



# HILLTOPICS –MAY 2017

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

## MESSAGE FROM OUR PASTOR...

In a garden store recently, I saw this sign: “Keep calm and plant something.” If you are a true blue gardener, I’m sure you see that as great advice. I wish I were a true blue gardener. I am much more an appreciator of wonderful gardens. Somebody has to do all the admiring, right?

There was a time when I really thought gardening would come naturally. I think Tom felt that way too. A few years after we got married, we decided to plant a large vegetable garden. Did you notice the word “large”? That was our first mistake. We thought that because we happened to have a decent size backyard, we might as well grow as many vegetables as we possibly could: tomatoes, beans, cucumbers, green peppers, lettuce – you name it. Oh yes, I can’t forget about the zucchini! Soon, however, it all felt overwhelming. We couldn’t keep up with the weeds. We couldn’t keep up with the watering. The tomatoes didn’t do well while the zucchini grew to be monstrous in size (I began to feel like I could make zucchini bread in my sleep). We came to realize that when it came to vegetable gardening, our ambition quickly exceeded what was realistic for us. We also came to realize something else. If we put the whole idea to rest, we were providing a needed service to others. So many folks had more bounty from their gardens than they knew what to do with and when they found out we were more than happy to take it off their hands, they were thrilled. It was a win/win!

Now, we are much more content to think small. Container gardening on the deck is more suited to us. And, I’m looking forward to making my usual trip to find just the right colorful assortment of annuals for my window boxes. That’s not to say we aren’t excited about a new project. With the expert help of our gardener friend Pat, we will soon be enjoying a small bed of a variety plants which will be perfectly suited for the spot in our front yard near my miniature weeping cherry tree. The tree was a Mother’s Day gift several years ago and the area around it looks rather neglected compared to the lovely, thriving tree. I can’t wait to admire what Pat has in mind right now and, what’s most important, it will be completely manageable.

Perhaps the moral to my story is a real life lesson. When we think too big, bigger than we have the capacity to realistically deal with, we can be overwhelmed and defeat our own purpose. When we think about what is much more manageable and doable, we have a better chance at success. Small can certainly be beautiful. This perspective leads me to reflecting on the bigger challenges in life. So often, the big picture of need and suffering in the world can feel totally overwhelming. We may ask: “What can I do in my small sphere of influence? How can I make a difference? What impact can I have?” These questions actually bring to mind Mother Teresa’s beautiful and moving words, “**In this life we cannot do great things. We can only do small things with great love.**”

Let’s never underestimate the powerful nature of the small things we can do with great love. Be on the alert for those small things. Such opportunities are everywhere we look if we have eyes to see them. What may be small to you can mean the world

to someone else! As I look forward to our new garden spot in our front yard (and I mean spot!), I’m going to keep in mind the delightful beauty of small in all areas of life, including and especially when it come to doing small things with great love. I invite you to join me in celebrating the wonderful and *big* value of small!

Faithfully Yours, Barbara

## Communion Sunday The Sacrament of Communion Sunday, May 14th, 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.*

## BLESSING OF THE ANIMALS...

We love our pets! Mark you calendars now for this year’s **Blessing of the Animals Service**. It will be on **Sunday, May 21<sup>st</sup>, at 1:30pm**. If you don’t have a live pet, stuffed “pets” are welcome! Please help us get the word out to pet lovers everywhere. This is a wonderful way to celebrate all of God’s creatures. Won’t you join us on the front lawn of the church? In case of rain, we will hold our **Blessing of the Animals** in the church narthex.

