

HILLTOPICS

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

A MESSAGE FROM REV. MICHAEL DROEGE

I walked into Matthew's office before I sat down to write this article to ask if he or I had written the last Hilltopics (it was him) because I have lost track of time. I'm about to complete a very strange year.

As I write, I am aware of my location on the calendar – it's nearly September 4. September 4, 2022, changed my life forever. But so did September 4, 1963. That was the day of Carol's birth. As significant of a date is the former, I cannot deny the joy of the latter.

That's the deal. To deny either one is to rob both of their meaning.

There is no rhythm without the blues. There is no yin without the yang. There is no beautiful spring days without harsh winters. Life is all of it. We are all of it.

That is my prayer for us in this coming year. I pray, and work, and teach, to do my part to help us become a place where we have room for the complex story of being human.

I'm reminded of the words found in Ecclesiastes chapter 3 (and the words of Peter, Paul, and Mary)

A time to give birth and a time to die; A time to plant and a time to uproot what is planted.

A time to kill and a time to heal; A time to tear down and a time to build up.

A time to weep and a time to laugh; A time to mourn and a time to dance...

It's all life.

Surviving it takes a family – a chosen community. What we build is not an institution or even really a religion. Jesus called us to be his gathered people – committed to living life, all of life, together.

As we enter this new fall season together, let us remain committed to each other. Let us dance with those who dance, cry with those who cry, be patient with those who need patience, and challenge those who need challenge. Above all, let us stay committed to the mission of love.

You are gifted, you are growing, and you are loved. – Michael



WILSON
MEMORIAL CHURCH

CALENDAR OF EVENTS

September 29-October 1

Semi-Formal Fall Gala
Homecoming Weekend

October 28

Enchanted Forest

November 12

Blood Drive

November 26

Hanging of the Greens

December 2

Advent Kick-off and Dinner

December 3

First Sunday of Advent

CURRENT BOARD MEMBERS

President: Nancy Scott

V. President: Judy Wall

Treasurer: Pam Davis

Clerk: Yvette Nora Whitley

Laurie Conley

Angela Dell Ventura

Bruce Heyman

Kendal MacTaggart

Cota Possien-Kania

Sally Reagan

Lisa Shpunder

STAFF

Rev. Michael Droege

Timothy Walton

Ricky Francese

Tina Kelly

Harold Kreis

Jacob Feldman

Matthew May

MESSAGE FROM OUR BOARD PRESIDENT

Nancy Scott

Have you ever watched a movie or read a book only to have it replay in your mind for weeks? Bits and pieces of dialogue pop into your head at inconvenient moments. At times you get to the end and find there are subplots and twists in the story line which haven't been answered. Or, maybe they have, and you missed it somewhere along the way. It's enough to keep you awake at night! Which is why I generally look for something on the lighter side.

The question's submitted for this summer's worship series, have left me both intrigued and dismayed, for the "answers" provided often led to..., yes you guessed it, more questions! I've pondered Matthew's two-part series, "How to Help Someone who Doesn't Ask for Help" and "I Need You to Survive" and how it relates to our church family.

While people might not outwardly "ask" for help, perhaps they find help just by coming to church, listening to the sermon, and participating in fellowship during coffee hour. You are helping each other by saying a word of encouragement, sharing a hug, or having a conversation. There are those who would like to help but are hesitant to volunteer. They may not know what the needs are or what they could contribute. Often, they are waiting to be asked.

Last year, the Board was overwhelmed by trying to plan and participate in events in addition to their regular duties. This year, we have been asking for help. Kendal MacTaggart put together a team of family, friends, and members of the congregation to pull off a spectacular VBS in July. The theme was, "Finding Jesus Under the Sea," and the church was transformed into an underwater adventure! We have created a Homecoming Committee, headed by Linda Basilio, and plans for the Gala on September 30th are running smoothly. Sub-committees are searching for talent, organizing flowers, creating baskets, and soliciting donations or advertising.

