



HILLTOPICS – JANUARY 2017

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

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

I recently listened to a call in show in which listeners were invited to call in and share their favorite New Year's tradition, especially those that were thought to bring prosperity and good fortune in the coming year. I learned a lot! I learned about what one caller called in to say was an Irish tradition in which her family enthusiastically participated. It's when you bang pans at midnight on New Year's Eve in order to scare the bad spirits of the previous year from following you into the new. It was the task of the children the week before to pick out pan with just the right tone. I wonder how that tradition would have been received at your New Year's Eve gathering?

Some of the food traditions are the easiest to understand, such as the idea of eating pork and sauerkraut on New Year's Day as a sign of good luck (because pigs always root forward and don't look behind). As for sauerkraut, I guess you can draw your own conclusions! Superstitious folk caution against eating chicken, though, because it is said chickens always scratch backward. Black-eyed peas apparently are a popular New Year's food of choice because they resemble coins and so supposedly insure monetary good fortune. We actually did eat those on New Year's when I was growing up since that was a tradition my mother having been raised in Alabama wanted to carry on. Black-eyed peas - they weren't bad, especially if you liberally coated them with ketchup!

I suppose that people throughout the ages have always tried to come up with ways to guarantee happiness and prosperity in the new year. And yet, you and I know it's how we live the present that really counts. It's all any of us truly have! The present time reveals the real windows of opportunity. As we really take hold of this gift of the present time, there is the challenge for each of us to ask, "what is God's purpose for me hidden within this pregnant 'now'?" What type of focus do I need to have so I don't let windows of opportunity stay closed, sealed shut?"

Isn't it true that when purposeful days are put up against ones in which we feel like we lose ground, there is quality to our time and experience that makes those purposeful days feel much more lasting than ones that aren't. So often we say, "I don't know where the time has gone!" And maybe you, like me have caught yourself commenting, "I can't believe it's 2017. How did that happen?" What if we were to say instead the following? "It's 2017 and I know where the time has gone. It's been filled with meaning and purpose and the fullness of discipleship as expressed through following Jesus."

Happy New Year, friends! Let's all vow to live 2017 with meaning and purpose and the fullness of discipleship as expressed through following Jesus! Don't we want to look back on 2017 and be able to say, "I celebrate where the time went"?

Faithfully Yours, Barbara

Communion Sunday The Sacrament of Communion Sunday, January 8th, 2017



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? Sunday, January 8th 11:20am in the Sanctuary Jesus and Buddha

Are Jesus and Buddha an unlikely pairing? Stay for our "What's Brewing?" program after the Worship Service and discover why the answer is, "No". The many parallels in their teachings is uncanny. Both were reformers in their respective traditions and both taught an alternative wisdom as the path of transformation. Join Barbara as she shares about the amazing points of contact between Jesus and Buddha and the complementary spiritual practices of Christianity and Buddhism.

Mark your calendars for future "What's Brewing?" program. On February 12th, the program will be **Discover Haiti** led by Michael and available Haiti Mission Trip participants. **My Story: Connecting As a Student Assistance Counselor** is the program for March 12th. Our guest will be Counselor and Guitarist Philip Lester, Columbia High School, Maplewood.

Wilson Memorial Church Annual Meeting

The Annual Meeting of our Congregation will be held January 29th, 2017 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 5th** 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! If you are reading this during the first week of January, I will be proudly representing Wilson Memorial Church, along with four of our college students, in the country of Haiti. Wilson has been developing a relationship with our ministry partner, Haiti Partners, over the past year. We have made new friends and provided funding to build a recycled paper mill to help the school and the community be self-sustaining. We look forward to returning and sharing with you all of the good stories we generate. It's so important to us to continue the ministry we start in kids when they are young and give them opportunities into their young adulthood. I want to extend a personal thank-you to all who supported the trip, especially the generosity of the Memorial Endowment Committee and those who purchased recycled paper art. Thank you for covering our trip! We will also be thinking of a small group of students who will be staying back and going with Laurie Conley to Cathedral Kitchen in Camden to serve the hungry! We are starting the new year right!

We will hit the ground running as soon as we get back with our Second Sunday opportunities of Kid's Church and the Second Sunday youth group at Michael's house. We are also looking forward to our High School Winter Retreat to Lake Champion on Jan 20-22. If you are in high school and would like to go, the cost is only \$150 per student. A deposit of \$50 is due by Jan 8th. We hope all high school students will join us! Have a happy new year!!

Blessings, Michael

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

Happy New Year to all of the Wilson Memorial families near and far! Here is something to think about for 2017...“Don't put your dreams on hold for too long, or they will hang up on you.” This was the message on a church sign on Long Island this past fall. When I saw the message, I knew it would be my Hilltopics theme for the New Year, 2017. There is no time like the present to embrace the life we live and choose to make it the best life we can... one day at a time.

Whether we have dreams of learning something new (I want to learn to play guitar) or executing a simple task, resolving a complicated emotional issue or a goal to strive outside of our comfort zone, I encourage you to look at the reality of achieving your dream(s) as we enter this New Year. Dreams mean hope... and hope keeps us looking forward... and looking forward allows us to evolve and grow as we embrace our lives and the changes that occur each day and each year. I wish each of you a year of love, hope, peace and dreams. As we enter into this year together as a church community, committed to each other as well as those around us, let us act upon our hopes and dreams, so they don't hang up on us. Together we can achieve great things.

