



HILLTOPICS – MAY 2019

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

I am writing this on Earth Day. Two of my favorite quotes come to mind as I take a moment to reflect on my respect for God's glorious creation, and the amazing, mysterious beauty of the natural world. The first is from the poet William Blake:

To see a World in a Grain of Sand
And a Heaven in a Wild Flower,
Hold Infinity in the palm of your hand
And Eternity in an hour.

The second is from the poet, Pablo Neruda: "You can cut all the flowers, but you can't stop the spring".

You know, each and every day should be Earth Day if we take to heart all the ways we are so vitally and inextricably connected to the stunning web of life we are so privileged to experience just because we are human beings living on this planet. All we did was be born, and look at the gorgeous gift of rich fertile earth, exuberant color, and incredible variety of animal life we get to not only witness, not only behold, but celebrate with all the loving respect befitting such an unsurpassable gift! I feel like the red cardinal that visits me just outside of my front window would add his own "AMEN!" to that if he could.

Unending awe and wonder at the magnificence of a tree, or the industry of a bee, really should be constant companions of ours, don't you think? While there is so much to take in when it comes to what happens to be part of our firsthand, personal experience, imagine all the glorious, intricate expressions of what goes on in the natural world that you just haven't had the opportunity to hear about.

Jack Kornfield tells the fascinating account of when the naturalist Robert Ardrey visited the renowned Paleontologist, Lewis Leakey, in East Africa. Leakey asked Ardrey to look at a coral colored "flower" that looked like a hyacinth. When he looked closely, Ardrey saw that each part of the blossom was made of insects. Ardrey said, "Well, this is evolution. The insects imitate a flower so they won't be eaten by the birds." But Leakey said, "There aren't any flowers that look like that. They aren't imitating anything." He explained that each flower imitated by the bugs (that doesn't exist in nature) is made up by a batch of eggs made by the female. It includes one bug with green wings, not coral, several with wings of in-between shades, and others with wings of pure coral. Then, Leakey shook the twig. The colony rose and filled the air with fluttering wings. After a time, they returned to their twig. They alighted in no particular order. After a lot of what seemed like random movement, soon the twig was still and there again was the flower. I have one word for this: **Wow!**

Won't you make at a personal practice to each day to be kind to God's gift of creation (which Richard Rohr has so creatively called, "God's first Bible")? We would never treat another human being the way so many dishonor and destroy what is not ours to dishonor and destroy. There is such an urgency to our important role as guardians and protectors of that which has been entrusted

to us. When we look at all we see, I hope we also see the words, "**Fragile, Handle with Care**". Faithfully Yours, Barbara

CHAPEL WEDNESDAY MAY 1st...

The next Chapel Wednesday will be held May 1st in the Chapel. Join Barbara, **7:15pm-8:00pm**, for a personal retreat time of music, spoken reflection, guided meditation and silent prayer. The theme will be "Spring".

Jazz Sunday, May 5th
Join Us for Our 10:00 am Worship Service

PROSPECTIVE MEMBERS' GATHERING, MAY 5TH...

Interested in finding out more about Wilson Memorial? Join Barbara for a Prospective Members' Gathering, May 5th after the Coffee Hour (at approximately 11:40am). The gathering will be held in the Choir Room.

The Sacrament of Communion,



May 12th, 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.

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

All good things... I imagine that was in the back of the disciple's mind when they were locked in a room together during that Sabbath when Jesus was in the tomb. "*It was a good run!*" "*It was great while it lasted!*" We say so many things to help us say goodbye to things we loved. This is a month of goodbyes in our church. We say goodbye on **May 19th** to a great year of Sunday school where we started in Babylon and will be ending in ancient Jerusalem with the newly formed church. Kids started in the service as always but then became immersed in Bible stories led by one of our team of teachers: Thomas Henry, Carol Droege, Yvette Whitley, Laurie Conley, Lori Goucher, Lisa Shpunder, and the many who came and did crafts for the children in Fisher Hall. It was especially gratifying to see adults join in with the children during coffee hour as they created things together. **We hope all of you plan to join us for our year-end pizza party in coffee hour on that date.** We also say goodbye to an amazing season of dinners with our teens at our monthly "Second Sundays". Teenagers and their family would join together around a meal, some teaching, and some kind of project to develop their own faith voice that we often got to see for ourselves in worship services. Grow Together was game changing for many in our congregation and it was bitter-sweet to have our year-end celebration last month.

