



HILLTOPICS –DECEMBER 2018

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

Once in a while, I post something about what is going to happen at church on our church's Facebook page. The question comes up from Facebook's algorithm-land, "do you want to make this an event?". I find that a little funny because it already is an event and I don't need Facebook telling me it could be or not be one. But I get it. If I post an "event", then it appears as an invitation on others' Facebook feeds and they can respond with whether or not they will attend.

As far as church life goes, everything we do is an event with an invitation automatically attached. There is no service or program or general happening that doesn't have within that service or program or general happening the all-important message: "please come...without **YOU** it won't be the same...your presence matters more than you will ever imagine...please come...we are looking for you because your presence brings us joy...we are far more when we are physically together than we ever are when we are not...please come."

Have you noticed that Jesus was all about the invitation? Invitation was at the heart of his ministry. "Come, follow me," is as clear as it gets! As with any invitation, a response is hoped for. Whoever heard Jesus' invitation in the moment had the option of saying, "oh, it's so nice you are thinking about me," and let that be it. So many things are easy to let in one ear and out the other after all. But we are talking about Jesus here and it's not hard to imagine he felt tremendous sadness when his invitation didn't carry weight.

All this is to say we hope and pray that the invitation inherent in all that we offer, and do, at church, carries weight. We hope it carries weight because the invitation of Jesus carries weight. It's his **Great Invitation** that is behind any and all of the ones we are all about. And, it's his **Great Invitation** that is behind all that we seek to do anyway. Once again, event and invitation matchup, but even in a more profound way than meets the eye.

This Advent and Christmas season, we are companions to one another along the way to the manger's side. As we light the candles of our Advent Wreath one by one, as we prepare our hearts in worship, as we encourage all ages with love and support through the hustle and bustle of activity, as we care for those in need beyond our walls, as we delight in singing our beloved carols once again; may we truly know all of this as the **Great Invitation of Jesus** and nothing less. My sincere hope is that you will hear the voice of the one who truly does the inviting deep in your heart. There are certainly a lot of other voices this time of year that speak loud and strong, and want our attention. Just because they want our attention doesn't mean we have to give it. We do have a choice, you know. We have a choice about who to listen to and how to listen. Who do you hear?

Michael and I so look forward to being with **YOU** as together we celebrate this most rich and meaningful time of year!

Faithfully Yours, Barbara

Communion Sunday The Sacrament of Communion, December 2nd, 2018



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.

CHAPEL WEDNESDAYS CONTINUE IN DECEMBER ...

The last Chapel Wednesday of the year is December 5th, *Gift*. **The time is 7:15pm-8:00pm.** Each evening consists of music, a very brief reading or spoken reflection on the theme of the night, a guided meditation and then a period of silence that you may use for your own private prayer practice. Invite anyone you think may be interested!

Christmas Eve Services, December 24th

Family Service, 5:00 pm

The story of Jesus, the wonder of the shepherds, and the travels of the Wise Men will be presented by the children of our Sunday School.



Join Us for Our Candlelight Service, 10:00 pm

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

It's Christmas Time! Well, actually it's ADVENT TIME! Confused? It's easy to do. Did you know that Advent and Christmas are not two different ways of describing the SAME THING? It's true! Christmas is, of course, the day we celebrate the coming of Jesus, the one who was God in the flesh come to demonstrate God's love by showing up! It's the day we celebrate with each other and are reminded of Peace on Earth and Good Will toward Humanity. Advent, on the other hand, is a season of preparation. We live out the journey toward Bethlehem taken by prophets and the people as they waited for the promised One. We in our culture are not fans of waiting, but it's all about how we wait for the promise. We prepare our hearts for God's coming by tuning our spirits into God's Spirit. I hope that this season is one where you hear God's heart in a new way. Advent is a gift to God's people. I hope you get to enjoy it.

As with every season, we try to provide some experiences for your family to deepen the season. Here are some of the things offered this season:

December 1st, 4:00 PM is our **ADVENT SUPPER** where we kick off the season with a pasta dinner, dessert, crafts for the kids, and then a stroll over to the town tree lighting at 5. It's a great way to start the season right!

December 9th, 10:00 AM is our **all family Advent service** complete with our Jazz Trio and an invitation to follow the prophets of old into the story of Jesus. Also, December 9, 5:00 PM is our Second Sunday **Youth Ugly Sweater Gift Exchange Extravaganza!** All teenagers are welcome to come to Fisher Hall for our annual celebration. Come with your best ugly sweater and participate in our gift exchange. Dinner will be provided. We hope you can all join us!

December 23rd, 10:00 AM is our **CHRISTMAS PAGEANT PRACTICE** for all kids who want to be shepherds, angels, or kings at our Christmas Eve service. Sign ups for parts are happening now...see Michael or Thomas ASAP.

