

# HILLTOPICS

WILSON MEMORIAL UNION CHURCH • WATCHUNG NJ 07069 • 908-755-5020  
WWW.WILSONMEMORIALCHURCH.ORG

## A MESSAGE FROM REV. MICHAEL DROEGE

On February 14th, we entered another Lenten journey. Lent is not one of the more celebrated church feasts or observances, but I think it is one of the more critical. We typically avoid taking a hard look at the way we are living our lives – but the 40 days of lent invites us to courageously consider where we are in the journey. I often think that if Jesus felt the need to take seasons of solitude to hear the voice of God clearly, then who am I to avoid it?

Of course, I hope you are taking advantage of what is offered this Lent – particularly our Wandering Heart: Figuring out Faith with Peter series. In the narthex (and online) there are devotionals, art, and meditations to inspire you. We also hope you are making it to our Soup Suppers on Sunday nights and even taking advantage of some of the classes in Wilson U. If you want to get connected to any of these things but do not know how, please reach out by calling or emailing the church office.

But beyond all of this, I invite all of you to clear space in your life to listen. Listen to the spirit of God with an open mind and open heart during this season. Let God challenge you and heal you.

Then, in just a few short weeks (March 31st) we will have our celebration of Easter. Easter breathes new life into the wilderness of Lent. Lent allows us to make space for the gift of new life. May we truly have cause for celebration this season.

Soon we will be preparing for the warm season activities like VBS and our Summer Mission trip. These are tangible ways we celebrate the new life of Easter. The call of the church is to be ever moving into New Life. May you have a blessed rest of Lent and an even more blessed Eastertide. You are loved – Michael

## CONGRATULATIONS

The Executive Board would like to extend congratulations to **Rev. Dr. Michael Droege** for completing the doctoral program and obtaining his degree in Practical Theology!

Well done, Michael!

## WEDDING CELEBRATION

Paige Anderson and Ray Mastroiannis

## MEMORIAM

Elizabeth Aldridge



WILSON  
MEMORIAL CHURCH

## CALENDAR OF EVENTS

**FEBRUARY 25, MARCH 3, 10, 17**

Lenten Soup Suppers 4:30pm

**MARCH 8**

International Women's Day: Cabrini movie

**MARCH 24**

Palm Sunday, brunch, egg hunt

**MARCH 28**

Maundy Thursday, 6pm Service

**MARCH 29**

Good Friday, 6pm Service

**MARCH 31**

Easter Sunday

**APRIL 20**

Blood Drive 8am-2pm  
Watchung Exempt Hall

**APRIL 27**

Spaghetti Dinner for Mission Trip

**MAY 12**

Mother's Day/Blanket Sunday

**JUNE 1**

Flea Market

**JUNE 23**

Church Picnic

**JULY 16-19**

ICCC Conference

**JULY 22-26**

VBS

**JULY 28-AUGUST 2**

Mission Trip to Urban Promise

**SEPTEMBER 28**

Wilson Gala – Theme: "The Music of Our Lives"

# MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Nancy Scott

Hello Wilson Family!

Last Sunday, I sat in the pew behind Timothy's daughter Josie. I watched in fascination as she coaxed a ladybug to crawl around on a scrap of paper. Her face was lit with excitement and wonder.

As I drove to work this morning, making mental lists of all I needed to get done, my mind wandered back to that moment. Have we as adults become so immersed in the minutia of our lives that we have lost our curiosity and joy? Have we closed ourselves off to such an extent that we don't recognize the miracles that surround us every day? If God were to answer our prayer, send us a sign or walk among us would we rejoice- or be unaware of His presence? Are we still open to all of God's possibilities?

As we enter this Lenten season, I hope you will make time to listen for Gods' message. Take time out from your busy lives and join us for our Sunday Soup Suppers and Palm Sunday Brunch. Rejoice in the promise of Spring and all the miracles of nature that it brings. Reclaim your sense of wonder, your curiosity. Restore your peace of mind- and your faith. Let God's promise of love fill you and take the opportunity to pass it on.

Of course, here at Wilson the opportunities to do just that are endless. There are many outreach programs already in place which could use extra hands. We just delivered 71 handmade Valentine cards to Brandywine- maybe you have a new idea. The Frippery is looking for volunteers and there are a variety of events in the planning stage which will need help soon. Try some of the courses that Wilson U is offering. Come to the Open Sanctuary on Tuesday mornings during Lent and open your mind to endless possibilities.

