



HILLTOPICS –DECEMBER 2017

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

MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

In the book, *Secrets In the Dark*, Frederick Buechner shares a wonderful and classic story about a Christmas pageant at an Episcopal church. He writes,

The manger was down in front at the chancel steps where it always is. Mary was there is a blue mantle and Joseph in a cotton beard. The wise men were there with a handful of shepherds, and of course in the midst of them all the Christ child was there, lying in the straw. The nativity story was read aloud by my friend with carols sung at the appropriate places, and all went like clockwork until it came time for the arrival of the angels of the heavenly host as represented by the children of the congregation, who were robed in white and scattered throughout the pews with their parents.

At the right moment they were supposed to come forward and gather around the manger saying, ‘Glory to God in the highest, and on earth peace, goodwill among men,’ and that is just what they did except there were so many of them that there was a fair amount of crowding and jockeying for position, with the result that one particular angel, a girl about nine years old who was smaller than most of them, ended up so far out on the fringes of things that not even by craning her neck and standing on tiptoe could she see what was going on. ‘Glory to God in the highest and on earth peace, good will among men,’ they all sang on cue, and then in the momentary pause that followed, the small girl electrified the entire church by crying out in a voice shrill with irritation and frustration and enormous sadness at having her view blocked, ‘**Let Jesus show!**’

Don’t you think that child’s words were right on the mark? “Let Jesus show” is our cry as well when so much at this time of year crowds out and blocks the view of the Christ child born once again. Commercialism blocks the view. Busyness and frantic gift buying block the view. Expectations of ourselves and others block the view. Sadness and personal grief block the view. And yet, the truth of the matter is that we don’t *have to* let all of that block our view. Let’s remember that Jesus has a way of showing up no matter what and our job one is to heed the words of John the Baptist who quoted from the prophet Isaiah: “Make straight the highway of the Lord.” With a straight, direct and unobstructed highway, the view is not blocked.

Won’t you let Jesus show? Letting Jesus show this time of year means allowing ourselves to be shaped by a different priority than the priorities we see around us. It means staying focused on why we do what we do anyway – be it in our homes, in our church or just in our daily walks. Again, won’t you let Jesus show? Blessings to you and yours at this beautiful time of year!

Faithfully Yours, Barbara

SHOP FOR GOOD SALE, DECEMBER 2ND...

Saturday, December 2nd from 10:00am-2:00pm will be our wonderful sale of beautiful handcrafted items from around the world just in time for your holiday gift giving needs! Our **Shop for Good** sale will draw from the same artisans in developing countries as Ten Thousand Villages which we have partnered with in the past. This year, we have joined up with Fair Trade Winds and SERRV. **Your support will help accomplished artisans pay for food, education, healthcare and housing** in areas where this is the only way they can provide for family needs.

Communion Sunday The Sacrament of Communion



December 3rd, 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.

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

YEAR-END GIFTS ...

While I do not have the final November financial results as of the time I am writing this note, I do have 31 years experience as your treasurer and I do know that we continue to be in the red and will continue to stay “under water” unless each of us donates an extra gift to our church in December. Won’t you please prayerfully consider what extra you can give using the enclosed Christmas Gift envelope? With your help, we can end the year in positive financial territory, but without every person’s help, we will end up in the hole.

Finally, if you have not yet returned your Estimate of Giving card for 2018, please do so as soon as possible.

