

Pastor's Update, Saturday, May 15, 2021

Happy Saturday WFMC Family!

[Link to Morning Worship Live-stream \(becomes live at 8:20a\)](#)

Morning Worship: In light of the revised guidelines from the CDC and the state, we are able to make our gatherings “mask optional / mask free” beginning this Sunday, May 16. This includes all ages and gatherings. Over the coming weeks, we’ll also be resetting rooms to more “normal” settings.

I realize the new guidance is for vaccinated persons. At the same time, the church cannot / will not be the “vaccine police.” We live in a community of trust, so we trust that persons will make wise decisions for the good of all.

We also should realize that this is a big shift for some, so if you feel more comfortable continuing to wear a mask for a while longer, please do. Some of you have perhaps invested heavily in masks that accessorize your outfits and feel you’ve not yet gotten your money’s worth. You’re welcome to continue to wear them as well. 😊 In all things, let’s continue to show grace for different opinions here, so that we can move forward together.

I’ve Attached a Good Article that speaks to the need for Sabbath – and from the Wall Street Journal, of all things.

This Will Be the Final Pastor’s Saturday Update. This was created to help keep us informed and together on the quick changes that happened due to the Corona Virus. Now that things are settling back into a normal cadence, this seems largely no longer necessary. The link to the livestreamed service and other information has been / will be moved to the Friday Prayer Notes and News e-list. Note that just because you receive the Saturday Update does not mean you’re subscribed to the Prayer Notes and News. If you’d like to subscribe, [please click here](#). The weekly worship folder and songs will continue to be available at the WFMC web site, as they always have been. [Click here to get to that page](#).

Newsletters Now Available Electronically:

[The Latest from the Free Methodist Historical Society](#)

[The Latest Free Methodist Chaplain’s Newsletter](#)

[This Week’s Issue of the Light and Life Magazine](#)

[The Latest Issue of the Free Methodist Foundation Financial Newsletter](#)

[The Latest Issue of the FM Pastors and Leaders’ Newsletter](#)

And Finally, In The Interest Of Keeping Our Senses of Humor,



Peace and Blessings, Sisters and Brothers,
Pastor Daryl

WEEKLY SCHEDULE OF EVENTS—WEEK OF MAY 16, 2021

TODAY

- 8:00a Pre- Service Prayer—B106
8:30a **Morning Worship I**—Sanctuary & B200-B201 Overflow
Nursery—Building B Preschool Wing
9:40a **Children's Sunday School, Youth and Adult Bible Fellowships**
Adult Elective: Prayer Boost — B107
Nursery—Building B Preschool Wing
11:00a **Morning Worship II**—Sanctuary & B200-B201 Overflow
Nursery—Building B Preschool Wing children under 4 years

MONDAY

- 10:00a Ladies' Bible Study via Zoom;
(contact Peggy Welch for Zoom link / 859-338-4378)

TUESDAY

- 6:30a Men's Prayer Meeting—A200
8:00a Ladies' Prayer Meeting—A200
7:00p Men's Bible Study
7:00p Men's Basketball

WEDNESDAY

- 4:50p Bible Quizzing—B100s
7:00p Adult Prayer Meeting
FM Youth—Building C
Children Grades K through 5—A106
Pre-School (4 and under)—Building B Preschool Wing
Nursery—Building B Preschool Wing

THURSDAY

- 12:00n TOPS—A200
4:00p Youth Open Gym

FRIDAY

- 10a-noon Moms Pray & Play—Church playground
12:00p New South Annual Conference Business Session
7:00p New South Annual Conference Ordination / Worship Service
Reception following—Building C