With that being said, I think back to the disciples locked in that room thinking that they were at the end of a journey when in just a few hours they will realize that they are simply at the beginning. The resurrection of Jesus reminds us that when good things end, they give new life. I'm excited for a summer of building relationships outside the church walls and hosting our BIG events such as VBS, July 8-12, and our Urban Promise Mission Trip, August 4-8! Signups for both are happening NOW. The deadline for our Mission Trip is Memorial Day Sunday, May 26th and our first fundraiser is on Sunday, June 9th. Beyond this, I am so thrilled to be building relationships and plans for our coming new season. I see such excitement in this church to be a church that grows together, includes even the youngest, and listens to the voice of God as we walk together in the life God breathes into us. Thank you for a great season of ministry as we move into the next! Blessings Michael

Highlights from the April 15 Executive Board Meeting

Pastor's Report: Barbara began her report by talking about the meaning of Maundy, which comes from *mandatum novum*, Latin for "new commandment." She thanked everyone who helped with the Soup Suppers. The Suppers and Chapel Services are always a meaningful time during Lent each year, and it was great to see all the participation at all the Wednesday evenings! Pam Cox was faithful playing the piano at the services, and Sara Brescher shared her flute at three of the four services. The Thursday evening Grief Group has concluded meeting. The 8-week series ended last week. She reminded the Board that she will be attending more training in grief work April 26-29, so she will be away Sunday, April 28th. Confirmation was celebrated during our Palm Sunday Service. She highlighted the 3 newest members of our congregation: Matteus Fontes, Jenna Maziekien and Robert Nunn!

Barbara was honored to give a "Christian Blessing" at the Interfaith Gathering at the Shrine of St. Joseph last evening. It was a wonderful event with an outstanding turn out of folks representing different religious faiths in the general community. We had a table of Wilson folks, including Ron and Lonnie Miller!

Youth and Family Ministries Report: Michael submitted a report and expressed his love of community after dealing with Carol's health issues and all the support the congregation gave them through love, prayers and food during her surgery and recovery. He was able to keep up with the church through the mobility of his phone, to keep the ball rolling.

Grow Together completed and the feedback observed that people want to know one another and that people will rise to intentional spiritual direction. Michael is very pleased with the foundation we have laid. We will have another session in the coming year. He was happy with the team that helped create and execute this project: Angela, Sarah, Shashy, Jennifer and the Henrys.

Plans for April/May

1. Begin promoting VBS to the community.
2. Finish our Sunday school season as well as plan a teacher's "retreat" evening before summer begins.
3. Reformulate some of our tasks and leadership flows in the children's and family areas to better serve our congregation.

4. Finalize Mission trip – currently just three signed up, but more mentioned they are coming.
5. Spend some time with our younger teens in areas of their passions and interests, specifically new confirmands on their next steps in Church membership.

Committee Reports:

- Keith McNally spoke about the Photo Directory and explained that an alternative will be provided for people missing the photo shoot opportunities.
- The Covenant Committee reported a successful blood drive on April 6 with approximately 50 units of blood taken.
- Tony Cito reported on various items: carpet cleaning on April 18; pot-hole repairs on April 27; a dead tree will be removed on the driveway circle; flood damaged carpet was replaced in the library and Barbara's office (awaiting insurance reimbursement). Many hands joined into assist, including the Boy Scouts, to move furniture out of the library and office and then to return it.

Dates to Remember:

May 4 – Susan Sparks fundraising event
May 5 – Jazz Sunday
May 10 & 11 – Church Directory photographing sessions
May 12 – Mother's Day, Communion
June 9 – Mission Trip fundraising

FINANCIAL FACTS-NOTE FROM YOUR TREASURER...

Our March giving numbers were slightly higher than March 2018, but our expenses were also slightly higher.

Overall, we are in a slightly better place than this time last year, but we are still showing a significant deficit, which is always concerning. However I'm hoping that April numbers will help reduce that deficit.

We're on the final push for ticket sales for the Susan Sparks fundraiser on May 4th. Get your tickets NOW! Tell family and friends!
With gratitude, Pam Davis

Susan Sparks Outreach Benefit Event

"Laugh Your Way To Grace"

May 4th, 2019 at 7:00pm

Book signing and refreshments to follow

Susan Sparks is the Senior Pastor at Madison Avenue Baptist Church in NYC. She travels globally as a standup comedian, sharing hope and healing through laughter. Find out more about her at: www.SusanSparks.com

TICKETS

General Admission: \$30 Seniors (62+): \$25

All tickets will be available for purchase following Sunday Worship Service.

\$30 General Admission tickets may also be purchased through our website www.WilsonMemorialChurch.org

CALLING ALL BAKERS!!