December 24th, 5:00 PM is our annual **FAMILY Christmas Eve SERVICE!** It's one of our favorite services of the year where we see our kids tell the Christmas story and join together in song. It's the perfect way to end our time of preparation and begin the celebration!

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

"If you want a love message to be heard, it has got to be sent out. To keep a lamp burning, we have to keep putting oil in it."

Mother Teresa.

I love this season in our church – decorating our church for the season, United Family and Children's Gifts, Advent Supper, Jazz Sunday, Bells ringing, Christmas Eve Family Service, Candlelight Service, not to mention all the Christmas hymns sung! Yet holidays can be overwhelming to some folks – those who are facing the loss of a loved one, those who are by themselves. Consider asking those folks to join us for any of our wonderfully joyful services. The love we show to others will help lift us all.

"Prayer is simply talking to God like a friend and should be the easiest thing we do each day." - Joyce Meyer

BOARD BRIEFS...

1. **MINISTER'S REPORT** – October 21 was a wonderful day of celebration with Michael's Ordination. It was certainly historic for our congregation, and Barbara was very grateful to everyone who made the day so special. She highlighted the bells, the choir, and Karen and Tony Cito for ALL the hard work on the beautiful reception after. It was great to feel connected to the ICCC in the experience with the presence of Phil Tom, Executive Director.
2. The Fairytale Forest on October 28th was a great success, and hope that it is a start of a wonderful tradition.
3. The "What's Brewing?" session by the United Family and Children's Society of Plainfield presented the different ways they offer mental health support. It is such a wonderful thing to be a partner with them through our annual Christmas gift drive. Bags to be filled will be available Nov. 25 and Dec. 2.

4. The yearly tradition of the Covenant Blood Drive followed by the 40th anniversary of the Thanksgiving Covenant Service with St. Mary's shows the special relationship we have had with each other.
5. **YOUTH AND FAMILY SERVICE REPORT** – Michael spoke of his deep thanks to the Board, along with Tony and Karen for the wonderful celebration of his ordination.
6. The Fairy Tale Forest was well attended, not just by members of the congregation but by many from the Watchung community.
7. Michael presented the idea of asking an active youth member to be part of the Church Board. A motion was made by Betty Ann to accept a youth position of the board for the period of 3 years, to be fulfilled by 3 members, one year at a time. Laurie Conley seconded, motion was passed.
8. **FACILITIES** – Tony reported that the lighting over the buffet tables in front of the kitchen in Fisher Hall has been replaced, just in time for the Ordination celebration.
9. The film on the windows in Fisher Hall has been completed.
10. The circulation pump in Blackburn Hall failed, and the wing was without heat while waiting for replacement parts. A long range plan is being developed to replace each of the three boilers in that wing, one at a time.
11. The replacement windows for the three sets of windows in Blackburn wing have been ordered.
12. There is a new leak in the library roof, where the old and new roofs meet.
13. The potholes in the circle of the driveway were discussed.
14. The Fisher Hall kitchen has had a deep clean, from ceiling to floors.

NOTE FROM YOUR TREASURER...

Financial Facts

Usually, I am only able to report the numbers from two months prior. Timing has worked out regarding Sunday giving, so I am able to comment on preliminary November status. Obviously, we have 5 more days of expenses in November, but I've tried to account for regular expenses.

From preliminary November report:

- We have continued our giving increase trend, up by about \$2,000 over November 2017.
- November should come in about \$4,000 on the plus side for our giving vs expenses ratio. Again, this is an estimate.
- We also received another \$13.75 in October from **Amazon Smile** purchases. Every little bit helps! Go to: smile.amazon.com and search "Mary Wilson Memorial Church Treasurer" Purchases made through Amazon Smile will automatically donate 0.5% of the price shopping on Amazon, please consider using Amazon Smile!
- Unfortunately, we still have an over **\$22,000 deficit YTD**. That is better than the almost \$33,000 deficit in 2017, but still concerning. I am hopeful that historical year end giving, as well as our slight upward trend bring us to at least a balanced budget. Your extra gift in the enclosed Christmas envelope will be a big help.

As we enter the advent season, let us prayerfully consider how you can contribute, either monetarily or in service to this, *YOUR* church and all the great work we do. Pam Davis

JAZZ FOR THE HOLIDAYS...

We are excited to announce that our Jazz Trio will be leading us in worship on Sunday, December 9. Joining the trio will be NYC based trombonist, composer/arranger, Erick Storckman. Over his career, Erick has performed with The Nelson Riddle Orchestra, Aretha Franklin, Blood Sweat and Tears, Bernadette Peters, and many more. How wonderful to be able to enjoy beautiful Advent/Christmas music in a jazz idiom with these amazing performers. Don't miss this very special Advent Jazz Sunday. Why not bring a friend or two?