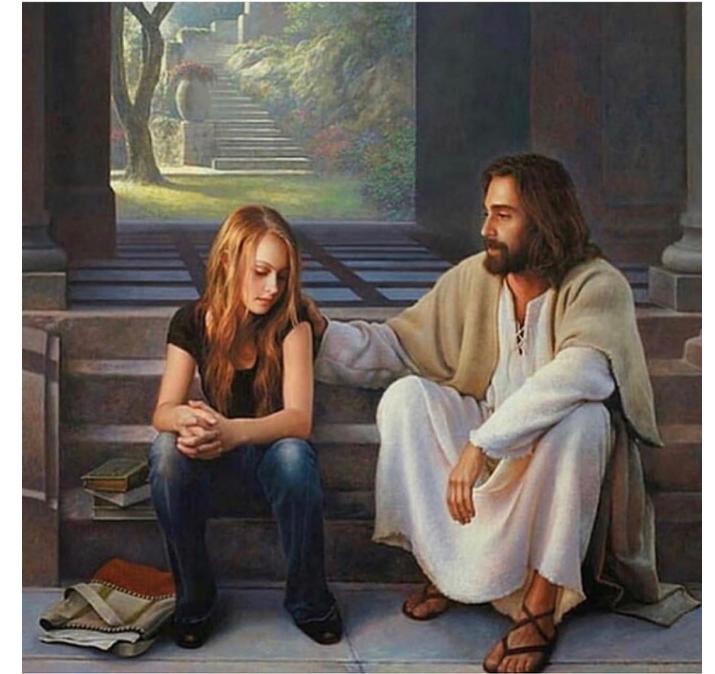
SATURDAY

- 8:00a New South Annual Conference Business Session

IN THESE STRANGE DAYS, we are worshipping in different ways—like not using offering plates or communion elements. We're not greeting one another with hugs or hand-shakes, and we're wearing masks when less than 6 feet from others indoors and while singing. Due to virus spread, most of our vocal music ministries groups are on hold. All this, like so many other parts of life, is very different, and the need for it is passing quickly, but until then, thank you for loving one another in these ways.

Meeting the Risen Jesus: Do What He Says
Matthew 28:16-20

Pastor Daryl



RECORDINGS OF ALL MESSAGES ARE AVAILABLE.
Note "Message" and date on a Communication Card at the Welcome Center, and pick up your CD the following Sunday. Messages (audio, video and print) may also be downloaded at wilmorefmc.org.



PRAYER SEEKING SALVATION: *Lord Jesus, I know I have sinned against You. I believe that You died for me, and I place my trust in You. Forgive my sins and save me from the judgment to come. Help me to turn from my sin and live a life wholly devoted to You.*

PRAYER SEEKING SANCTIFICATION: *Lord Jesus, I recognize my need for holiness. Purify me of all that is unlike You, fill me with Your Holy Spirit until I am totally Yours, and set me apart for Your purposes from this day forward.*

If you seek or have found salvation or sanctification today, please let a member of the pastoral staff know. We're here to help you on your journey.

WILMORE
FREE METHODIST CHURCH

MAY 16, 2021

OFFICE@WFMC.NET

WWW.WILMOREFMC.ORG

859.858.3521



Welcome to worship at WFMC!

Here are some helpful notes if you are new.

THE COMMUNICATION CARD is key to allowing us to welcome you fully. Please fill it out and drop it in the gold box after worship. We won't harass you, but we'd love to send a welcoming note.

THE WORSHIP GUIDE in this folder leads through our service. We try to use elements, liturgy, music and sacraments from a variety of Christian traditions to help lead people of all ages, stages, and tastes into God's presence. Worship is participatory, so please join in prayer, word, giving, and song.

NURSERY for children up to 2 years is available all morning in the Pre-school Complex, Building B. Please note nursery at the 11:00a service includes children under 4 years old.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP JR. (CWJR, age 2 and 3) is presently available during the 8:30a worship service in the Pre-school Complex, Building B.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP (CW, age 4 through grade 3) is available in the 8:30a service only. After the Children's Time, children are escorted by CW Staff to A106. Following 8:30 worship, parents of children ages 4 through Kindergarten must pick up their children from Room A106. Children in grades 1-3 will be taken to their Sunday School classroom.

HEARING ASSISTANCE DEVICES are available in the foyer.

WHEELCHAIR SEATING is readily available in the center aisle or an usher will be glad to remove a sanctuary chair for your convenience.

PRAYER FOCUS: Let's pray for the situation in the Middle East between Israel and Hamas...pray for peace to come to this little piece of land.

WORLD MISSION FOCUS—AFRICA: Pray for Mike & Vicki Reynen, FM Area Directors for Africa. They travel extensively, speaking, teaching, training and encouraging missionaries and national church leaders.

HOME MISSION FOCUS: Francis Asbury Society—Pray for Jerry Coleman and his ministry of evangelism and speaking on the deeper life in the Spirit through the Francis Asbury Society, headquartered right here in Wilmore.

YOUTH MINISTRY FOCUS: Thank you for supporting and encouraging our Class of 2021 seniors this past week. Continue to pray for them as they are seeking God's will in their lives, taking big steps of faith in His direction: Rose B., Wyndham C., Reid G., McKayla K., AJ K., Nathan R., Nathan S., John S.