Nancy

## OUTREACH

Cota Possien-Kania

"Outreach" is just as important as "Inreach" here at Wilson Memorial! In fact, we do a combination of both with some of our projects such as our upcoming Mission Trip to Camden, NJ to help out URBAN PROMISE. Did you know YOU, as a Wilson congregant, send Urban Promise \$500 a year to help fund some of their projects like after school programs? Our youth members, as well as interested adults, will be traveling to Camden the week of July 28. If you are interested in participating, even if it is just for a day trip, please see Kendal MacTaggart. This is an exciting opportunity that Wilson has missed since COVID!

We are requesting that you continue to support our Blue Bin Food Pantry for our local Wilson families, as well as our ongoing, long-term support of STAR FISH Food Programs by bringing non-perishable items to our SOUP SUPPERS and/or Sunday church services. There is always a STAR FISH collection bin in the narthex and the Blue Bin outside our main sanctuary doors. Designated cash donations can be placed in the collection plate during services or given to Pam Davis, our Treasurer.

Thank you for your continuing financial support so that Wilson can be the Light on the Hill for all to see!

## CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

President: Nancy Scott

Vice President: Judy Wall

Treasurer: Pam Davis

Clerk: Yvette Nora Whitley

Laurie Conley

Angela Della Ventura

Russ Harding

Bruce Heyman

Kendal MacTaggart

Isaac Onuorah

Cota Possien-Kania

Lisa Shpunder

## MUSIC

Timothy Walton



As our faith journey takes us down wandering paths, the words we grew up singing and the old, familiar melodies have a way of tethering our hearts to the God who wanders with us. During our Lenten journey, The Wilson Music Collective has curated a long list of music ideas—both traditional and contemporary—for worship, fellowship, and listening. We are looking forward to sharing those ideas throughout the lent and easter season. Here's a few to start you on your journey:

Hawk Nelson's Diamonds  
Elevation Worship's Trust In God  
Richard Smallwood's Total Praise  
Trey Mclaughlin 's Better is One Day

We also look forward to inaugurating, **The Sunday Series** "A Collective Experience". A concert series featuring New Jersey's Finest B- Side Artist. Our First Concert will be held **April 14** at 4:00pm featuring the R & B stylings of "The Jackie Grace Experience". We also look forward to the return of PJ Parker's Jazz Combo on **May 17** for a Jazz Vespers & Jazz Brunch.

## FACILITIES

Angela Della Ventura

Recent accomplishments:

- Exterior base sill and window frame on narthex exterior wall were rebuilt.
- Repairs were made to dislodged window panes in the sanctuary, misaligned gutters and office door column.
- Improvements were made to the Wi-Fi and network.
- An 86" TV monitor was installed in the sanctuary.
- The condenser and fan motor were replaced in the choir room heating unit.
- Several repairs were made to the sanctuary heating unit just before Christmas.
- Seeking additional estimates for electrical work to install a generator for the manse.
- Estimates received for a new heating system for the sanctuary.
- Estimates requested for protective exterior glass panels for the sanctuary windows.

Under Consideration:

Purchase of a new heating system for the sanctuary.

Estimates are under review.

Protective exterior glass panels for the sanctuary windows.

Exterior paint for the sanctuary.

## FINANCIAL FACTS

*Pam Davis*

Our year has started off on an encouraging note with some early annual Congregational Giving receipts. However, there are also reasons for concern at this early stage in the year. Overall, our Congregational Giving was down a bit in January 2024 as compared to January 2023.

Expenses are tracking well except in our Snow Removal budget item. Mother Nature provided random snow and ice events before we were done with February. We will keep tracking the numbers closely. Any extra gifts you can donate this early in the year will, of course, be very helpful.

The Wilson calendar of events is PACKED! Lenten services, Soup Suppers, Event planning, WoW meeting, Palm Sunday, Easter, Blood Drive, VBS and more. The Mission Trip to Urban Promise is back!

There's lots of opportunities for worship, outreach and fellowship...something for everyone.

Celebrate Easter and support our hopes for the future by using the enclosed Easter giving envelope. Your generosity is appreciated.

With gratitude,

Pam Davis

## WOW

Cota Possien-Kania

2024 began with big plans for the Lenten Season! Wilson women (and men) will be sharing Soup Suppers for four Sundays beginning February 25th through March 17th at 4:30 p.m. Come join us and sample delicious recipes, bread and beverages with prayer. All leftover soup is delivered to home-bound friends or congregants who are in need of a little TLC! (WoW may do a SOUP SALE in the future...let us know if you are interested in purchasing some as a WoW fundraiser.)