Thank you. Hugh Woodruff, Treasurer

A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

Merry Advent! I know, I know, I'm supposed to say "Merry Christmas", but in the church, we get to celebrate something way bigger than Christmas. Advent isn't just a day where we give presents and celebrate the birth of Jesus. Advent is all about the space in our lives where we learn patience and how to trust the promise of God. Throughout the Advent season, we get to remind ourselves and one another that God keeps God's promises even when things seem bleak and dark. It is a perfect opportunity for parents to teach this patience to children. We have prepared an advent devotional guide for families complete with small color pages and suggested Scripture for you to use with your family. We want every family to have one. Just let me know you'd like a copy and I'll get it to you. We also look forward to our family Christmas Eve Service on Sunday, December 24th, 5pm. Children who can participate should let us know very soon. It is an inclusive pageant with a spot for everyone to help tell the story. Each Sunday in Sunday School we will have something special leading up to that evening. If you need any help with ideas of how to tell the story of God's love to your children during this holiday season, it's why I'm here. I'm happy to help. I believe this year will be an extraordinary advent season. Blessings Michael

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 2018 Confirmation Class, please let Barbara know. You can also email her at stirlingpeters@verizon.net

A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...

It's here! The new church website, is now available online! <https://www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org/>. This project has truly been the work of a great team of members of our church, to help bring our church presence to our community, and tell our story. While we still have more content to put up, the Calendar of Events and announcements are current, with the opportunity to do on-line giving or donations a big plus. Please visit and share with friends and family.

The Advent season is my favorite time of the year. Church decorating, tree lighting ceremony at the village green, Advent Dinner – all old traditions that we as a family love. Yet sometimes it is great to add or change traditions as well. The opportunity to be kind to ourselves is December 6th, for the Chapel Wednesday at 7:15pm, a chance to unwind and center yourself for the wonder of the Christmas season. Perhaps you and your family may want to show kindness to others by filling an entire bag for the Starfish Food Pantry. Another tradition of kindness may be to bring hats and gloves for the Mitten Tree. Another tradition could be to give a farm animal to the Heifer International in honor or memory of loved ones. Whatever you choose for a tradition, may it be full of blessings and kindness to others. God Came Down to Earth, Let Us Rejoice and Be Glad In It! Lorri Monetti

1) MINISTER'S REPORT HIGHLIGHTS

- Barbara expressed a "big congratulations" to our entire congregation for raising \$3,575 for disaster relief during our October month long drive!
- She encouraged participation in the monthly Chapel Wednesday sessions (7:15-8:00pm) that includes music, reflection, guided meditation, and silence for personal prayer. The next one is December 6.
- Plans are progressing for our **Shop For Good** Fair Trade Holiday Sale, Saturday, December 2, 10am-2pm. This is a great opportunity to give people awareness of the economic struggles in other parts of our world. Everyone on the Board is asked to take a flier home and see that it gets put up at a place of your choice especially in Watchung, Green Brook, Warren or Berkeley Heights.
- Because the Advent season is such a special time of year, Barbara and Michael hope everyone will pay special attention to using it to help them prepare for a meaningful Christmas. Please remember that Dec. 24th is on a Sunday, so we will have our morning Worship Service and then our Christmas Eve Services (5pm and 10pm).
- Barbara reported on her wonderful and enriching experience at her training for The Grief Recovery Method which she attended in October. This is a specific program developed to help people deal not only with the death of someone close to them, but other forms of loss in life (divorce, job etc.). As a Grief Recovery Specialist, she has been trained to meet with individuals one-on-one as well as in a group setting. More information about opportunities will be forthcoming.

2) YOUTH AND FAMILY MINISTRIES HIGHLIGHTS

- Michael reported that he is especially focusing on faith development at home and intergenerational opportunities. His goal is to get parents to join him in learning how to do faith development at home beginning with a simple book as a launching point for further development of faith at home. He also wants to form an intergenerational team to help look at the ministries at Wilson and make sure we are doing the job we need to do to develop relationships and root the next generation. The work being done is in places like the ushering team and bell choir as a start.
- Mission Trip: Michael submitted a proposal to do an "all church" or "intergenerational" mission trip this year. Hurricane Harvey has opened the opportunity to care for people in a unique way. The mission trip to the Houston area would be August 6-11 2018, and be open to St. Mary's families as well. The Board voted to support the continued investigation of this project.
- Trail Project: While cancelling our Halloween event was a disappointment, the event did encourage one of our students, Abby Wighard, to do her Girl Scout Silver Award project there. Abby will be taking one of our outdoor benches (outside already) and making a "Kindness Corner".