NURSERY:

	TODAY/THIS WEEK	NEXT WEEK
8:30 Worship	J Evans/D Flanigan/Y Lee	L Evans/R Saunders/K Winter
Sunday School	A Diddle/D Roxberry	C Blankenship/P Probst
11:00Worship	N Elwood/E Walsh/S Walsh	C Maynard/C Shafer/N Shafer
Wed. Evening	K Winter/R Zent	A Diddle/R Thompson

• DEAR FRIENDS AT WILMORE FMC: We so enjoyed being with you all May 2nd and wanted to say a BIG Thank You for your faithful partnership with us. May the Lord richly bless you as you seek to be a blessing locally and globally. Lots of love, Colleen & Brent Weaver.

• ANNUAL BAPTISM AT JESSAMINE CREEK will be scheduled in early September! If you have received Christ and would like to be baptized, please indicate that on your Communication Card by writing "Baptism," and you will be contacted by one of the pastors.

• WEDNESDAY PRAYER MEETING CONTINUES THROUGH THE SUMMER! Call it an old-fashioned vestige of the past if you like, but through the years, it's proven to be a necessary component of healthy church life and spiritual power. We sing a song, hear a brief devotional word, share requests that tend to be larger in scope, then go to prayer, sometimes in smaller groups, sometimes all-together. Enter in as much as you like...or not. The fact is, prayer is hard work and it takes time, but it also changes things and people. Come and join the work of corporate prayer; you may find your burdens lifted in the process. Wednesdays, 7:00 p.m.—Room B200/201.

NEW SOUTH ANNUAL CONFERENCE meets May 21-22 (Friday/Saturday) here at our church. You are invited to the Worship/Ordination Service Friday night at 7:00 p.m. followed by a cake reception for those ordained. If interested in attending more than the ordination service, a brief schedule is outlined below.

Annual Conference May 21-22, Building C

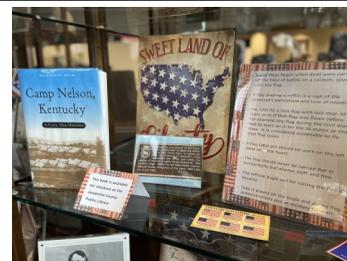
Friday, May 21	Saturday, May 22
12:30p Welcome/devotions	8:30a Welcome/devotions
12:45p Business Session 1	8:45a Business Session 3
2:45p Bishop Cowart	10:15a Superintendency/Comments
3:45p Business Session 2	11:15a Prayer for the Church
7:00p Ordination Service	12:00p Communion/Closing



- ★ Family Camp June 17-20
 - ★ Teen Camp June 21-27
 - ★ Kids Camp June 28-July 2
- Registrations will be available soon!

HONORING THE CAMP NELSON NATIONAL MONUMENT!

Be sure to stop by the foyer display case to see and read about the history, traditions, and some very special stories about Camp Nelson (located just a few miles from Wilmore). There are some unique facts about Camp Nelson you won't want to miss, and you will come away appreciating even more the significance of this special place. Our heartfelt thanks to Teresa Cassidy for putting together this excellent tribute!



THE FAMILIES OF REID GOUGE, NATHAN RIFFELL AND JOHN SCHUMACHER invite you to a "Come & Go" (or stay!) graduation party on Saturday, May 22 from 3:30- 6:30 p.m. in the backyard of the Gouge home: 422 Akers Drive, Wilmore.

ADULT NURSERY HELPERS NEEDED! We are in immediate need for "once a month" adult volunteers in our nursery - particularly for our 8:30 service. If you are an adult and would like to be part of the nursery team, please contact Carol Blankenship at cblankenship@wfmc.net, or 859-401-2048.



A NIGHT TO REMEMBER
ONE DAY. ONE MESSAGE.
ONE STAND

Tuesday, May 18, 7:00-9:00 p.m.
West Jessamine High School

Fields of Faith is a peer-to-peer movement where thousands of students from across the nation and world gather on their school's athletic field to share faith stories and challenge each other to apply the Bible as their "game plan for life." This is a student led event, and hosted on an athletic field, which provides a neutral, rally point where a community can come together.



Bring a blanket, friends, family, unsaved classmates — and enjoy hearing a powerful testimony by UK student athlete diver Chris Lane, and a message/musical performance by local pastor and recording artist Curt Vernon.

Assurance
Baby Bottle
BLESSINGS



Be a blessing to women and girls and their babies by picking up a bottle from the stack of crates next to the Welcome Center, filling it with spare change, and returning it on Father's Day, June 20.

Participating online is also an easy option!
Visit: Babybottleblessings.org.