Soon we will be entering the season for stewardship. I challenge each of you to find time to participate in one activity. Find your inner child and dress up for the Enchanted Forest on Saturday, October 28th. Come sing in the choir or read the liturgy. Host a coffee hour. Help with a Fundraiser, Mission Trip or VBS. Perhaps you have a suggestion for an event or activity you would like to lead.

There are a lot of ideas on the table. Help us to continue our various missions and create new in-reach and outreach programs. My friends, with your help, we can accomplish great things for our church and our community. So, I ask for your help. We need You to Survive.

Nancy

MUSIC MINISTRY

Greetings Gorgeous.

I pray the summer months have treated you kind as we prepare to worship in the main sanctuary. We are pleased to announce the hiring of Ricky Francese as the new accompanist here at Wilson Memorial. Ricky comes to us from Somerset, NJ as a follower of Christ with a heart devoted to inspiring the kingdom of God. He is a recent graduated of Pace University with a degree in musical theater and is a self taught musician in the art of piano & guitar. We are truly blessed to have him join our music collective. I pray his ministry draws you closer to the heart of God. Family, please join me in welcoming Ricky into our lives.

The Music Collective will resume Tuesday Night sessions on **Tuesday, September 19, 6:30pm-8:00pm**. We are not looking for perfection, yet seek those who want to use their musical gifts to celebrate the kingdom.

WE are keeping the light on, see you soon beloved.

Timothy (your good and faithful servant)



RICKY FRANCESE

FINANCIAL FACTS

Our 2023 financial status continues to be positive, mainly due to our Interest/Return on Investments and our Mitchell Trust allocation.

We have been mindful of our expenses and are on track.

Our Congregation Giving numbers continue to lag at 43%, more than halfway through the year. We are blessed to have the benefit of our endowment, but our desire is to support our ministries through the contributions of our current congregation.

We have had tremendous contributions this year, with members of our church family stepping up to offer their gifts and talents to our programs, such as VBS, Music Ministry, our Facilities team, and the upcoming Homecoming Weekend. These aren't new members, but longtime members finding a place to share their expertise. Each one of us has a unique calling...behind the scene or leading a project. What's your interest?

Kudos to our Executive Board, led by Nancy Scott for continuing to come up with fundraising opportunities to support our budget.

I look forward to a busy Fall with many activities, including, but not limited to our Gala, Enchanted Forest and our Tree Lighting fundraiser. Please jump in wherever you feel called!

With gratitude, Pam Davis



VBS

Finding Jesus Under The Sea Vacation Bible School was a success at Wilson Memorial Church this summer. The community came together with donations of time, funding and decorations, including LOTS of seashells and fishies of all kinds to turn the church into a whimsical under the sea world. Wilson collaborated with St. Mary's and Our Lady of The Mount to achieve the success of this VBS. Thank you to everyone who supported the creation and execution of VBS in any way from creating props and decor, to decorating our space, to donating funds or supplies for activities, to time and love for our children during the week of camp, and even taking all the decorations down and cleaning up our space.

Looking forward to more fun next summer!

Kendal MacTaggart

BAPTISM CELEBRATIONS

Ava Reilly Camuccio (Aug. 13)

Kursten Kramer (Aug. 22)

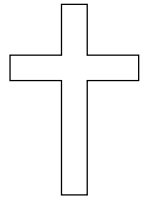
Bruce Heyman (Aug. 22)

MEMORIAM

Inge Ginter

Ruth Allen

Janet Meeks



ENCHANTED FOREST

Get ready for a spooky delight as the Enchanted Forest event approaches quickly! Mark your calendars for **Saturday, October 28, 1pm to 4pm**. Enchanted Forest invites families to join us, free of charge, on the Kindness Trail behind the church. The theme this year is all about movies, embracing the diversity of old classics, new releases, Disney favorites, action-packed adventures, and more! Our aim is to transform the woods into a movie gallery, with each set offering tricks and treats. Discover beloved movies from our church community and enjoy a spook-tacular experience.

We are looking for participants to create a station to set up along the trail. The stations should be inspired by a movie and can include treats, snacks, and enjoyable activities for families exploring the trail.

