



HILLTOPICS – MARCH 2017

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

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

As I write this, we are once again ready to begin the season of Lent. For me, Lent is a time to strip everything down to the bare essentials and recognize our basic need for, and dependence on, God. I liken that need to what the Psalmist says, “As a deer longs for flowing streams, so my soul longs for you O God. My soul thirsts for God...” (Psalm 42)

Described by the Psalmist is the desperation of the deer as it seeks water to stay alive. So often we think of our thirst as simply one of the many needs that we have and not a need that’s survival related (which of course it is). And, for children, being thirsty isn’t even always a real need. Many of us who are or have been parents have had the experience of our children being “thirsty” at bedtime. Often it was a call for attention more than anything else. Did you ever hear, “Mom, Dad, I NEED a drink of water, just one more, I really NEED it”? In contrast, thirst in the Biblical context is all about a survival need in relation to God. It is that big. It is that important. Just look at the symptoms of when such thirsting fails to be acknowledged. We find poor substitutes for what really quenches: excessive workaholicism, unhealthy relationships, food, drink, money or materialism.

The Desert Fathers knew what it meant to focus on just the kind of thirst I’ve been talking about. They lived in the Egyptian desert during the fourth and fifth centuries. Of course, there were Desert Mothers too, but the men got most of the attention. Their flight to the desert was, in part, a way of avoiding conforming to the world; but it also was a way to come face to face with the deepest thirst of their lives. Their life in the harshness of the desert was simple, and filled with solitude, silence and prayer. They strove to put themselves in a place where there wouldn’t be any distraction from their quest. They felt they needed to remove all outward scaffolding from their lives in order to die to their false selves, and allow God to be revealed to them. St. Anthony is said to have spent 20 years in isolation! Talk about really being in touch with one’s thirst!

I can bet none of us feel called to the desert, but I hope we feel called to Lent which is our contemporary version of what those Desert Fathers and Mothers sought to do. Won’t you commit yourself to really tapping into your deep desire which the ancient words of the Psalmist call forth in you? I invite you to find out more about this thirst that I’ve been describing, and how you recognize it in your life. Discovering it isn’t a once and for all thing, but an ongoing process of peeling back the layers that keep it hidden from view. I invite you to get to know your thirst and make friends with it. Live with it. Let it be your teacher. May you follow where it leads to flowing streams however those flowing streams make themselves known your life by the strength and power of God’s grace.

Faithfully yours, Barbara

Communion Sunday The Sacrament of Communion Sunday, March 5, 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, March 12th 11:20am in the Sanctuary

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.

Soup Suppers and Chapel Services!

Please mark your calendars! Once again we will carry on our tradition of holding Soup Suppers and Chapel Services During Lent. They will be held on **Wednesday evenings, March 15th, March 22nd, March 29th and April 5th.**

Won’t you join us for a tasty meal of homemade soup, bread and dessert at **6:30pm** followed by a simple service in our Chapel at **7:30pm**? We hope you will invite family members, friends and neighbors. This is a wonderful way to introduce them to Wilson Memorial Church. For our theme for our Chapel Services, we will be exploring **The Power of Forgiveness**. We look forward to seeing you at our **2017 Soup Suppers and Chapel Services!**

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

I am often asked what this season of lent is all about. When we hear let we often think of what we are “giving up” for lent. The word “lent” comes from an old English word that just means “spring”. I like thinking of it like that. It's a season of new life, of getting back to those things that give us life. Sometimes it does mean there are things we need to give up or it might mean there are things we need to start doing. In all things, it's all about reconnecting or deepening the life that God has given us. This is a year it's all about relationships at Wilson. We have two big happenings that are designed to bring our congregation together and deepen our relationships.

1. Lenten family poster coloring project: 8 families will be taking charge of large posters depicting events of the passion of Christ. The posters are artfully and intricately detailed. The families who have “charge” of the posters will be inviting another family (or two or three) to join them in the project. The goal is to bring families together to explore a portion of the

passion of Christ in an intergenerational way. If you would like to lead on one of the posters, please let me know. You can reach me at wilsonyouthandfamily@gmail.com.

2. Screenagers is a movie designed to start a conversation about smartphone usage. It's a powerful documentary designed to allow generations to speak to one another about what is changing in our culture and how we can work together. Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for teens, and free for children. Head to Screenagersmovie.com to buy tickets to the screening at Wilson!