Baby Bottle Blessings is sponsored by Assurance Care.

CHILDREN'S TIME:

Pastor Daryl

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP JR. (CWJR) for children ages 2 and 3, is available in the *Building B Preschool Wing* for the entire 8:30 worship service time. For the 11:00 service nursery/childcare is available for children up to age 4 in the Pre-school Complex, Building B.

CHILDREN'S WORSHIP (CW- currently 8:30 service only) After Children's Time, children age 4 through grade 3 will be dismissed (please wear masks) and escorted by CW staff to Room A106. Following 8:30 worship, parents of children ages 4 through Kindergarten must pick up their children from Room A106. Children in grades 1-3 will be taken to their Sunday School classroom.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

**Children in 8:30 service may now leave for Children's Worship*

MUSIC MINISTRY

arr. Mary McDonald

Sinner Saved by Grace

Rose Evans, Cheryl Schell, Dale & Myrna Hale, Glenn McGlothlin

MESSAGE

Pastor Daryl

Meeting the Risen Jesus: Do What He Says

POSTLUDE

arr. Anna Laura Page

Praise the Lord! Ye Heavens, Adore Him (Hymnal 9)

WORSHIP IN GIVING

In this strange, "touchless" season, we are giving our finances in worship through either the gold boxes in the foyer, by mail, or digitally through *Engage* via this QR code.



WORSHIP GUIDE

God is so glad you've set aside this time to worship Him. He inhabits the praise of His people. As we gather, please take a moment to ask God to prepare us for worship—to open our ears and minds to His voice and to freely apply His word to our hearts and lives. Please also take a moment now to silence all electronic devices so that the Lord might have opportunity to freely speak to all.

GATHERING

I Surrender All (Hymnal 366)

arr. Jolene Boyd

Come, Ye Sinners, Poor and Needy (Hymnal 334)

arr. Larry Shackley

I Then Shall Live (Supplement C28)

arr. Mark Hayes

Hannah Miller, piano

SONGS OF PRAISE AND ADORATION

Hymnal 108

Come, Christians, Join to Sing

Hymnal 92

Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

Hymnal 234

Crown Him with Many Crowns

(Please wear a mask if you choose to sing)

CALL TO PRAYER

Hymnal 586

Jesus, Stand Among Us

Jesus, stand among us in Thy risen power;
Let this time of worship be a hallowed hour.

Breathe the Holy Spirit, into every heart;
Bid the fears and sorrows from each soul depart.

(CCLI Member)

PRAYER

Pastor Dwight

GOD'S WORD TO US

Matthew 28:16-20

Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.

All: Thanks be to God.

108 Come, Christians, Join to Sing

Sing and make music in your heart to the Lord, always giving thanks. Eph. 5:19-20

1. Come, Chris - tians, join to sing Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!
2. Come, lift your hearts on high, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!
3. Praise yet our Christ a - gain, Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!

Loud praise to Christ our King; Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!
Let prais - es fill the sky; Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!
Life shall not end the strain; Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!

Let all, with heart and voice, Be - fore His throne re - joice;
He is our Guide and Friend; To us He'll con - de - scend;
On heav - en's bliss - ful shore His good - ness we'll a - dore,

Praise is His gra - cious choice: Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!
His love shall nev - er end: Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!
Sing - ing for - ev - er - more, "Al - le - lu - ia! A - men!"

TEXT: Christian H. Bateman
MUSIC: Traditional Spanish melody; arranged by David Evans;
Choral ending arranged by Eugene Thomas

MADRID
6.6.6.6.D.

92 Love Divine, All Loves Excelling

God showed His love among us: He sent His one and only Son. 1 John 4:9.



1. Love di - vine, all loves ex - cel-ling, Joy of heav'n, to earth come down
2. Breathe, O breathe Thy lov-ing Spir-it In - to ev - 'ry trou-bled breast!
3. Come, al-might-y to de - liv - er, Let us all Thy life re - ceive;
4. Fin - ish then Thy new cre - a - tion, Pure and spot-less let us be;



Fix in us Thy hum - ble dwell-ing, All Thy faith-ful mer - cies crown.
Let us all in Thee in - her - it, Let us find that prom-ised rest.
Sud - den - ly re - turn, and nev - er, Nev - er - more Thy tem - ples leave.
Let us see Thy great sal - va - tion Per - fect - ly re - stored in Thee:



Je - sus, Thou art all com-pas-sion, Pure, un-bound-ed love Thou art; Vis - it
Take a - way our bent to sin-ning, Al - pha and O - me - ga be; End of
Thee we would be al-ways bless-ing, Serve Thee as Thy hosts a - bove, Pray and
Changed from glo-ry in - to glo - ry, Till in heav'n we take our place, Till we



us with Thy sal - va - tion, En - ter ev - 'ry trem-bling heart.
faith, as its be - gin - ning, Set our hearts at lib - er - ty.
praise Thee with-out ceas - ing, Glo - ry in Thy per - fect love.
cast our crowns be - fore Thee, Lost in won - der, love and praise! A - men

TEXT: Charles Wesley

MUSIC: John Zundel; Choral ending arranged by David Allen

A higher setting may be found at No. 268; Alternate tune: HYFRYDOL, No. 89

BEECHEI

8.7.8.7.D

234 Crown Him with Many Crowns

On His head are many crowns. Rev. 19:12

1. Crown Him with man - y crowns, The Lamb up - on His throne:
2. Crown Him the Lord of love: Be - hold His hands and side -
3. Crown Him the Lord of life: Who tri - umphed o'er the grave,
4. Crown Him the Lord of heav'n: One with the Fa - ther known,

Hark! how the heav'n-ly an - them drowns All mu - sic but its own!
Rich wounds, yet vis - i - ble a - bove, In beau - ty glo - ri - fied.
Who rose vic - to - rious to the strife For those He came to save.
One with the Spir - it thru Him giv'n From yon - der glo - rious throne.

A - wake, my soul, and sing Of Him who died for thee, And
No an - gel in the sky Can ful - ly bear that sight, But
His glo - ries now we sing, Who died and rose on high, Who
To Thee be end - less praise, For Thou for us hast died; Be

hail Him as thy match-less King Thru all e - ter - ni - ty.
down-ward bends his won-d'ring eye At mys - ter - ies so bright.
died e - ter - nal life to bring And lives that death may die.
Thou, O Lord, thru end - less days A - dored and mag - ni - fied. A - men.

TEXT: Matthew Bridges, stanzas 1, 2, 4; Godfrey Thring, stanza 3
MUSIC: George J. Elvey; Last stanza harmonization by Mark Hayes
A higher setting may be found at No. 478

DIADEMATA
S.M.D.

THE SATURDAY ESSAY

What We've Lost in Rejecting the Sabbath

Setting aside one day a week for rest and prayer used to be an American tradition. In an age of constant activity, we need it more than ever.

By [Sohrab Ahmari](#)

Updated May 7, 2021 4:43 pm ET



Listen to this article

13 minutes

In 2019, North Dakota lawmakers abolished their state's Sunday-trading ban. Going back to the 19th century, business owners had faced jail time and a fine for keeping their doors open Sunday mornings. It was America's last statewide blue law, and it went the way of the rotary telephone and the airplane smoking section. The bill's main GOP sponsor in the state legislature claimed that a majority "wants to make decisions for themselves."

Ending the ban, officials argued, would boost shopping and, with it, revenues.

Who but a few scolds could complain? The share of Americans who don't identify with any religion continues to grow, and even many believers reject the concept of the Sabbath as a divinely ordained day of rest. Instead, we are encouraged to pursue lives of constant action and purpose, and we do. Smart devices allow white-collar professionals to freely mingle work and play. The gig economy and the Covid-19 work-from-home trend have further blurred the line between the two. The Sabbath doesn't fit into the rhythm of our lives. It feels like an imposition—it is an imposition.

'The danger begins when in gaining power in the realm of space we forfeit all aspirations in the realm of time.'

— Abraham Joshua Heschel

Americans' turn away from the Sabbath has been going on for a long time. In the mid-20th century, Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel, one of America's foremost Jewish thinkers, wrote about the Sabbath in terms of "the realm of time" and "the realm of space." Modern life is all about conquering space: winning geopolitical territory, growing and prospering economically. But "the danger begins," Heschel worried, "when in gaining power in the realm of space we forfeit all aspirations in the realm of time." In that realm, "the goal is not to have but to be, not to own but to give, not to control but to share, not to subdue but to be in accord."



Rabbi and theologian Abraham Joshua Heschel in 1964.

PHOTO: CSU ARCHIVES/EVERETT COLLECTION

Many of his American coreligionists in those days saw the ritual as an impediment to freedom: the freedom to shop, work and socialize as much as they wanted. For Heschel, this brand of freedom was missing something profound. It barred entry to an entire

dimension of existence: namely, time, whose passage reminds us that everything is contingent, everything passes away—everything, that is, except God. The Sabbath, Heschel thought, is the guarantor of our “inner liberty,” while restless, Sabbath-less societies could easily descend into tyranny and barbarism.