Please remember to carry in, carry out your trash. We kindly request that no leftover candy be left at the church.

After the Enchanted Forest adventure, join us in Fisher Hall for a movie showing. Feel free to bring your own blankets, pillows, or chairs for your comfort. The church will provide chairs for those in need.

Admission to Enchanted Forest and the movie showing is completely free. We welcome donations to support the successful execution of this event, which can be made through the give page on our church website. Donation buckets will also be available at the Enchanted Forest.

If you are interested in creating a station for Enchanted Forest OR participating in any other capacity that is not mentioned please email Kendal MacTaggart: kendalmactaggart@gmail.com or text (908) 565-2357.

THE FRIPPERY THRIFT SHOP

(The pale yellow building in the TOP parking lot)

JOIN US for our 53rd YEAR!!!!

Re-opening Thursday September 14th at 9:30am!

Then, Tues and Thurs 9:30am-12:30pm, adding the FIRST Sat starting in October, same hours.

A few of the Frippery volunteers worked thru out the summer, cleaning, washing and ironing our linens and curtains, rearranging displays and starting FRESH with ALL "NEW" items for opening day. Many thanks to Becky Santora for repainting a cloud scene on our ceiling AFTER our handyman Art Wilson repaired a cracked ceiling in 4 places. "Jewelry Jean" Burner has 100's of "new" pieces of jewelry ready to go and our UPSTAIRS crew has all the Fall/Winter clothing ready for you. MOST items just \$4 each OR \$25 FILL a level kings paper bag for yourself or the family!

We will also have Halloween/Fall items available as well as Christmas things. We are only open 2 days a week. We have just "30" selling days to sell TONS of Christmas items!

WHY PAY RETAIL??? We are very comparable to TJMaxx and HomeGoods!! LOTS of PINK depression glass, teapots and cookie jars at the moment also.

Over the summer the Frippery has donated \$2,300 to Wilson for the organ repair, \$2,500 to Star Fish, \$500 for the Vacation Bible School, \$500 to Robert Nunn as a graduating senior for higher education and \$200 in diapers. That's \$6,000 and we have been closed!!

This year we hope to reach FAR AND WIDE with our donations. Each volunteer (we have 20) will choose a charity or organization close to her heart to have \$250 donated to -in her honor- on her birthday as it rolls around on the calendar. We hope to set a bulletin board up in Wilson shortly so you can see where our funds are helping. xo

We would like to thank you for your patronage in the past and our prosperous future together, we look forward to another exciting year.

ALL The Frippery Volunteers

Any questions call/text Lisa Renaud 908-625-5042

Mary Ann's Mittens: We will be setting up our mitten tree in December as usual but I'd like to know if anyone would like to knit/crochet some hats ahead of time? I seem to have a bunch of nice yarn and would be glad to have you choose some to keep you busy.

United Family and Children's Society Christmas Gift Project 2023. This is my 32nd year plus many years before that. I have just confirmed that Wilson will take 80 names for Christmas (and 20 more if we need more).

This project will start the Sunday BEFORE Thanksgiving (11/19) and finish the first Sunday in December (12/3) so social workers have time to get gifts to families to wrap. The world is a changing ... MANY people are requesting just gift cards,,,,, but I did ask for at least 1/2 of those to be children requesting items/toys for those of you that like to shop. We usually have a dozen baby names with needs to fulfill also. It's a HUGE job and I appreciate the elves that help on the final day.

CARING HEARTS GRIEF SUPPORT



Wednesdays, beginning **September 27, 2023**
1:00pm at Wilson Memorial Church (6 weeks)

This group is for those who have lost a family member or very close friend. Facilitated by
Rev. Barbara Peters, Pastor Emerita

For more information email
barbaragrangepeters@gmail.com or call church
908 755-5020. Preregistration is required

OUTREACH

We hope you had time to relax, refresh your spirit, and recharge your batteries! We are already geared up and ready to GO!