## A MESSAGE FROM OUR YOUTH DIRECTOR...

I have to tell you a quick story. On Good Friday, I propped one of the main doors open to bring in some of the rocks that we were going to use for the service. It was a beautiful day, so the door stayed open while I arranged them for the service. I finished up and went home to change. When I came back in the building I was greeted by a member of our congregation that informed me that, upon entering, she was greeted by a black cat! As she described the cat, I knew exactly what cat she was talking about; a cat that was always torturing my less-than-athletic dog. I also knew how it had gotten in, during my aforementioned set up! After the service, I went looking for the cat to no avail. The next morning I tried again, reopening outside doors, with the hopes that the ruckus I was making would encourage the cat to escape, and also hoping this time I wouldn’t be welcoming in more woodland creatures. I had no idea if I was successful, but I didn’t see any more evidence of a feline resident. A few days later, I was sent an email of a lost cat, with an inquiry if it might be our Good Friday visitor. I called the number and sure enough I discovered that our visitor was most likely in the building, and was named Licorice. I told them to meet me at the church and we would go searching. It seems like a familiar voice brought Licorice from her hiding place and back into the very welcoming arms of her family.

I couldn't help but think how this was exactly what the church is supposed to be. No, not a shelter for adventurous felines, but a place of safety where miracles happen and relationships are restored. It was not lost on me that our cat began her adventure on Good Friday. That's where, spiritually speaking, all of our adventures of faith began. Sometimes we think we are doing one thing, but all the while God is guiding us home. Licorice had some dark nights with a lot of questions and an empty belly, but here in the warmth of God's house, she found her way back to those who loved her.

This season is one where we wind down our programming and gear up for some of our summer adventures. We begin with VBS on our first week of summer vacation (June 26-29) and then head to Urban Promise in Camden, July 16-21. These are great events and they have a huge impact on those who participate, but what is never lost on me is that the real work is how all of us come together to pull them off. If you've never come on board as a VBS volunteer, let this be your year! If you can't join us in Camden, please come and have a wonderful spaghetti dinner with us on June 4th or buy some "stock" after the morning services the last two Sundays of May. Because, when it all comes down to it, our church is a place of safety where miracles happen and it's not only cats that find relationships are restored and that God is guiding us all home. Blessings, Michael

#### **A MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT...**

Rev. Barbara reminds us - Easter is a season, not just one day! One of my all-time favorite hymns, "Because He Lives", by Bill Gaither, has some of the most straightforward messages - Jesus gave his life for us so that we can be forgiven. How simple is that, yet so hard to accept? I, like so many in the choir, have a hard time singing this song without getting choked up.

God sent his son, they called him Jesus,  
He came to love, heal and forgive.  
He lived and died to buy my pardon,  
An empty grave is there to prove my savior lives.

Many Blessings, Lorri Monetti

#### **BOARD BRIEFS...**

1. We had our Unity Service Program here on March 26th which was sponsored by the Covenant Committee. The bells did a wonderful job as well as did Roseann Sicola and Peter D'Angelo from St. Mary's. The dinner portion of the evening went very well as well.
2. A few people who attended my "Jesus and Buddha" program are getting together to discuss *Buddhist Bootcamp* by Timber Hawkeye.
3. It was a great day with our first ever Palm Sunday breakfast (we certainly thank Doyle and his cooking crew). It was wonderful to recognize our Confirmation Class who are now officially members, Blake Januzzi, Shirley Kreis, Nick Maziekien, Melanie Nunn and Stuart Whitley. Ashley Shpunder was confirmed April 23rd.
4. Barbara will be away Thurs., April 27 - Monday, May 1 to attend a workshop. "The Spiritual Dimension of the Enneagram" Sun., April 30th Michael will be away as well, (he will be on a trip to the Netherlands). Don

Ashmall of the ICCC will be preaching. Barbara's husband Tom will be "Minister on Call" while away.