We are looking for volunteers to bake goodies for the Susan Sparks Benefit Event. We want to provide refreshments following Susan's performance. Your donation will help us keep our costs down, to further benefit our Outreach programs. We are looking for any bite size treats such as cookies or brownies. A sign-up sheet, for bakers, will be on the ticket table outside of Fisher Fellowship Hall. Your baked items may be dropped off Friday, May 3rd, between 6 PM – 7:30 PM, or Saturday, May 4th, after 2 PM. Thank you for helping us make this a successful event!

WOMEN'S GUILD...

The Women's Guild will enjoy Grand Tea at the Cozy Cupboard on Thursday, May 2nd.

BLANKETS+ SUNDAY, "MOTHER'S DAY", MAY 12TH ...

What a wonderful way to celebrate Mother's Day! Please consider paying tribute to your own mother or special friends by either specifically ordering a blanket (just \$5.00/ blanket) or making a monetary contribution in their names. Blankets+ is a special mission opportunity to assist people in need around the world. Your contribution provides the means for Church World Service to help individuals and communities when faced with an emergency situation as well as to just give assistance in providing basic essentials for everyday living. Church World Service has worked for over 66 years in partnership with local communities to first identify their needs and then access the resources needed to build the foundation for a more viable future. Contribution envelopes along with an informational insert will be placed in the church bulletin on May 5th as well as on May 12th. Please be generous in your support of BLANKETS+. You are not only honoring your mothers and friends but are providing comfort to those who so desperately need assistance at this time. If you have any questions, please contact Pam Cox (908-756-8223).

THE COVENANT COMMITTEE...

We are doing well and feel that the Covenant between the two churches in Watchung is a good ecumenical experience. The last Blood Drive on April 6 was a success with 51 units drawn. I keep rooting for 60 and we are almost there. The next Drive will be in the summer and currently is scheduled for Saturday, August 10th (but do keep alert for any updates). We thank all who generously donate and all those who support the importance of ecumenism.

Fran Ellis

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP ...

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

Happy May! Spring has sprung at the Frippery, we have lovely gift items for mom or Grandma... VINTAGE canister sets, beautiful Lenox china (individual complete place settings) one of a kind decor items for you home, stop by and discover WATCHUNG'S best kept secret! The Frippery closes for the summer so now is your chance to see what all the fuss is about! We also have clothing for men, women and children, MOST items are \$4 each, during the month of MAY, they go to \$1 each (we NEED to clear the racks!) a LEVEL shopping bag becomes only \$10, then \$5 midmonth and down to \$3 BAG by the end of the month, stop in now to choose from the cream of the crop!

STARFISH FOOD PANTRY...

"Make your Mom proud!" Whether your mom is in your daily life or up in heaven, let's honor these special women with a BAGFUL of goodies for Starfish! Pick up a **Mother's Day Starfish Bag** in the Narthex and return it during the month of May. Just head to your nearest grocery store or Dollar Tree and FILL IT in honor of the woman who taught you "It's better to give than receive." If you have children, take them along with you and let them choose the items going in the bag and let them know WHY you are doing this. It's such a valuable lesson to be learned. If you're lucky enough to have your mom in your daily life, take a picture on your iphone and send it to her and **thank her**. If she's in heaven BELIEVE ME, she knows. Happy Mother's Day to all of you!



PERSONAL ITEMS...

We continue to pray for those suffering with health problems: Betty Aldrich, Rev. Ron Miller, 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.

Wilson Memorial Church – May 2019 Hilltopics

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Chapel Wednesday 7:15-8:00pm Boy Scout Meeting 7:30pm Library	2 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Women's Guild Grand Tea at Cozy Cupboard Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	3 AA 8:30pm	4 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Susan Sparks – Church Fund Raising Event Fisher Hall 7:00pm
5 Worship Service 10:00am Jazz Sunday Prospective Members Gathering - Choir Room 11:40am AA 8:00pm	6 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	7 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	8	9 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	10 Photo Directory Appointments Fisher Hall - All Day AA 8:30pm	11 Photo Directory Appointments Fisher Hall - All Day
12 Worship Service 10:00am Communion Mother's Day Blanket Sunday AA 8:00pm	13 Board Meeting 7:30pm Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	14 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	15	16 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	17 Men's Breakfast Country Squire 9:00:am AA 8:30pm	18 Memorial Service Don Monetti Sr.
19 Worship Service 10:00am Pizza Party AA 8:00pm	20 Bells 7:30pm Women's AA 7:30pm	21 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	22	23 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	24 AA 8:30pm	25
26 Worship Service 10:00am AA 8:00pm	27 Memorial Day Office Closed Women's AA 7:30pm	28 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm AA/SA 7:30pm	29	30 Frippery 9:30am - 12:30pm Choir 7:30pm AA 7:30pm	31 AA 8:30pm	