He had learned this from bitter experience. Heschel was born in 1907 in czarist-ruled Warsaw, where traditional and modern Jewish currents converged and clashed. He was a prince of the traditional Jewish world, heir to Polish and Lithuanian Hasidic dynasties and formed from an early age to become a rabbi. Thanks to a photographic memory, he excelled at memorizing the Torah, the Jewish prayer book and the foundational medieval commentaries on the Bible.

SHARE YOUR THOUGHTS

What does the Sabbath mean to you? Join the conversation below.

Even as a boy, his biographer Edward Kaplan tells us, “Heschel was treated like a rebbe, with deference. Expecting wise answers to their questions, people rose to greet him when he entered a room.” Competing Hasidic impulses vied for his soul: an ecstatic spiritual optimism in tension with an austere moral vision that harshly judged human nature. The one gave “me wings,” he would later write, the other “encircled me with chains.” Only the Sabbath could reconcile the antagonistic impulses. The celebration of God’s rest opened a holy dimension to its observers—“a dimension,” Heschel wrote years later, “in which the human is at home with the divine.

Ordained as a rabbi at 16, Heschel went on to seek secular learning, and in 1927 he enrolled as a philosophy student at the University of Berlin. The golden-age culture of Weimar Germany was in full swing, but Heschel for the most part kept his nose in his studies. A skeptical spirit dominated his chosen field, the philosophy of religion. The scholars Heschel encountered didn’t ask: What does this biblical text tell us about God or morality? But rather: What do these claims about God and morality tell us about the culture that produced the text?

In such circumstances, holding fast to his forefathers’ faith proved taxing. But one night in the early 1930s, while strolling Berlin’s “magnificent streets,” Heschel had a breakthrough. “Suddenly, I noticed the sun had gone down, evening had arrived.” He had forgotten about time. He should have been preparing for the evening prayer. “I had

forgotten God—I had forgotten Sinai—I had forgotten that sunset is my business.” The sunset reminded Heschel of his “task” as a believer and a faithful Jew: namely, “to restore the world to the kingship of the Lord.”



A mother and daughter light candles for Shabbat, the Jewish Sabbath.

PHOTO: ALAMY

Fired up by this awakening, he went on to write a dissertation on the Hebrew prophets that reversed “the secular-humanistic projects of his time,” as Kaplan puts it. The goal of a philosophy of religion, Heschel argued, shouldn’t be to understand “God” as an ancient idea or symbol, still less a disturbance in the ancient mind, but to understand human beings as the living God’s project and as partakers in the divine “pathos.”

The God-centric vision had to be nurtured in a life of prayer and ritual—that is to say, in the dimension of time. In the Sabbath.

This God-centric understanding, he came to believe, was the only sure guarantee of human dignity. Without an absolute standard that reflected the will of a supreme being, people could countenance any evil; everything could be relativized. And it wasn’t enough merely to contemplate this supreme being. Rather, the God-centric vision had to be nurtured in a life of prayer and ritual—that is to say, in the dimension of time. In the Sabbath.

On Jan. 30, 1933, German President Paul von Hindenburg administered the oath of office to a new chancellor, Adolf Hitler. The first mass anti-Semitic attack came on April 1, when Nazi thugs launched a boycott of Jewish businesses. Jewish merchants were forced to

post yellow stars on their storefronts. Brownshirts stood outside, warning “Aryans” to take their business elsewhere.

The boycott took place on a Saturday—on the Sabbath. The timing wasn’t lost on Heschel. He published an anonymous Yiddish-language poem pouring scorn on the Nazis: “On Sabbath day / At ten o’clock, a filthy-brown mass of people / Sat on shoulders, on doorsteps, on thresholds.../ Gut yontif [happy holiday], purebred Germans!”

In 1938, Heschel was expelled to Poland along with some 70,000 other Polish Jews living in Germany. This reunited him with his Polish kin, but it also left him vulnerable to the genocidal threat that would soon descend upon Polish Jewry. Though Heschel didn’t know it, his writing had brought him to the attention of Julian Morgenstern, the president of Hebrew Union College in Cincinnati. Morgenstern resolved to save Heschel along with a number of other imperiled Jewish scholars, and in March 1940 he arrived in the New World.

But Heschel couldn’t save his Warsaw kin. His mother died of a heart attack when Nazi troops stormed her apartment in the Warsaw Ghetto. One sister perished under Nazi bombing; two others were murdered in German death camps, two of the six million Jews immolated in “the fire of an altar to Satan,” as he famously wrote.