5. Speaking of Enneagram (an ancient tool helpful for personality theory and spiritual growth), Barbara will be leading a new book group on "The Road Back to You" by Ian Cron Morgan and Suzanne Stabile. Please read my announcement in Hilltopics. It will meet every other week beginning Tuesday, May 2nd at 7:00pm for five sessions.
6. Blessing of the Animals will be Sun., May 21<sup>st</sup>, 1:30pm.
7. Michael said that April winds down the Church School year - crank up for summer! Michael worked with members of the confirmation class and their parents to try to keep them engaged in a role in our church. He spoke with the parents about keeping them on board for 2 years past confirmation. The parents are on board with serving on each phase of our church. Mentors will be decided and help keep kids here after a two-year internship. Find out what they like and ask them to help, we need young voices even on the board and partner with St Mary's on the mission trip.
8. The spaghetti dinner has been postponed until June 4<sup>th</sup>. On April 23<sup>rd</sup>, the original date for dinner, go to the Texas Roadhouse for dinner and a portion of your meal cost will be given to our Mission Trip.
9. COVENANT COMMITTEE - Bruce Ryno said there was a steady flow of donors with 61 pints being collected during our latest blood drive. The Unity Dinner was a big success with a new caterer. Please let Bruce know your comments on the dinner.
10. FACILITIES COMMITTEE Antony Cito said that they have been very busy with several projects. First the work on the Blackburn Hall doors has been completed. We had a water problem identified, so work was done to clean the drains and the sump pump checked. Additional outside drainage will need to be cleaned.
11. The garage roof at the Manse needs replaced. Since the quote is \$5,200 Tony wanted to clear it with the Board. This quote includes a 25-year guarantee. There was no objection to the work to be done.
12. PRESIDENT'S REPORT - The investigation for a new church website is winding down to a few hosting companies. The decision is to be presented to the Board for approval at the May meeting.
13. The research continues for a company to install a UV filter film on the windows in Fisher Hall. Folks are invited to give their opinion on the film strengths by looking at the samples on the windows.
14. Do you have an hour or so to help out during the summer? Weeding, watering, TLC cleaning is needed, and we are looking for volunteers. Please contact the church.
15. The ICCC Conference is to be held this year in Cherry Hill NJ, July 17-20. All invited to attend any or all of the conference, however we are still in need of an additional delegate. This person must be a church member in order to represent the church. Please contact the church or Lorri Monetti as soon as possible if you are able to attend.

### VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL...

**Dear Parents:** Send your kids on an imaginative, impacting adventure! Calling all Kids 4 years old through those currently in 5th grade! At **Maker Fun Factory VBS**, kids discover not only that God made them the way they are, but for a purpose too. Maker Fun Factory is filled with incredible Bible-learning experiences kids see, hear, touch, and even taste! Maker fun, team-building games, cool Bible songs, and tasty treats are just a few of the standout activities that help faith flow into real life. Your kids will also participate in a hands-on mission project, through a program called Operation Kid-to-Kid, that will let the kids in our community show God's love to needy remote villages in Peru. So mark June 26-29th on your calendar! The fun starts each day at 8:45am and will end at NOON. Registration forms are available in the church foyer or by calling the church office.

### NEW BOOK GROUP BEGINS IN MAY ...

If you have ever wondered, "Why am I the way I am?" or "Why is my family member/friend/coworker the way they are?" this new book group is just for you! Please join us as we delve into a fascinating way of understanding our personalities and the direction we can grow personally and spiritually. We will be reading and discussing ***The Road Back to You*** by Ian Morgan Cron and Suzanne Stabile. This book is based on a contemporary understanding of a very ancient tool called the Enneagram. As the summary of the book states, "the Enneagram's uncanny accuracy in describing how human beings are wired, both positively and negatively, has spiked its popularity in recent years... ***The Road Back to You*** is rooted in this approach to formation, which Thomas Merton described as the one challenge on which all of life rests: to discover our true selves in discovering God, and to find more of God in finding our true selves." Discussing this book will be an amazing adventure in both self discovery and understanding others with compassion.

***The Road Back to You*** book group will meet Tuesday evenings: **May 2<sup>nd</sup>, 16<sup>th</sup>, 30<sup>th</sup>, June 6<sup>th</sup>, June 20<sup>th</sup> at 7:00pm.** Please let Barbara know if you are interested! The gatherings will take place either in homes or at the church. ***The Road Back to You*** can be purchased from any major bookseller.