We hope that no matter what you do this season, it brings you closer to God and to people. That's what it's all about!

Blessings Michael

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

Lent is a time for reflection. I was shopping in a store on Valentine's Day when the cashier mentioned she did not need a special day to show love to her family, that she did that every day. While this is great, we sometimes need a reminder to slow down and reflect on our faith, to accept God's love, and to listen for His words to us. A lovely way to start is the quietness and solemnness of the Ash Wednesday service, which is March 1 at 7:30pm. The Wednesday soup suppers are followed by a prayer service. While some feel that this is a time to fast and repent, others take the time to focus on service to others. This is a time to prepare for major changes in our lives, sort of like a 40 day trial run for changing our lifestyle and letting God change our heart.

Many Blessings, Lorri Monetti

BOARD BRIEFS...

1. Confirmation class continues with six students: Nick Mazekein, Melanie Nunn, Blake Januzzi, Ashley Shpunder, Stewart Whitley and Shirley Kreis. They hosted the Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper, February 28th at 5:30 PM. They are attending class, church or Sunday School on Sundays, working on other community service hours and preparing their "My Expression of Faith Projects". Palm Sunday, April 9th there will be a general breakfast for everyone (similar to the Thanksgiving Breakfast) and the Confirmands will be confirmed during the morning service.
2. A few people who attended Barbara's "Jesus and Buddha" program are getting together to discuss "Buddhist Bootcamp". Our initial meeting was Wednesday, February 15th at 5:30PM at Sarah Miller's home. We will set other times at the meeting and then Barbara will be getting the word out on a wider scale for others to join us.
3. March 1st begins Lent with Ash Wednesday and we will have our service at 7:30PM in the Chapel. Our Lenten weekly Wednesday Soup Suppers and Chapel Services will be held on March 15th, March 22nd hosted by the Women's Guild, March 29th hosted by the Executive Board and April 5th. The theme of the services this year will be Forgiveness.
4. The morning of March 12th Phillip Lester will be joining us for "What's Brewing?" He is a Student Assistance Counselor at Maplewood High School, excellent Guitarist and a personal friend of Cota.
5. We are hosting the movie Screenagers HERE, March 12th, 5-7 PM. All will find interesting. Please come.

6. The February "What's Brewing?" presentation on Haiti was very well attended with St Mary's kids attending and bringing some of their friends. Michael and Carol Osborne narrated the picture presentation of the paper factory and other interesting facts about Haiti and the children. A slide show put together by Jason Scalera was shown. Michael has 8 large posters that he is asking families to take and invite another family to help them color it. These will be displayed along the wall coming down the ramp from the sanctuary during Holy Week.
7. The Boy Scouts led by Logan Stiles have blazed a trail in the back of our property and we would welcome you to visit it for a Forgiveness Walk during the Lenten Season.
8. Anthony Cito is working on getting quotes and a roofer to repair the roof on the manse garage. We have completed the manse bathroom as well as the Frippery bathroom. The next projects are windows on the first floor of the Sunday School wing and bannisters on the steps leading to the upper parking lot.
9. The Memorial Endowment Committee is in need of both the Committee Chair and Treasurer. We are reaching out to others to see if anyone will step into those positions.
10. The Memorial Endowment Committee sent two requests to the board for approval. The first was a request for funds for a project ESL program at Crescent Avenue Presbyterian Church for equipment to run a student program at the church and was approved for \$2,000.00. The second request was for additional funding of the Haiti paper-making project. The Board approved \$5,000.00.
11. The Covenant Committee reports the next event will be the joint service with St. Mary's on March 26th. The Ost Memorial Ringers will present a musical program and St. Mary's will provide professional musical entertainment. A dinner will follow this service. Ticket information will be available by next meeting. A Blood Drive will be held on April 1st.
12. The Board reviewed the time for the Christmas Eve Candlelight Service and has decided to review the time each year for approval. The 2017 service will be at 10PM.

COVENANT COMMITTEE

The Covenant Committee is finalizing plans for the Annual Unity program that will be held at Wilson on Sunday, March 26th at 4 PM. It will be followed by a supper in Fisher Hall. The program will include music from both St. Mary's and Wilson. From SMSH, Roseann Sicola will sing and Peter DeAngelis is the instrumentalist. For WMC, the Bell Choir will fill us with their beautiful sound. Tickets will be sold during the month of March. The cost is \$18 for adults and \$10 for children under 12. Please plan to join us that day. Sharing our Christianity is vital to our ecumenism and much needed!!

