.

FACILITIES – presented by Tony -

- Moving forward on replacing carpet in the library after the heating pipes broke and flooded both the library and Barbara's office.
- Help is needed for moving out library books and shelving in an orderly manner. Randy to help coordinate with Scouts, with enough warning.
- Looking to put Texture 111 for replacing rotting wood on south wall of the office wing.

COVENANT COMMITTEE – Barbara mentioned the next Blood Drive, as well as the praise that the Covenant Committee had given the Ellis's for their support in coordinating the drives.

OUTREACH COMMITTEE –

- Last year the ICCC had requested early disbursement so they could plan funding of grants for members to attend the summer conference, as well as other yearly expenses. Pam to give Roberta a check for both the budgeted Outreach (\$4,500) and Wilson (\$1,500) amounts for ICCC on 2/10/19, ahead of the normal June outreach distribution.

SUSAN SPARKS 2019 OUTREACH BENEFIT EVENT, SAVE THE DATE...

Date: May 4th, 2019 | 7:00pm with refreshments and book signing after the show.

Details: Susan Sparks is a Baptist Minister at Madison Avenue Baptist Church in NYC who travels globally as a standup comedian sharing hope and healing through laughter.

Tickets: \$30 per seat (\$25 Senior Rate for 62+) will soon be available after church on Sundays and the \$30 tickets are available through our church website and Eventbrite. Tickets are limited so be sure to get yours early!

NEEDED:

- **Ad Sponsors** - we would like to offset the cost of the event and fill the pages of our program with advertisements for local businesses. Half and whole page ads are available for purchase at \$25 for a half page ad or \$40 for full 5x8 page. PLEASE HELP US by asking local businesses to support this event. Letters are available on our website (under Ministries, Susan Sparks Benefit Event) and in the narthex.
- **Donations** - are welcome and greatly appreciated. Donations can be made on our church website or by mailed check.

Sponsors and donations will cover the event and benefit our Outreach efforts. We want to fill the church with laughter so please tell your friends and family about this great event! See you there!

FINANCIAL FACTS-NOTE FROM YOUR TREASURER...

We are off to a bit of a slow start in terms of our giving numbers but it's early and I'm not too concerned.

Our Interest and Dividends number is double last year, which is due to the generous Montgomery Jenkins and Boyd & Jeanette Woodruff funds, which are invested with the intention of the proceeds going directly to our operating budget.

While we are truly blessed to have the gifts of those before us or friends that have moved away, it is our responsibility to support our church and programs to the best of our ability. I have no doubt that we will continue to do so as the year progresses.

We have the exciting Susan Sparks fund raising event on May 4th. Let's get out and support the important steps to make it a HUGE success!

With gratitude, Pam Davis

NEXT CHAPEL WEDNESDAY MAY 1st...

Due to Ash Wednesday being March 6th, and the Soup Supper and Chapel Service on April 3rd, there will be no Chapel Wednesday until May 1st. Join Barbara in the Chapel on May 1st from 7:15pm – 8:00pm for a time of music, spoken reflection, guided meditation, and silent prayer.

COVENANT COMMITTEE...

We are pleased to say that our Unity Supper and Special music program was well attended and much enjoyed by all. The Committee then decided to send \$500 to Covenant House in Newark. The need of these youth is always a concern and we are pleased to be able to offer some help. We thank all of those who helped this meaningful organization.

Our Spring Blood Drive will be held on Saturday April 6 from 8:00 am to 2:00 pm. There is always a vital need for blood of all types and the help of blood is always appreciated. Please call 1-800-933-2566 to register or ask any questions you may have. Please make an appointment, sign up in the narthex, or be a walk-in. The Drive will be held in the Firemen's Exempt Hall at 31 Mountain Blvd. in Watchung. We thank all of you!

Fran Ellis

STAR FISH FOOD PANTRY ...

PLEASE keep Star Fish on your grocery list EACH WEEK. If we all picked up just ONE EXTRA ITEM WEEKLY, it would make so much of a difference to our friends in need (Collection box located in Narthex).

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP ...

The Frippery Thrift Shop is the yellow house in the top church parking lot. Open Tues/Thurs and the FIRST Saturday each month 9:30am-12:30pm, cash sales, checks accepted from church members .