### BLANKETS+ SUNDAY, "MOTHER'S DAY", MAY 14<sup>TH</sup>

Again this year Wilson Memorial Church is providing each of you with 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 \$10.00/ 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 Services 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 Services has worked for approximately 65+ 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 7<sup>th</sup> as well as on May 14<sup>th</sup>. 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. This year, Blanket Gift Cards verifying that a blanket or monetary gift has been given in a person's honor are available to give to them. You can pick card/cards up in the church office or by contacting Pam Cox (908-756-8223).

### COVENANT COMMITTEE...

The Covenant Committee has enjoyed a year of joint programs and appreciates all who have participated in them. Our last Blood Drive on April 1st collected 61 units of blood for those who are in need and that may possibly help over 150 people. Thanks again to the donors and those who came but may have to try again in the future. The summer Blood Drive will be held on August 12th. It is again on a Saturday and will be held in the Exempt Hall on Mountain Blvd. Please continue to support this much needed method of sharing.

We are also happy to support the Vacation Bible School, which will be held at the end of June. Children ages 4 through grade 5 may sign up to attend. Of course there will be many volunteers to make the event complete. All of the ecumenical programs add to our understanding of each other! With thanks from The Covenant Committee.

### SUNDAY SCHOOL NEWS...

This will be the last month of classes for the 2016 – 2017 Church School year but we will open the next session in September with more storytelling excitement

**May 7<sup>th</sup>** We continue with the story "The Lord is my Shepherd" and the Sunday School classes will have a cooking lesson related to the story.

**May 14<sup>th</sup> Second Sunday: Mother's Day / Kids Church** It is the 2<sup>nd</sup> Sunday of the month so it is "Kids Church" and Mother's Day so the Sunday School classes will be in the main sanctuary for a special Mother's Day and Kids Church service.

**May 21<sup>st</sup> Youth Sunday** This is Youth Sunday, Teachers Appreciation Day and the end of the current Sunday School session. This is an exciting day as some of our students will receive their own personalized Bible. All classes will remain in Church for the service.

We thank the Women's Guild for their loving support and generosity to the Sunday School and purchasing the personalized Bibles presented to the students. The students who will be receiving their bibles are: Kayla Grace Grundman, Hannah Marie Stefanovic, Ashley Elizabeth Shpunder, Alexis Grace Shpunder.

The **ANNUAL SUNDAY SCHOOL PIZZA PARTY** will be held in the Fellowship Hall following the Worship Service. **Everyone is invited.** This is a great time for the congregation, students and teachers to get together. Come and enjoy the food, fun and fellowship. **Remember, everyone is invited.**

We'd like to say thank you so very much to all our teachers, substitutes and those who have read a story to the children and those who gave of their time this 2016 – 2017, Church School year. We have a wonderful Church program, thanks to each and every one of you. We would like to acknowledge all those who taught in the Sunday School this year. The 2016/2017 year teachers are: Laurie Conley, Lara Grundman, Yvette Whitley, Kim Nunn, Adrienne Johnson, Kathleen Bakos, Lori Goucher, Lisa Shpunder, Carol Osbourne and Michael Droege. The uplifting music sessions were with Jim Musacchio. We appreciate the time, energy and compassion they all give to the children of this church.

This has been a wonderful year and experience with the various people from the congregation who have volunteered to read the short and inspirational stories to the children. It has been a great experience for the children. This year's story readers have been: Paul Ost, Thomas Henry, Gwen Chalker, Judy Wall, Judy Funk, Eileen Higgins, Lisa Shpunder, Dennis Bakos, Carol Osbourne, Sarah Miller, Laurie Conley, Michael Droege and Arlene Seidel.