WoW is hosting Coffee Hour on March 3 to celebrate International Women's Day on March 8. We are trying to organize a small group expedition to view the movie Cabrini in one of our local theaters during its limited run.

It is the story of St. Frances Xavier Cabrini, an Italian-American Catholic religious sister who founded the Missionary Sisters of the Sacred Heart of Jesus. She focused on serving the immigrant population in NYC and ended up establishing 67 missionary institutions across the US to serve the sick and the poor long before our government agencies provided social services. Let us know if you are interested.

Women of Wilson is continuing to pack individual feminine hygiene kits to provide to women who participate in the Plainfield Food Security Program. Thanks to Angela Della Ventura for being our delivery person! If you would like to contribute to the purchase of kit supplies see Cota or Pam Davis. Online donations can be made at [www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org/GIVE](http://www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org/GIVE).

Wilson needs help with COFFEE HOURS! It is a painless task of providing a treat of your choice (does NOT have to be homemade!) to share with parishioners after church. We are grateful for healthier options including nut and gluten-free choices for folks with diet restrictions.

Sign up in Fisher Hall, talk to any Board Member or WoW person for more information.

Looking ahead to possibly a day trip to somewhere in NJ....Ideas?





## THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP

Lisa Renaud

(The pale yellow building in the TOP parking lot)

**Serving the community since 1971.**

**The Frippery Thrift Shop is open Tuesday, Thursday and the FIRST Saturday each month thru June.**

**9:30-12:30 WHY SHOP RETAIL ???**

### Mary Ann's Mittens

Thank you to everyone that contributed to the mitten tree this year. 366 items were divided between the teen safe house in Bridgewater, The Pregnancy Aid Center and the WoW coat distribution in North Plainfield.

Your donations this year certainly helped warm up the lives of others.

Many of the items that you would buy at TJ Maxx, Marshall's and HomeGoods wind up on our shelves unbelievable prices! Vintage items are another best seller. Fill your home, your beach or lake house with top quality items. Linens, kitchenware, puzzles, books and toys.

Holiday decorations are also always a big hit!

Our spring, summer, cruise wear is available at this time. MOST items are \$4 each or \$25 fill a paper Kings bag! You will NEVER be disappointed with the treasures we carry. Stop in to see what our special of the day is. Hope to see you soon.

\*Please limit incoming donations to 2 boxes or bags, we need to be able to absorb the items right onto our shelves. We do have tax donation slips if you ask.

This year (June '23 -June '24)

The FRIPPERY is honoring each volunteer on her birthday with \$250 to donate to the charity of her choice. Each year we make thousands of dollars of contributions to local organizations but we wanted to be able to reach further this year. Keep an eye out for our upcoming bulletin board in Wilson to see all the good work of the FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP.

## COVENANT COMMITTEE

Bruce Ryno

On January 23, 2024 the parishes of St. Mary's Stony Hill and Wilson Memorial Unity Church joined together at St. Mary's to witness the signing of the annual Covenant Agreement between the two churches. The Agreement was signed by Msgr. William Benwell and Rev. Dr. Michael Droege.

The first Covenant Agreement between the two churches was signed and dedicated at the Service of Unity on January 22, 1978.

## EQUITY COMMITTEE

Michelle Marigliano

Having a committee that examines Diversity, Equity, Inclusion, and Access (DEIA) is part of Wilson's commitment to create an organization that identifies and nurtures healthy community connections.

This year the Equity and Justice Committee is committed to fostering listening as a way to encourage our congregation to meet the DEIA needs of folks within and beyond our current Wilson congregation.

The act of listening is proving to be an essential strategy to nurture social connectedness. In her book *Kitchen Table Wisdom; Stories That Heal* author Rachel Naomi Remen, tells readers "The most powerful way to connect with another person is to listen. Just listen. Perhaps the most important thing we ever give each other is our attention... A loving silence often has far more power to heal and to connect than the most well-intentioned word."

In January we began to monitor our coffee hour menu to ensure nut and bean free options.

In February we created space for Joseph Aochoa from [Innoculated Farms, in Fairfield NJ](#) to share how his journey with prayer led him to establish an exotic mushroom farm that is growing and distributing NJ's finest mushroom. It's not too late to invest in Joe's mission by joining the [2024 Innoculated Farms Winter community supported agriculture \(CSA\)](#).

Wilson created space during worship to hear Shirley Kries share her efforts to raise awareness and financial support for childhood cancer. [Connect with Shirley](#) to help her reach her fundraising goal of \$1,200.00.

Kendal MacTaggart shared details about this year's mission trip to support [Urban Promise's](#) summer youth programming in Camden NJ, July 28-August 2, 2024.