ONE FREE BOOK for each customer through March. “Top O The Morning to yaw!” Lets start SATURDAY March 2nd off with a 1/2 price sale that also benefits StarFish.*With a \$1.00 donation, everything you buy on our "DOWNSTAIRS, household level" will be 1/2 price (with the exception of designer handbags, which are currently \$10 off each one) JEWELRY, kitchen items, craft items, candles, crystal china, Lenox, Lenox place settings, home decor, frames, linens, stationery items, lamps, toys, puzzles, games, books, CDs , DVDs and SO MUCH MORE!!! And "UPSTAIRS/clothing"-spring is beginning to show at the Frip. Spring and summer clothing is making its debut, MOST items start at \$4.00! WHERE can you get a men's suit for \$8??? Even a sport jacket for \$4??? We ARE the HIDDEN GEM of Watchung With the OSCARS around the corner, rumor has it that Lady Gaga and Bradley Cooper MAY have been spotted here looking for treasures!!!! See U at The Frip!

Lisa Renaud

WOMAN'S GUILD...

The Women's Guild meeting will be Thursday, March 7th at 11:30am-1:30pm in Fisher Hall. The meeting will be followed by a bring your sandwich luncheon at noon. Desserts and beverage supplied. All are welcome.

THANK YOU FROM UNITED FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY...

We received this thank you note from Karen Flanagan, CSW, of United Family and Children's Society.

“On behalf of the staff of United Family and Children's Society and the families we serve; we would like to take this opportunity to thank the congregation of Wilson Memorial Union Church for their continued generous outpouring of love during this past Christmas season. Gifts to the tiniest of infants to elderly adults were so thoughtfully supplied. The Christmas wishes you granted were greeted with abundant smiles as families came to pick up their gifts.

For more than 35 years, Wilson Memorial has been an active participant in this very special ministry. Thank you for your continued support of so many families and children in the community through the Christmas gift program.

We would also like to extend a special thank you to Lisa Renaud for being our contact person and organizer as well to those who helped her in this endeavor.

Thank you, for once again making a difference in the lives of so many.”

LOOKING AHEAD TO APRIL...

Please mark your calendars:

April 3rd, Soup Supper 6:30pm, Chapel Service 7:30pm

April 6th, Grow Together, Fisher Hall 5:30pm

April 10th, Soup Supper 6:30pm, Chapel Service 7:30pm

April 14th, Palm Sunday, Confirmation During Service, 10:00am

April 18th, Maundy Thursday, Communion Service, Sanctuary 7:30pm

April 19th, Good Friday Service, Sanctuary 7:30pm

April 21st, Easter Sunday 10:00am

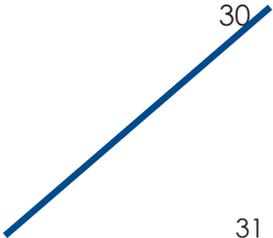


PERSONAL ITEMS...

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

March 2019

Wilson Memorial Church Monthly Activities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					1	2 Frippery 9:30am-12:30pm Grow Together 5:30pm
3 Worship Service 10am Communion AA 8:00pm	4 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	5 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper FH 6:00pm Boy Scouts Meeting 7:30pm Library AA/SA 7:30pm	6 Boy Scouts Meeting 7:30pm Library Ash Wednesday	7 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Women's Guild 11:30am Grief Group 7:00-9:00pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	8 AA 8:30pm	9 O'Neil Interment Memorial Service Memorial Garden 11:00am
10 Worship Service 10am "What's Brewing?" 4:30pm AA 8:00pm	11 Executive Board Meeting 7:30pm Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	12 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	13	14 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Grief Group 7:00-9:00pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	15 Men's Breakfast Country Squire 9:00am AA 8:30pm	16 Memorial Service 12-4
17 Worship Service 10am Confirmation 4:30pm AA 8:00pm	18 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	19 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	20 Soup Service 6:30pm Chapel Service 7:30pm	21 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Grief Group Fisher Hall 7:00-9:00pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	22 AA 8:30pm	23
24 Worship Service 10am Confirmation 4:30pm AA 8:00pm	25 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	26 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	27 Soup Service 6:30pm Chapel Service 7:30pm	28 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Grief Group Fisher Hall 7:00-9:00pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	29	30  31