We would be happy to answer any questions you may have regarding the Sunday School. Email: [akrays106@gmail.com](mailto:akrays106@gmail.com)  
Home: 908-668-0974 Cell: 908-405-8091

Love in Christ, Arlene and Roger Seidel

#### **WOMEN'S GUILD**

**Women's Guild will meet on Thursday, May 4th 11:30am-1:30pm.** Meeting will be followed by bring your own sandwich luncheon. Desserts and beverage provided. The program will begin at 12:30pm. *Candy Ashman will present a program on the Pinelands and cranberry bogs. She will also provide information on the oil pipeline and where it will go now that it has been approved. All are welcome.*

#### **THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP...**

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

We will be open the FIRST SATURDAY in May, which is 5/6, so stop on over, and bring a friend! ALL BOOKS are now 10/\$1.00, YES you read that correctly! Come get your summer reading! Music CDs are 3/\$1.00 and movie DVDs are \$1.00 each! Clothing is now \$2 an item or a whole bagful for the family for just \$10! \* Specially marked items (prom dresses, name brand shoes, and such will be 1/2 of the marked price) Mid May we start EVERYTHING at 1/2 price (with a \$1.00 donation to StarFish) and May 30<sup>th</sup>. June 1st is our WORLD FAMOUS FILL A BAG of everything (except jewelry) for \$10!!!

#### **STARFISH ...**

Let's have a MACARONI and CHEESE / PASTA collection for the month of MAY! Each *week*, please grab a box of MACARONI and CHEESE / PASTA at your favorite grocery store for your cart for the StarFish table! Can we reach 100???? How about The Frippery starts us out with 50 ????:) Thank you all for your generosity! Lisa Renaud

#### **A SUMMER OPPORTUNITY...**

We love our church, don't we? We love our people, our pastors, our long, rich history and our work in our community.

This summer we have a chance to experience our connection to the larger Church. The Annual Conference of the International Council of Community will be held July 17-20, 2017 in Cherry Hill, NJ - only 1-1/2 hour drive time from us. At the Conference, other churches of our communion - from all over the US (and some from abroad) - will gather for worship, Bible study, workshops, music and fellowship. Conference youth will join with Wilson youth for the summer mission project. Bible study will be led by Dr. Tony Campolo.

Another highlight you won't want to miss is that Pastor Barbara Peters will preach at evening worship Wednesday, July 19<sup>th</sup>. Liturgist for that service will be Brian Januzzi. Come for the whole Conference or come for the day.

If you want to know more about ICCC, speak with Roberta Smith or Deidre Seidel. Brochures are in the narthex and you can get info online at [www.iccnw.org](http://www.iccnw.org).

Roberta Smith, Ecumenical Committee & Board Member, ICCC

#### **YOGA...**

Did you know that we are still holding a yoga class every Thursday at 4:30pm, in Fisher Fellowship Hall? Did you know that you can join us at anytime? New participants are always welcome. Bring a friend. I will demonstrate and teach you asanas (yoga poses) that offer many physical, mental and spiritual benefits. To participate you simply wear comfortable, breathable clothing, bring a bottle of water and a yoga mat. The first class is always free and then a \$5 fee for each class or 6 classes for \$25. Feel free to email me any questions: [carolynmusacchio@gmail.com](mailto:carolynmusacchio@gmail.com). Please join me and explore the many benefits of yoga. Carolyn Musacchio

#### **NEW MEMBERS WELCOMED...**

We welcomed new members of the Confirmation Class into membership on April 9<sup>th</sup>. Blake Thomas Januzzi, Shirley May Kreis, Melanie Beth Nunn, Nicholas Dennis Maziekien and Stuart Piers Whitley. We also welcomed Ashley Elizabeth Shpunder on April 23<sup>rd</sup>. Congratulations to all our confirmation students.

#### **SYMPATHY**



We extend our sympathy to the family of Mary Virginia Nunn (Ginnie) who passed away on April 19<sup>th</sup>. A Memorial Service was held at Wilson Memorial Church on April 23<sup>rd</sup>.

#### **PERSONAL ITEMS...**



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

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**Check out our website: [www.wilsonmemorialchurch.com](http://www.wilsonmemorialchurch.com)**

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