

Welcome to
WILSON MEMORIAL UNION CHURCH
A Member Congregation, International Council of Community Churches



This piece contains seventy-seven people and flowers to represent abundance of grace that Jesus calls us into. "Seventy-seven Times" by Lauren Wright Pittman

March 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

10:00 a.m.

7 Valley Road, Watchung, NJ

Phone: (908) 755-5020

Website: www.wilsonmemorialchurch.org

Email: admin@wilsonmemorialchurch.org

MARCH 17, 2024

Fifth Sunday in Lent

10:00 AM



Please rise as you are able, in body or in spirit

Bold print indicates a unison reading.

PRELUDE

Various Melodies

Bagpiper, Doug Parody

LIGHTING OF THE CHRIST CANDLE

The Candle this morning shines to remind us of God's guidance into a new season.



OPENING HYMN #260 *The Old Rugged Cross*

WELCOME

Rev. Dr. Michael Droege

CALL TO WORSHIP

Liturgist, Carolyn Musacchio

Why are you here?

**I am seeking God with my whole heart, with my entire mind,
with a fire burning in my bones.**

I see it! You're in the right place!

This is God's house. The door is open to you.

Why are you here?

I am seeking God with my whole heart,
with my entire mind,
with a fire burning in my bones.

**We see that in you! You're in the right place. This is God's house. The door is
open to you.**

Let us worship God.

Let us learn from the each other. Amen!

OPENING PRAYER

Dear Teacher, we want to learn your ways. We want to learn the ways of forgiveness. We want to learn the ways of grace. We want to learn your ways of love. That is part of why we return here week after week, because we are hungry to be more like you.

So, as we prepare to listen, calm the noise in our minds. Center our spirits to focus on you so that we might learn and hear what we have missed in this story before.

Meet us here.

Speak your truth.

Help us listen.

Amen.

HYMN #300

In the Garden



PRAYER OF RECONCILIATION

(All who wish are invited to participate verbally in our prayer of reconciliation.)

Holy God, we long to be lifelong learners. We long to approach you with curiosity and an open mind. Instead, we often live as if we know best. We forget that the disciples called you “Rabbi, Teacher.”

Forgive us for the times when we fail to be curious.

Forgive us for the times when we assume we know best.

Forgive us for the moments when we imagine that our learning is done and that we have all the answers.

Like Peter—who was brave enough to ask, “How many times should we forgive?”—make us brave. Spark a desire in us to learn, and may our curiosity carry our faith into deeper waters. With hope and humility, we pray, amen.



ASSURANCE OF PARDON

PASSING THE PEACE OF CHRIST

One: Peace be with you.

All: And also with you.

CONTEMPORARY TESTIMONY

written by: Rev. Sarah Speed

Teach Me

Teach me about the ways of the wind,
about the ways of the world,
about the ways of the heart.

Teach me about the soft crook of my lover's arm,
and the way two souls can hold each other close.

Teach me about forgiveness, about the language of I'm sorry
and the softness of sincerity.

Teach me about abundance, about seventy-times-seven
and all the days of my life.

Teach me about joy, about its contagious weaving
and its soul-healing.

Teach me about mercy, about open hands and deep breaths.

Teach me about the dawn of time and the stars in the sky.

Teach me what matters most.

Teach me what is mine to do.

Teach this achingly curious heart
until I run out of questions
or I run out of days.

Teach me some melodious sonnet,
and I will have a life well-lived.

PRAYERS OF GOD'S PEOPLE

LORD'S PRAYER

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be thy name.

Thy kingdom come, thy will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.

Give us this day, our daily bread,

and forgive us our debts as we forgive our debtors.

And lead us not into temptation but deliver us from evil.

For thine is the kingdom, and the power and the glory forever. Amen

CONGREGATIONAL ANTHEM

Goodness of God



DOXOLOGY

Praise God from whom all blessings flow,

praise him all creatures here below; praise him above, you heavenly host,

praise Father, Son and Holy Ghost. Amen.



PRAYER OF GRATITUDE

SCRIPTURE

Matthew 18:21-22

Then Peter approached and said to him, “Lord, how many times will my brother sin against me and I shall forgive him? As many as seven times?”

Jesus says to him, “I tell you, not as many as seven times, but as many as seventy times seven.”

 **GLORIA PATRI**

**Glory be to the Father,
and to the Son, and to the Holy Ghost;
as it was in the beginning, is now, and ever shall be,
world without end. Amen, Amen.**

SERMON

Asking the Right Questions

Rev. Dr. Michael Droege

ANTHEM

Diamonds

 **BENEDICTION**

**We believe that questions are a building block of faith.
We believe that humble curiosity can open our eyes.
We believe that God is a teacher.
We believe that faith invites our whole being to engage,
with all our heart, with all our mind, with all our strength.
We believe. Help our unbelief.
Amen.**

POSTLUDE

Various Melodies

Bagpiper, Doug Parody

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.

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

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.

Follow us on social media @mywilsonchurch

How to reach Pastor Michael: You can schedule an appointment online at calendly.com/michaeldroege or call the office for assistance at (908) 755-5020. In any kind of crisis, you can always call Pastor Michael at (908) 755-5589

Rev. Dr. Michael Droege, Pastor
Timothy Walton, Director of Music & Worship Arts
Ricky Francese, Accompanist
Jacob Feldman, A/V Specialist
Tina Kelly, Administrator
Harold Kreis, Sexton
The Rev. Barbara Peters, Pastor Emerita
Lisa Renaud, Frippery (908)625-5042

CHURCH ANNOUNCEMENTS

The flowers that grace the Sanctuary this morning are in loving memory of **ASTRID AND ROLAND OST** from their children Ruth, Jane, and Paul.

 Wilson welcomes, **DOUG PARODY** on the bagpipes today to help us celebrate St. Patrick's Day.

Soup Supper Sundays: March 17 @ 4:30 in Fisher Hall.

Please consider a food pantry donation for the Blue Bin and Star Fish.

Starfish food request: Please consider donating pasta, tomato sauce, diced/canned tomatoes, cereal (non-family size), and tuna.

For Prayer: For peace • Joe Higgins • Peter Della Ventura

Palm Sunday: Join us on March 24th for brunch, Easter egg hunt and palm folding after Worship Service.

Holy Week Schedule: Join us during Holy Week.

Maundy Thursday 2/28 @6pm, Good Friday 2/29 @6pm Service

Wilson University Weekly Reflections:

THE THEOLOGY OF GROWING UP with Rev. Dr. Michael Droege

“Michael's four session class on The Theology of Growing Up is a very brief yet intriguing overview of his doctoral dissertation, and is presented in a lively, informative, interactive, and fun manner.

Learning that the concept of "adolescence" is quite recent, and WHY this is so, is fascinating as Michael takes us through the lives and activities of children over the past hundred years. We are enjoying this non-academic approach to an important yet often difficult-to-understand time of life.

Lonnie Miller