

Invitation to the Way of Transforming Discipleship

Every year, within the first two Sundays of the calendar year, the lectionary readings assigned for the beginning of the year introduce us to the beginning of Jesus' ministry. First, after Epiphany Sunday, the first scripture reading we hear is the story of Jesus' baptism. Then, in the following few Sundays, we hear scripture readings disclosing Jesus' invitation to the first group of disciples. I always find it fitting that, as we begin a new calendar year, the scriptures remind us of Jesus' call and invitation to discipleship because, with these scripture readings, we are always invited to reflect on our own call to discipleship.

In a time when the secular world is thinking about New Year's Resolution, it is perhaps fitting that we, Christians, are also reminded of our supreme calling: the call to follow Jesus. As followers of Jesus, we know that we do not always get it right. Throughout the year there are many distractions, challenges, trials, and temptations that make our walk in faithful discipleship difficult. However, with the start of each calendar year, we are given an opportunity to re-commit ourselves back to a more faithful walk in discipleship. This, I am convinced, is an activity of God's grace. God is always gracious to offer us new opportunities for new beginnings.

This year, during the season after the Epiphany and during the season in Lent, the worship planning team will be leading a worship series based on a *Companions in Christ* Small Group Curriculum entitled: *The Way of Transforming Discipleship*. An outline of this Epiphany series is listed on page 6. We want to invite you to join us on this journey.

What would you like to do in 2017 to be more faithful to Christ's invitation to follow him? What would you need from Wesley to help support you in your walk of faithful discipleship? How would you like this community of Christ's disciples to accompany you in your journey? I invite you to think about these things, pray about them, and talk with myself or members of the worship planning team. We want to know how to walk with you better on this Way of Transforming Discipleship.

May God bless you as you embark on this new year. Afehyia Pa! Happy New Year!

Pastor Shandi

LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS

The Rose window lighting for January is given in loving memory of Mrs. William B. Smith by the United Methodist Women.

The Tower lighting for January is given in loving memory of my mother, Mary Fletcher and my brother, David Fletcher by Barbara Fletcher.

The altar flowers on Sunday, January 15th are given in loving memory of Mrs. William B. Smith by the United Methodist Women.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✠ The family of Eleanor F. Norwood whose funeral was on Jan. 3, as they grieve her death.
- ✠ Caroline Sherman who is now at home after her surgery.
- ✠ Jeff Robbins who continues his battle with lung and liver cancer.
- ✠ Bev Strons who is recovering from her hospital stay.
- ✠ Shelash Walsh and her family who are grieving the tragic loss of her brother, Geoff Taber, his wife and children who died in a Christmas Eve fire.
- ✠ Lina Faldelta, friends of Mercy Peacock, for comfort and healing.
- ✠ Janan Vaughn for health and healing.

ANNUAL REPORTS were due in the office by December 11th. If you have not turned a report in, please do so immediately. You can email (office@wesleyworc.org) a Word document or drop off a printed report. If you submitted an article for the Church Conference book, please let me know if I can use this one or submit to me a revised report with any changes you need to make. *Thank you, Debi*

2017 ALTAR FLOWER CALENDAR is now available in the Welcome Office to sign up for altar flowers on that special Sunday in honor, celebration or in memory of a loved one or friend. Stop by the office and reserve the date in the Altar Flower book. You can reserve the chapel or the sanctuary. After church you are welcome to take the flowers home to enjoy or you may leave them to be delivered to a shut-in or member/friend in the hospital or in rehab. The cost for the two arrangements in either the chapel or sanctuary is \$50. Please be sure to complete a form with the dedication and return it to Debi with the payment as soon as you are able.

A CHRISTMASTIDE THANKSGIVING...

Many, many thanks to all who helped make the Christmas Day Lunch such a wonderful time for our congregation and our neighbors! Over 125 people were served a buffet of salad, turkey, ham, sweet potatoes, joloff rice, chicken wings, greens, stuffing, green beans, mushrooms, rolls and cornbread, and a vast array of desserts. Over a dozen people helped with set up, cooking, serving, and clean up... with many more donating desserts and salads. A special shout out to Nan Gibbons and Tom Friend who were here until after midnight on Christmas Eve helping to cook the turkeys.

Additionally, a word of overwhelmed appreciation for all who gave of time and materials to create "Reverse Advent" gift boxes for our neighbors who attended the lunch. The look on our guests' faces when they were told that the beautiful gifts at the front of Brewer Hall were for them was a heartwarming sight that will not soon be forgotten. There were enough gifts for every guest. One of the guests receiving a gift box came to church on New Year's Day, and made a point to let us know how much they appreciated their gift. They said, "I don't know how anyone but God could have known how much I needed every single thing that I found in that box. It was like a miracle for me. Thank you!"

I offer my profound thanks for all of the Christ-like love and care and generosity that was poured out from our congregation during this season and for this lunch.