- 3) **FACILITIES** – Tony Cito reported that the choir room deep clean, including the chairs, had been completed. Blackadar Heating and Plumbing will be contacted to check the AC dehumidifier units to make sure that they are functioning properly. Other projects include waterproofing the exterior wall of the choir room, improving the railing to the upper parking lot, completing work on emergency lighting and work on the Blackburn Hall sump pump.
- 4) **STEWARDSHIP UPDATE** – The envelopes are distributed, and we are encouraging all to return by December 3rd.
- 5) **NEW BUSINESS**
- Nominating Committee – Two board members, Keith and Cota, have offered to serve a second term. There will be a need for Board members for one full term and one unexpired term plus a Clerk and Treasurer.
 - Memorial Endowment Committee – A project approved by the MEC for work at Timothy Christian School was reviewed and partially approved. A second vote for final approval is in progress.
 - Assistant Treasurer position proposed – Hugh Woodruff suggested that we re-instate the position of Assistant Treasurer, and to elect Pam Davis. Motion was proposed by Keith, seconded by Betty Ann, and approved.
 - ICCF – The Board was asked by Roberta Smith, ICCF Financial VP, for our agreement on allowing them to re-categorize a portion of the excess Ost Fund money as general operating funds to help with the 2017 shortfall and the Board agreed.
- 6) **OLD BUSINESS**
- Fisher Hall Fees – Continued discussion was made, with the issues regarding the definition of a non-profit. Keith to take the chart to review and revise.
 - The request by the Church of God and Saints for the use of Blackburn Hall by this group was discussed in length, and a final vote was made. The request was denied by the Board due to conflict of use by other groups as well as additional stress for support.

COVENANT COMMITTEE...

The Covenant Committee is thankful for the choirs, readers, speaker and those who helped with the refreshments and planning for our Covenant Thanksgiving Service. We also thank those who kept others in mind and gave at the Blood Drive on November 18th. Our total of collections was 43 units. We will be holding another Drive in the Spring and our annual Unity Service will also be scheduled for the late winter or early Spring. More information to follow. Enjoy this Christmas Season! Fran Ellis



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 than
December 15th**

Name _____

Address _____

No. plants _____ \$11.00 per plant

SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS...

In preparation for the Children's Christmas Eve Service we need 3 Kings, a multitude of Angels & a flock of Shepherds for our 5pm Children's Christmas Eve Service. So parents: please stop by the Sunday School office to sign your child up to participate in the service.

Dec. 3th Please note the time change for the Advent Workshop. This year the children will have the Advent Workshop during their Sunday School class from 10am – 11am. They will enjoy a wonderful morning walking from room to room making different holiday crafts.

Dec. 10th Second Sunday: Kids Church Our Kids Church will be held in the sanctuary as a "Family Friendly Service".

Dec. 17th Sunday School will be a Holiday Music class.

Dec. 24th A Christmas video will be shown during Sunday School. Then at 5pm we will have the **Children's Christmas Eve Service**. Remember to sign up and your child will need to be at church at 4:15pm to get ready for the service.

Have a wonderful and joyous Christmas.

Dec. 31st New Year Eve We will not have Sunday School classes but all children are welcome to join their family in the church service. A Happy New Year to all and a healthy and blessed 2018. 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 and Roger Seidel

**LOOKING AHEAD... "WHAT'S BREWING?",
JANUARY 14, 2018**

For our January "What's Brewing?" program, Barbara will speak on the topic, *Let's Talk About Grief*. Her presentation will be based on her training as a Grief Recovery Specialist with the Grief Recovery Method.