As we move forward let's make a commitment to use active listening as a strategy to grow in our role as Jesus' disciples, "And let us consider how we may spur one another on toward love and good deeds," Hebrews 10 Bring your listening love and good deeds to the next Wilson Memorial Church Equity and Justice gathering. We want to hear your story.





## BLOOD DRIVE

Judy Wall

Save the date for the Spring drive on **Saturday, April 20th from 8am-2pm** at the Watchung Exempt Hall hosted by The Wilson Memorial Church and St Marys Covenant Comiittee.

To make an appointment, please scan QR code or call 1-800-933-2566



## FAITH FORMATION

Michelle Marigliano

Did you know you can carry Wilson's Sunday service into your week? Each week through our newsletter, Wilson shares a Faith Formation supplement to nourish your spiritual journey. This weekly supplement is filled with guiding questions, poetry, music, children's books, and storytelling for all ages!

This Lenten season the Wilson Memorial Church community has access to a Lenten Devotional titled Wandering Heart; Figuring out faith with Peter published by A Sanctified Art LLC (2024)

## LILY ORDER FORM

Due March 17th



You may choose it to be in memory of or in honor of a loved one. A listing of all of those remembered will be included in the Easter Bulletin.

Donor(s):

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In loving memory of:

-----  
In honor of:

-----  
Enclosed is \$10.00 per plant:

Cash\_\_\_\_\_Check\_\_\_\_\_Paid online\_\_\_\_\_

Please make check payable to

Wilson Memorial Church

7 Valley Rd., Watchung, NJ 07069

Online: Email this order form to

admin@wilsonmemorialchurch.org and submit your

payment online at

www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org/give

## OPENING FOR ASSISTANT TECHNICAL SPECIALIST

Do you know Jake?

**Jake Feldman** is our technical specialist who helps Wilson create their online services every Sunday.

Want to learn more about what he does, and offer your assistance? **HE NEEDS YOUR HELP!!**

Reach out to

[mdroege@wilsonmemorialchurch.org](mailto:mdroege@wilsonmemorialchurch.org)



## MAH JONG

Mahjong club of Watchung meets at Wilson Memorial Church on Mondays and Thursdays from 1pm-5pm. Expereinced players are welcomed. For more information contact Melanie Novello at [novello1800@aol.com](mailto:novello1800@aol.com)

## WILSON U

Wilson U is an educational opportunity for Wilson members and friends. The mission is to provide people with quality education without having to enroll in a university or professional school. Registration for classes is done on an individual basis. Please email the teacher of the class you are interested in.

Use the QR code to see a full list of classes offered this semester.



[Matthew May](#) :

Practice of Prayer, Tues. 2/20-3/26 @4pm  
[mmay1@drew.edu](mailto:mmay1@drew.edu)

[Timothy Walton](#):

Voice Class, Sun. 3/3-3/17 @2pm  
[TWalton.wilson@gmail.com](mailto:TWalton.wilson@gmail.com)

[Rev. Dr. Michael Droege](#):

1.Theology of growing up, Sun 2/25-3/17 @6pm

2.Homiletics:

The art of preaching, 4/7-5/19 @9am  
[mdroege@wilsonmemorialchurch.org](mailto:mdroege@wilsonmemorialchurch.org)

## WORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

### Sunday Mornings at 10:00am

In Person Worship

On-line Worship

Live Stream also available on our  
website

[www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org](http://www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org)

## OFFICE HOURS

Monday - Friday 9:00 a.m. - 12:30 p.m.  
Email: [admin@wilsonmemorialchurch.org](mailto:admin@wilsonmemorialchurch.org)

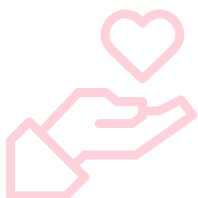
Happy Easter!

WILSON MEMORIAL UNION CHURCH  
7 Valley Road, Watchung, NJ 07069

## HOW TO SUPPORT THE WORK OF WILSON MEMORIAL CHURCH

**In Service:** You are invited to place your offerings in the plate at the back of the Sanctuary.

**Text-to-Give:** Text WILSONCHURCH to (908) 460-8818 and follow the setup prompts for your first time. Once set up, you can simply text the gift amount to the above number.



**By Mail:** Gifts can be sent to the office at:  
7 Valley Road  
Watchung, NJ 07069



**Online:** Use our secure giving portal  
by clicking the "Giving" link on our website; [www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org/GIVE](http://www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org/GIVE)