WOMAN'S GUILD...

The Women's Guild will meet Thursday, December 6th 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.

COVENANT COMMITTEE...

The Covenant Committee is happy to report on our busy weekend and are glad to say that it all went well! The Blood Drive was held on Saturday November 18th when 46 units of blood were drawn. It was a great number but I'm still rooting for 60 units to be drawn - maybe in the spring! Thanks to all who participated. Then on Sunday November 18th our annual Ecumenical Thanksgiving service was held at St. Mary's Church. Father Guy spoke and the combined choirs sang! All was beautiful and surrounded with thankfulness. We had a pleasant time together afterwards with refreshments in the Parish Hall. Thanks to all. We do have much to be thankful for. Fran Ellis

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! December 1st, this month!

LOTS OF SALES in Dec! With a \$1. donation to Starfish your order becomes 1/2 price! Many things on Saturday in December will be marked \$1.00!!! (We have too much and I'd rather sell it to YOU for \$1.00 than to re thrift it to another store) Christmas items, currently \$5 FILL A LEVEL BAG!!! Clothing, items that are regularly \$4 will be \$2 OR \$10 fill a LEVEL bag. Items that have special prices will be 1/2 price BOOKS, get ready for the next snowstorm, 10 FOR \$1.00!! (Really!) Pictures and painting CLEARANCE ANY SIZE \$2. (Again too many) CLOSING 12:30pm on Tuesday, December 18th, REOPENING Thursday, January 3rd at 9:30 AM.

UNITED FAMILY CHRISTMAS GIFT DRIVE ...

It's NEVER TOO LATE to jump on the giving bandwagon!! I have 100 names of individuals that we buy gifts for Christmas, many names (bags) have been taken but SOMETIMES bags don't come back, If anyone can donate a gift card or two, or a game or two, any NEW item by December 9th, it will get used to help someone less fortunate celebrate Christmas morning. Questions?? Please call Lisa Renaud 908-625-5042.

MARY ANN'S MITTENS ...

Beginning December 1 - January 15th, we will have a mitten tree by Fisher hall. We will be collecting, hats, scarves, mittens, gloves, warm socks and Men's underwear (Socks and underwear are the most requested items at shelters) the Ingram family will start us out with 87 items in memory of our mom, Mary Ann Ingram. Donations will be divided between Starfish and The Somerset County Homeless Project at the end of January. Thank you SO much for donating to this worthy cause! Questions? Call Lisa Renaud 908-625-5042

ANNUAL REPORT TIME ONCE AGAIN...

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 scheduled for January 27th. Note: Please whenever possible send your report in online to wilsonchurch@verizon.net.

SYMPATHY...

We extend our sympathy to the family of Greg Molyneux who passed away on November 19th. A Memorial Service will be held on December 2nd at 3:00pm at Wilson Memorial Church.

We also extend our sympathy to the family of Pat McPherson upon the death of her son Lee. Lee McPherson passed away on November 20th.

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.



Poinsettia Order Form

I would like to order a poinsettia plant(s) to help decorate the church for Christmas. I understand the plant may be taken home after the 10 pm Christmas Eve Service.

Orders must be received NO LATER then December 13th

Name _____

Address _____

No. plants _____ \$12.00 per plant

December 2018

Wilson Memorial Church Monthly Activities

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						Decorate the Church 1 8:30am Frippery 9:30a - 12:30pm Advent Supper 4pm-Tree Lighting 5pm
2 Worship Service 10am Communion Memorial Service for Greg Molyneux 3pm AA 8:00pm	3 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	4 Boy Scouts Meeting 7:30pm Library AA/SA 7:30pm	5 Chapel Wed. 7:15- 8:00pm Boy Scouts Meeting 7:30pm Library	6 Frippery 9:30 am – 12:30pm Women's Guild 11:30 am Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	7 AA 8:30pm	8
9 Worship Service 10am AA 8:00pm	10 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	11 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	12	13 Frippery 9:30am -12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	14 AA 8:30pm	15
16 Worship Service 10am AA 8:00pm	17 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	18 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	19	20 Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	21 Men's Breakfast Country Squire 9:00am AA 8:30pm	22
23 Worship Service 10am AA 8:00pm	24 Children's Service 5pm Christmas Eve Candlelight Service 10:00pm Women's AA 7:30pm	25 Christmas Day AA/SA 7:30pm	26	27 AA 7:30pm	28 AA 8:30pm	29
30 Worship Service 10am AA 8:00pm	31 New Year's Eve Women's AA 7:30pm					