Did you know there are over forty different types of losses we experience in life ranging from death of a loved one to divorce, loss of health or job, or loss of a pet? Grieving is natural, but well-meaning advice from friends or cultural norms fail to give us the tools we need to bring our grief to completion. Learn what is helpful or not helpful when connecting with the personal grief we experience in life, or with the grief of someone else.

WOMEN'S GUILD...

The Women's Guild will be participating in the Shop for Good Sale, Saturday, December 2nd, selling homemade crafts. The sale will continue Sunday, December 3rd with a Bake Sale, as well. The Women's Guild will hold their Potluck Birthday Luncheon on Thursday, December 7th 11:30am-1:30pm. Meeting will be followed by a potluck luncheon. Please bring a dish to share! Desserts and beverage provided. We will also celebrate the Christmas season with holiday festivities with Barbara Peters. All are welcome.

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 5th in order to give the office sufficient time to prepare for the Annual Meeting scheduled for January 28th. Note: Please whenever possible send your report in online to wilsonchurch@verizon.net.

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP...

The Frippery is the yellow house in the top parking lot and is open Tuesdays and Thursdays from 9:30am-12:30pm and first Saturday of the month, through June, also 9:30am-12:30pm.

Only 5/FIVE/5 "Frippery shopping days left" we close 12/14)
DECEMBER SPECIAL----- With a \$1.00 donation to The Starfish Food Pantry, your entire order will be 1/2 price! (Excluding designer purses and WATCHES (we just paid for all new batteries)) Regular Jewelry IS INCLUDED IN SALE We are overloaded with Holiday decorations for your home, nursing home, assisted living, college dorm, first apartment, office, school At 1/2 price you are picking up things for PENNIES! Think platters, china, glasses, wine glasses, champagne glasses (for New Years) tablecloths, decor, GRAVY BOATS, vases, linens for guests who stay over DON'T get stuck paying retail!

PLEASE NOTE: Our Thursday ladies have volunteered to stay an extra hour during December, so come spend your lunch hour with us, THURSDAYS, 9:30-1:30.

**UNITED FAMILY AND CHILDREN'S SOCIETY
CHRISTMAS GIFT DRIVE...**

We are well underway with our gift drive, only about 10 bags remain... ALL BAGS are DUE BACK Sunday December 3rd. We spend ALL day sorting bags, adding donated items, "making up bags" for ones that were never taken, it's a huge job but what a wonderful way to get the holiday season started!

Thank you to everyone who took a bag and shopped, donated \$10 gift cards (these are a HUGE help) donated NEW items from your homes, wrote a check for me to BUY gifts and also to the high school kids that are joining me on the last day to do the physical work. Merry Christmas to you all!

Lisa Renaud, 908-625-5042

MARY ANN'S MITTENS...

From December 3rd through mid January we will be collecting mittens, hats and gloves in memory of Mary Ann Ingram. Her family will start us out with 87 pair (her age) There will be a mitten tree near the entrance of Fisher Hall this year. In mid January the children's items will be delivered to Starfish to distribute and the adult items will be delivered to Somerville for the Homeless Project. Questions? Please call Lisa Renaud 908-625-5042.

NEW MEMBER WELCOMED...

We welcome as a new member Jackie Bowers, mother of Laurie Conley and Nance Bowers, grandmother of Matteus.



SYMPATHY...

We recently learned of the death of Robert Best, brother of Fred Best, on November 2. Fred and Merle reside in North Carolina. Our thoughts are with the Best family.



PERSONAL ITEMS...

We continue to pray for those suffering with health problems: DJ Hunsinger, Joan Baylis, Russ Funk, Howard Beyer, Janet Meeks, Joyce Possien, Ellie Groves, Gladys Andrews, Joy Jurgens, Eva Wehof, Michael Kontra, and Alison Barr.

*Wilson Memorial Church
7 Valley Road
Watchung, New Jersey 07069
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Check out our website: www.wilsonmemorialchurch.com

Email: wilsonchurch@verizon.net