MORE SATURDAY ESSAYS

[How a More Resilient America Beat a Midcentury Pandemic](#) April 30, 2021

[How Electric, Self-Driving Cars and Ride-Hailing Will Transform the Car Industry](#) April 23, 2021

[The Airline Safety Revolution](#) April 16, 2021

[The False Promise of Quick-Fix Psychology](#) April 9, 2021

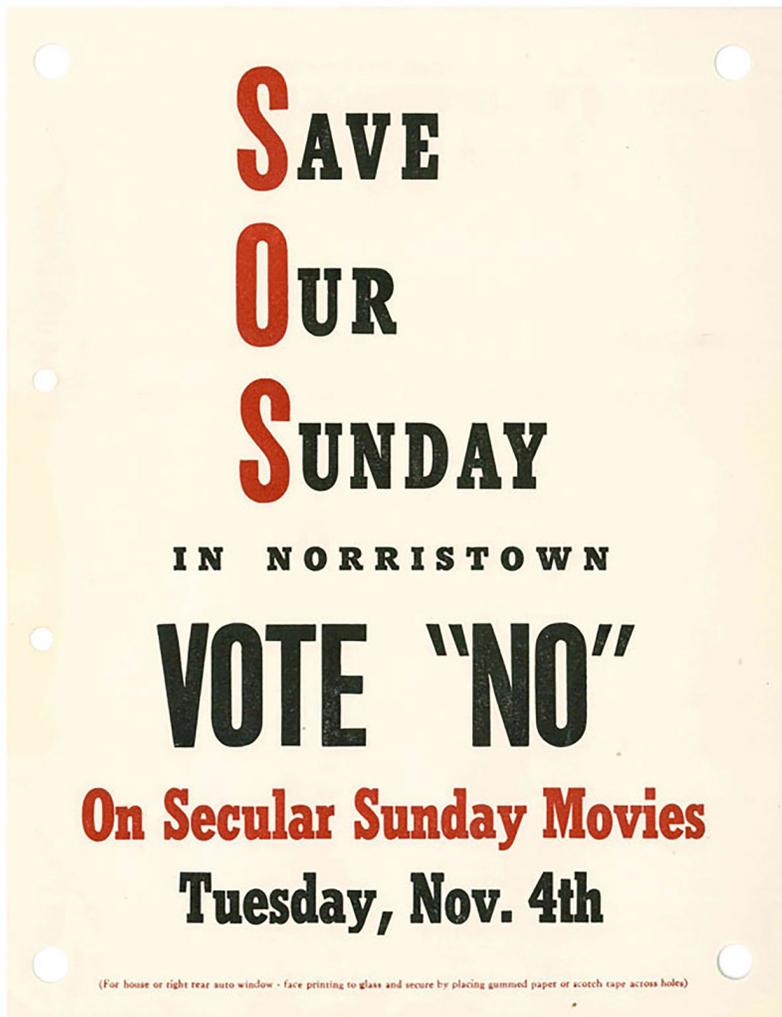
Heschel is best remembered for his political activism in the U.S. during the 1960s. He vociferously opposed the Vietnam War, marched arm-in-arm with Martin Luther King Jr. and was the only Jew to eulogize King at the civil-rights leader’s funeral. His lifelong hatred of injustice was foremost an outpouring of his piety.

That piety, nurtured in Hasidic soil and cultivated by German philosophy, clashed with the spirit of American Judaism. With few exceptions, his new students struck him as ill-read, shallow, inattentive to interior things. They, in turn, seem to have found him irascible and

hard to understand, a figure straight out of central casting for Eccentric Old World Academic. The students' shortcomings mirrored the spiritual state of the U.S. as a whole: its relentlessly practical sensibility, its impatience with the contemplative life. Americans were very much prepared to abandon the realm of time—the realm of the Sabbath—in conquering the realm of space.

Yet it hadn't always been so. In earlier times, a robust Protestant tradition disciplined America's commercial drive. Sabbatarianism—the notion that the law must uphold Sunday as a day of rest and worship—was taken for granted in colonial America, as much in the supposedly more secular Virginia as in puritan New England. The Dutchmen who settled New Amsterdam in lower Manhattan likewise imposed Sunday blue laws.