Our new specialty-focused project is to support NATIONAL DIAPER NEED AWARENESS WEEK, September 18-24, 2023. Look for our display on the bulletin board outside FISHER HALL with our drop box for donations. You can purchase diapers or donate by check or cash to help support MOMS HELPING MOMS. Learn more by visiting their website at: www.momshelpingmoms.org.

The Frippery is continuing their "Donate a Dollar for Diapers" project in conjunction with this project.

We mailed out 10 of our congregation-approved allocations totaling \$11,250, leaving some funds for emergency appropriations, while some money had already been spent for emergency situations earlier in the year.

If you have any close-to-your-heart programs, or projects that you feel fit into our community needs or interests, please email cotapkania@gmail.com or call Cota Possien-Kania.

Thank you for your generous donations and continued support of WILSON and our outreach program!

WOW

Cota Possien-Kania

This is a very special time of year with looking ahead to our Homecoming Gala the last Saturday in September and attempting to plan for future projects and programming, we need all women of Wilson to provide input!

Our first meeting will be on **Thursday, September 14 at 11:30am** in Fisher Hall. Bring a sandwich or whatever you like to eat for your lunch. Drinks and dessert are provided.

We will be discussing our on-going project for women in need of "Period Packs" and a new project for the month of September National Diaper Need Awareness Week, September 18-24. See OUTREACH blurb here in HILLTOPICS or the bulletin board outside Fisher Hall for more information.

We are looking for new ideas to attract any and all women of Wilson to participate in this legacy group from 1912! We want to update, infuse new energy and spirit into this group. If you feel comfortable, email Cota Possien-Kania at cotapkania@gmail.com, OR if you want to provide feedback anonymously drop your thoughts into the collection plate on SUNDAY!

All ideas and comments are welcome and appreciated!.

CONFIRMATION

Matthew May

We're moving into the final semester of the 2022-2023 Confirmation Class year. Our confirmands, Anthony, Emily, Lea, Sam and Sophia have been exploring the teachings of the church through creeds and exploring theological questions such as, who is God?

This final stretch really focuses on the connection between the confirmands and the community at Wilson. We are exploring possibilities of how the confirmands may take the lead in areas they are passionate about and create a plan of action that will benefit the community. I encourage you to be in dialogue with each of our confirmands about what they are interested in and how their projects are coming along. We can learn a lot through their insights and maybe even be a collaborator with their projects. It's all about how we are building the community and how each piece of our community makes an impact on the whole community. I am personally looking forward to seeing how their passions ignite ministry within Wilson!

EQUITY COMMITTEE

Michelle Marigliano

God is love. Whoever lives in love lives in God, and God in them. 1 John 4:16b

As we transition into autumn let's cherish our collective efforts to savor our summer of rest and reflection. The mood for harvesting has been set by summer's gifts of extended daylight, blooming florals, the buzz of hummingbirds, and the flicker of glitter within a moonlit star.

- What aspects of summer have you aligned your heart and mind towards?

We now enter a season to apply our summertime discoveries to expanding community connections. It feels true today that love is something we create and co-create throughout our lives. Essentially, our seasonal practices of love to ourselves and others have the power to increase the vibrations of God's love in every aspect of our lives.

- Can you remember a time when your intuition guided you away from resistance and defense toward love?

My beloved speaks and says to me:

"Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away, for behold, the winter is past; the rain is over and gone.

The flowers appear on the earth, the time of singing has come, and the voice of the turtle-dove is heard in our land.

The fig tree ripens its figs, and the vines are in blossom; they give forth fragrance.

Arise, my love, my beautiful one, and come away.
Song of Solomon 2:10-13 (ESVUK)

Join the Equity and Justice Committee as we gather to expand our pathways towards love! Share your ideas during the next in person meeting on **September 12, 2023 at 5:30pm** in the Library at Wilson Memorial Church or by emailing admin@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

FALL GALA TICKETS

Tickets are available in the church office or online.

Scan the QR code to go directly to the giving page.



Basket donations are being accepted in the office. Please include contact info and list of items being donated.

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