Happy New Year!
Blessings, Judy Wall

CONFIRMATION CLASS BEGINS IN JANUARY...

Confirmation is a special time when young people in eighth grade, or above, 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. You can also email her at stirlingpeters@verizon.net. There will be an information session for parents and students Sunday, Jan. 15th at 11:30am in the library.

TREASURER'S UPDATE ...

As I write this update, it is still too early to have the final numbers in for 2016's financials. However, it appears very likely that we will end the year in positive territory once again. Look for the Annual Report later in January and come to the Annual Meeting on January 29 to obtain the final numbers. I could not be reporting a positive year-end balance without each of you. Your financial contributions, of course, are essential. However, all of the volunteerism also means we can accomplish many things, often at little or no cost. Again, thank you for allowing me to make a positive report to the congregation!

Hugh Woodruff, Treasurer

YOUR 2017 WEEKLY OFFERING ENVELOPES ARE NOW AVAILABLE.

Please pick yours up in church. If you have not had envelopes in the past and would like some, just call or email the church office or tell Hugh Woodruff and we will be happy to provide them to you.

A Huge THANK YOU from Starfish ...

I just finished summarizing the financials for Starfish. When I combine all the donations from members of our Wilson church family, our Outreach contribution, donations from the Frippery, a donation from our Memorial Endowment Fund to purchase new freezers and a very generous donation in memory of Mary Ann Ingram, one of the charter members of Starfish back in the 1970s, I come up with an amazing total that I want to share with all of you. Wilson Memorial donated a total of \$16,545 to Starfish, an extremely generous number. When I tell you that this number equals just over 70% of the total financial contributions received by Starfish, you can see that it really is true that Starfish could not exist in its present form without Wilson Memorial Church. Starfish does received tremendous food contributions from Faith Lutheran Church in New Providence, from Postal Workers, from Mount Saint Mary's Academy and others, so we are not in this effort alone, yet we can be proud of all the good work that we help to accomplish in providing food for those in need throughout the year. From all of the Starfish volunteers – THANK YOU!!

Hugh Woodruff

COVENANT COMMITTEE...

The Covenant Committee is meeting on Jan. 10th to firm up our Spring Blood Drive date (it will be a Saturday, hopefully) and also to make more plans for our Unity Service to be held at Wilson this year. Please be on the lookout for these dates. Fran Ellis

FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP...

The Frippery Thrift Shop (the yellow house in the top parking lot) OPEN Tuesdays and Thursdays 9:30am-12:30pm and the FIRST Saturday of each month (October. - June) 908-561-8298.

The Frippery will reopen with a HUGE ½ price sale on Thursday, January 5th. On Saturday, January 7th, Tuesday, January 10th and Thursday, January 12th, we will be having our WORLD FAMOUS \$10 FILL A LEVEL PAPER GROCERY BAG SALE (jewelry area not included). We need to clear the old to make room for the new items overflowing in our storage area. THERE IS NO LIMIT TO NUMBER OF BAGS YOU CAN BUY!!! Stock those summer homes!!

Clothing, also \$10 a bag!!! Or \$2 an item, COATS will be \$4 for short coats, \$5 for long ones, any specially marked items will be HALF PRICE!!! Join us, this only happens twice a year!

STARFISH...

Happy New Year! The NEW year makes us think of New life: let's help StarFish out during the month of January with BABY related items, Baby food, diapers, wipes, baby wash, powder and like items. The Frippery will get us started with diapers, look for the table in the Narthex.

MARY ANN'S MITTENS...

We will be collecting Mittens, gloves, hats and scarves in memory of Mary Ann Ingram and donating them to StarFish and the Somerset Co Homeless Program in late January. There is a table near Fisher Hall thru Mid January. Thank you from the Ingram Family (Questions? Call Lisa Renaud 908-625-5042).

UNITED FAMILY CHRISTMAS GIFT DRIVE ...

Thank you ALL from the bottom of my heart for wrapping up another successful gift drive this year. On Tuesday, December 6th, five social workers came to Wilson to FILL THEIR cars with gift bags to brighten Christmas morning for 100 of their clients. This is a HUGE project and could never be done without your support. Lisa Renaud

WOMEN'S GUILD...

The Women's Guild will suspend meetings in January and February 2017. We look forward to regrouping Thursday, March 2nd at 11:30am! Have a safe and happy new year!



SYMPATHY...

We extend our sympathy to the family of Walter Fedirko who passed away on January 2, 2017. A service will be held at Wilson Memorial Church on January 5th, at 11:00am.



PERSONAL ITEMS...

We continue to pray for those suffering with health problems: Bill Ripley, Howard Beyer, Dorothy Ryno, Janet Meeks, Joanne Meeks, Ginnie Nunn, Joyce Possien, Clare Gault, Ellie Groves, John and Gladys Andrews, Joy Jurgens, Eva Wehof, Michael Kontra, and Alison Barr.

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Check out our website: www.wilsonmemorialchurch.com

Email: wilsonchurch@verizon.net