Leading American statesmen and clergy in the post-revolutionary period framed the observance of the Sabbath as an essential bulwark against the depravities that had marked the French Revolution. When President John Adams declared a National Fast Day on May 9, 1798, amid deteriorating relations with revolutionary France, Yale President Timothy Dwight took to the pulpit to warn that “to destroy us, our enemies must first destroy our Sabbath.” So seriously did early Americans take the Sabbath that, legend has it, even President George Washington got an earful from a local magistrate for riding from Connecticut to New York on a Sunday in 1789.



A 1947 poster urges Norristown, Penn., residents to vote in favor of blue laws.

PHOTO: HISTORICAL SOCIETY OF MONTGOMERY COUNTY PA

Yet Sabbatarianism wasn't forceful enough to stop the federal postal service from delivering mail on Sundays—a fact that drew the ire of Protestant leaders, not least because post offices had become places for men to drink and carouse. Economic and partisan considerations repeatedly blocked legislative attempts to ban Sunday mail delivery throughout the 19th century.

Facing the objection that stopping delivery on Sundays would hurt the national economy, New Jersey Senator Theodore Frelinghuysen pointed out that “a busy commercial center such as London took Sundays off without apparent problem,” as historian Gillis Harp writes. But even if there was some financial loss, Frelinghuysen added, America shouldn't measure “public worth by dollars and cents” and shouldn't tolerate “this national profanation.”

The 20th century saw the death of the American Sabbath by a thousand cuts, as states began to permit localities to liberalize blue laws.

It would take the alliance of a nascent labor movement and the spiritual heirs of Frelinghuysen to finally end Sunday mail delivery in 1912. Yet the 20th century saw the death of the American Sabbath by a thousand cuts, as states began to permit localities to liberalize blue laws. Usually they began by permitting recreational activities that didn't amount to "servile labor," such as baseball or horse-racing. Even as the Supreme Court repeatedly upheld Sunday trading bans on constitutional grounds, the days of stores being sternly shuttered on Sundays were soon over. Now even the U.S. Postal Service delivers mail on Sundays again—for Amazon.

Before Heschel denounced the injustices that disfigured America, he deplored the commercialized, technocratic way of life that denied time to the Sabbath. What his industrious fellow Americans might have mistaken for "wasted time" was, in fact, an absolutely necessary act. In biblical logic, holiness always requires sacrificial abandonment: Something must be handed over to God. This logic of sacrifice is at work in an especially tangible way in the Sabbath. As Heschel wrote, "he who wants to enter the holiness of the day must first lay down the profanity of clattering commerce, of being yoked to toil."

It is difficult to imagine just how revolutionary the Sabbath vision must have appeared in the ancient world, where vast multitudes of people were slaves. Into such a world, there appeared a religion that told slaves they had an identity separate from their labor, that their nonwork was sacred. Judaism taught men and women to find inner liberty by freeing themselves from "domination of things as well as from domination of people," as Heschel observed.



A Sunday service at Words of Life Fellowship Church in Miami, Fla.

PHOTO: ALAMY

Judaism, Christianity and Islam all appreciated the bond between Sabbath restrictions and human freedom, even as they designated different days to be holy. Across the West today, however, the drive toward maximal market liberty has squeezed out the liberty of the Sabbath. We have banished it in the name of “choice.” And some choice we have: Working-class families are denied even a half-day of rest together, yet we are puzzled by astronomical divorce rates, abysmally low rates of family formation, alienation and drug abuse. We have cashiered the Sabbath for algorithmic human-resources scheduling—computer code designed to minimize labor costs, regardless of the impact on families and communities.

For professionals, the Sabbath’s demise means barrages of emails to be answered during sleepless nights spent by the ghostly blue glow of the smartphone. For other workers, the Sabbath’s defeat means missed children’s baseball games, lunches wolfed down on impossibly short breaks and bladders relieved in bottles in the vast warehouses of endless consumer choice.

In our day, as in Heschel’s, a world without the Sabbath is a world without soul.

Rabbi Abraham Joshua Heschel celebrated his final Sabbath on Friday, Dec. 22, 1972. As usual, the dinner was attended by friends, who read aloud from the Yiddish poems Heschel had written while forging his biblical thought in the crucible of the Holocaust. The next morning, he didn’t wake up. His daughter, Susannah, has written: “In Jewish tradition, dying in one’s sleep is called a kiss of God, and dying on the Sabbath is a gift that is merited by piety.”

This essay is adapted from Mr. Ahmari's new book, "The Unbroken Thread: Discovering the Wisdom of Tradition in an Age of Chaos," to be published on May 11 by Convergent Books, an imprint of Penguin Random House. He is the op-ed editor of the New York Post, which like The Wall Street Journal is a division of News Corp.

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