Our Spring Blood Drive will be held on SATURDAY, April 1st in the Firemen's Exempt Hall on Mountain Blvd. in Watchung from 8am to 2pm. Sign up sheets will be in the narthex. Please plan to give whether you make an appointment (to be taken in at that time) or just be a walk-in. Blood is vital to our survival and only about 3% of New Jersey residents donate so please help to raise that average!!! Thanks! Both whole blood and double reds will be drawn. Fran Ellis

ANNOUNCING SCREENAGERS, MARCH 12, 2017, 5PM, FISHER HALL...

Did you know that the average kid spends 6.5 hours each day looking at screens and this doesn't include time spent doing homework?

The documentary, Screenagers, addresses concerns about the amount of screen time young people spend. The director of the movie uses the challenges of her own family life to highlight the struggles families are going through over social media, video games, and the role of personal devices. Read what Melinda Gates says about the movie,

*As the mother of three kids—two of them teenagers—I've noticed that whenever I get together with other parents, the conversation ends up turning to our kids' screen time. We're all worried about how much is too much. For any of you wrestling with this issue, I loved the documentary, **Screenagers**. It combines smart insights and practical tips for raising happy, healthy, technologically-empowered teens.*

Screenagers has been shown throughout the country at schools, churches and community centers. The movie is about an hour long. Our hope is that the discussion after will be as important as watching the movie itself. Please plan now to attend. Families are welcome! Tickets are \$10 for adults, \$5 for teens and children under 12 are free. This is a community-wide event! Please invite **anyone** who might be interested!

For more information about the movie, please go to screenagersmovie.com.

WOMEN'S GUILD

The Women's Guild will meet on Thursday, March 2nd 11:30am-1:30pm. The meeting will be followed by bring your own sandwich luncheon. Desserts and beverage provided. The program will begin at 12:30pm. *Bees Knees. Nature's most important role player. Are they in trouble?* Provided by Somerset County Environmental Education Center. All are welcome.

Thank you to all that supported our homemade soup sale! Proceeds will be used to support our programs and outreach efforts.

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP...

Open every Tuesday and Thursday and the FIRST SATURDAY of each month October through June, 9:30-12:30.

"TOP O THE MORNING TO YA", Happy March! The Frippery is now in FULL SPRING TIME mode. Our spring and summer clothing is out now, MOST items just \$4.00 each. (This USUALLY guarantees a snowstorm!) Easter items will be making their debut soon, but in the meantime we have 100's of items for you and your family and home. Make sure to mark Saturday, March 4th on your calendar, looking forward to seeing you then!

STARFISH ...

The StarFish Food pantry is gearing up for Easter dinners in March for April delivery, please consider helping provide an item that could be contributed to an Easter Dinner basket during the month of March. Your generosity is ALWAYS appreciated.

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS...

March 5th The Sunday School classes start with energetic music sessions with Jim Musacchio followed by a Bible story read by various members of the congregation. We continue this month with the story of "David". The Sunday School teachers have an art lesson related to the story.

March 12th Second Sunday Kids Church Daylight Savings Time: Spring Forward! On the second Sunday of each month we will be having "Kids Church" in the chapel from 10am – 11am. Come see what all the excitement is about at "Kids Church"!

March 19th We begin the next Sunday School session with the story of "Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday". The Sunday School teachers will then continue the lessons with some creative Bible skills and games.

March 26th We continue the Bible story and lessons of "Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday". "The Sunday School teachers have an art lesson related to the story.

April 2nd This is the 3rd and final session on the story and lessons of "Palm Sunday to Easter Sunday". The teachers will have a computer lab class to continue the lessons in the story.

We are looking to members of the congregation for storytellers. If you are interested in being a storyteller let us know. The various storytelling sessions are listed on the Sunday School bulletin board located outside of the Fellowship Hall. The storytelling sessions are only a short story before the teachers continue with the lessons. The children are always excited to interact with more of the adult congregation. Please note 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 always appreciate if parents are able to offer a little additional help in the Sunday School as a team teacher, substitute or helper. 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



PERSONAL ITEMS...

We continue to pray for those suffering with health problems: LaVonne Lundell (Barbara Peter's mother), Ruth Allen, 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.

*Wilson Memorial Church
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Check out our website: www.wilsonmemorialchurch.com

Email: wilsonchurch@verizon.net