Lisa Fagerstrom, Director of Christian Formation and Discipleship

UMW Annual Meeting, Luncheon and Memorial Service Sunday, January 15, 2017 ~ Noon ~ East Hall

All women are invited to this special time to celebrate the mission accomplishments of 2016 and plan for 2017. A delicious soup lunch, prepared by the Priscilla and Esther Circles, will be followed by a Memorial Service honoring Wesley women who died in 2016. Officers for 2017 will be installed. For more information, contact Allison Hansen (508-853-5339) or Barb Ingrassia (508-829-6359).

Turning Faith, Hope and Love into Action on behalf of women, children and youth around the world.

Submitted by Barb Ingrassia

CONFIRMATION 2017

Confirmation classes will begin on Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 9:30 AM in the Youth Room. The meeting on January 15 will be an orientation and overview to the class. We will determine meeting times based on student and teacher availability. Tentative options include meeting from 9:35-10:20 AM or 1:00 PM to 2:00 PM on Sundays. If you or someone you know is ready to take the next step into faithful discipleship and participate in confirmation classes, please contact Pastor Shandi or Lisa Fagerstrom as soon as possible. Thank you!



FROM MANY, ONE: On January 19, the eve of the Presidential Inauguration, Wesley Methodist Church will host an interfaith service entitled “From Many, One.” Members of the Christian, Jewish, and Islamic faiths will gather to pray for the future of our country and help to support one another in these difficult times. Members of all faiths are invited to attend. Speakers will be Rabbi Valerie Cohen, the Rev. Jose Encarnacion, and Dr. Amjad Bahnassi. The service will be held in Brewer Hall from 7 p.m. to 8 p.m followed by refreshments and a social hour.

Contributions of snacks and desserts are welcome. (Please, do not use any pork alcohol (including extracts) in the preparation of the food. Thank you.)

For any questions, you may contact Margaret Watson.

Blessings and peace to all!

THANKS FOR HELPING HOPE FOR HOUSING... Thanks to our faithful volunteers, Hope for Housing sold \$12,600 worth of gift cards for local grocery stores, CVS, Panera and Dunkin’ Donuts during 2016. Combined with sales at 29 other churches, the funds we raised as a percentage of the gift cards helped a dozen families remain in their homes – preventing homelessness and giving children the consistency they need in life. Gratitude for Cora Arsenault, Judith Barton, Kate Devlin, Earl Flagg, Donna Hirtle, Amelia Hirtle, Mark Muncy, Gerard Piscitelli and the Wong family for their willingness to sit at the table near the coffee, week after week!

~ Allison Hansen

CARTY CUPBOARD...

After many years of collecting, sorting, preparing and distributing clothes and household items at Carty, Dot Ellis is retiring from this project. I would like to say Thank You very much to Dot for all the extra time and effort you put into this project. We will no longer be accepting or distributing these items. Dot along with all the other volunteers will continue to help those in need by providing food and personal care products for distribution.

Please also remember that the Items of the Month for January are Minute Rice and Low Sodium Beans... like kidney, cantinelli, and pinto.

Thank You! Nancy Spencer

CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

Happy New Year from Children's Christian Education!

We ended the year with a beautiful music and reading performance by the children on December 18th, and a worshipful interactive Christmas Pageant on Christmas Eve. Thank you to all who made these events a success, including Lisa Fagerstrom, Nan Gibbons, Rachel & DJ Ferdinand, and all our volunteers on Christmas Eve!

Sunday School is back to its usual schedule on Sundays during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. **Children's Choir** will continue to meet on Sundays from 11:45 a.m.- 12:30 p.m. upstairs in Wagner Hall (3rd floor). Please come upstairs to pick your children up at 11:45 a.m. from Sunday school & the childcare room **or** at 12:30 p.m. for choir. It makes departures easier and choir more focused if children do not leave at straggled times. Currently, our children's musical worship/choir is for children in grades 2-7. Thank you for your support.

Be on the lookout for upcoming events: Easter Egg Hunt information, Vacation Bible School dates/theme.

The Way of Transforming Discipleship

A Worship Series for the Season After Epiphany 2017

“Knowing Who We Are: Our Search for Identity and Belonging”

Epiphany 1, January 8:

Theme: *Hearing The Voice* in Our Search for Identity & Belonging

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 3:13-17) The Baptism of Jesus

Epiphany 2, January 15:

Theme: *Invitation to Discipleship* for Our Search for Identity & Belonging

Scriptural Focus: (John 1:29-42) The First Disciples of Jesus

Epiphany 3, January 22:

Theme: *Saying Yes to the Invitation* in Our Search for Identity & Belonging

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 4:12-25) Jesus Begins His Ministry in Galilee

Epiphany 4, January 29:

Theme: Receiving The Blessing

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 5:1-12) The Beatitudes

Epiphany 5, February 5:

Theme: *Seeing Ourselves Through God's Eyes...*

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 5:13-20) Salt and Light/ The Law and the Prophets

Epiphany 6, February 12:

Theme: *Living As God's Beloved...*

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 5:21-37) Concerning Anger, Adultery, Divorce, Oaths

Epiphany 7, February 19:

Theme: *Seeing Others as God's Beloved...*

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 5:38-48) Concerning Retaliation, Love for Enemies

Transfiguration Sunday, February 26:

Theme: Remembering Who We Are

Scriptural Focus: (Matthew 17:1-9) The Transfiguration of Jesus

We invite you to come worship with us and to invite others to our worship series. You are welcome to use this outline for your weekly devotions during this season.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

As I prepare and plan for this new calendar year in ministry, I wanted to write and share a couple of things:

First: I want to extend a most heartfelt THANK YOU to Lisa Fagerstrom and her team. At one Church Council meeting, I had raised what I feared would be a crazy question. I asked whether Wesley would want to open its doors on Christmas Day to our neighbors and offer a free meal to the community. Knowing that many family have private family plans on Christmas, I did not know how successful it would be. But thanks be to God, Lisa Fagerstrom volunteered to take the lead on the Luncheon and was able assemble a diverse team of volunteers and servants. I am certain that if Lisa had not responded affirmatively to this invitation, we would not have seen the joy on people's faces as we shared the Christmas day with them. Thank you, Lisa and your team for the wonderful ministry you provided. I want to imagine that Jesus is saying Lisa and her team of volunteers: "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

Second: I want to extend another heartfelt THANK YOU to Lorna Mattus-Merrill and her team. It has been a tradition at this church that we participate in the First Night activities. Over the years, as people feel themselves drawn to spend more time with family and spend New Year's Eve with family, there have been fewer and fewer people willing to take the lead in preparing for and planning for the First Night fundraiser. Leading this endeavor is not something that is on the job description of a Church Business Administrator, but out of her genuine love for this congregation and its ministry, Lorna has offered herself three times now to lead the event. I want to thank Lorna and her faithful cadre of volunteers and supporters. They helped to give Wesley an opportunity to open our church doors and have guests experience a bit of the beauty that our space offers. I have sat in membership classes where the First Night event was the one of the things that introduced people to Wesley and eventually led them to worship with us. Indeed, I want to imagine that Jesus is saying to Lorna and her team of volunteers: "Well done, good and faithful servants!"

While I recognize that, for both Lisa and Lorna, there were many lay volunteers (and some other staff) who helped, I mention them specifically because the work that they did is not something that is part of their job description. They are paid staff who love the ministry of this church and offered themselves to support our ministry. They went above and beyond what is expected of them as staff, and for this I am grateful. I invite you, members of Wesley to please extend your appreciation for their service.

*In Christ,
Pastor Shandi*

MISSION MATTERS

Wesley's IHN Week is Sunday, Feb. 5 to Feb. 11... In October, our new schedule of two shifts per day seemed to work better than having three shifts. Please sign up with Mercy Peacock if you are able to do the evening shift (5:30 to 8:30 pm) or the overnight (8:30 pm to 6:30 am). The sign-up chart will be on the Mission Spotlight bulletin board and updated weekly. If you wish to split the first shift with someone, or pair up, just let us know that. If you would like an explanation of how to do either shift, please tell Mercy. A written role description is also available.

Each evening volunteer can now choose whether to provide dinner or not. Residents would appreciate our cooking 2 or 3 dinners (or providing takeout), if you're up for that. The Mission Committee will give Big Y Hope for Housing cards to pay for the other meals and housing staples during our Feb. 5 to 11 week. Donations of Big Y cards would be much appreciated.

January 28th Community Supper... UMW is once again in charge of the first supper of the new year. The menu will be beef and vegetable stew over buttered noodles, Italian bread, beverages and dessert. Emily Smith will be the leader, so please contact her, UMW members, if you're able to help prepare, set up, serve... the meal. If you prefer to communicate by email, you can use Allison's (achis4788@aol.com). Any Wesley woman who wants to find out more about UMW and its circles is invited to sit at a special table and get info from UMW members.

Volunteers Needed to Play with Homeless Children... If you have 2 hours/week to play with homeless children in a central MA family shelter, please read the info on the Mission Spotlight bulletin board, or speak with Betsy Pennino. Training sessions held monthly.

From Many, One

**On the Eve of the
Presidential Inauguration,
let us gather**

To pray

To hope

To support each other

Thursday, January 19, 2017

7 p.m to 8 p.m

Speakers of the Islamic, Jewish, and Christian Faiths
Will encourage us and lead us in prayer

Refreshments and Social Hour to Follow

Wesley United Methodist Church • 114 Main St. Worcester
office@wesleyworc.org

DID YOU KNOW?

The music in our hymnal reflects the traditions of many cultures and nationalities across the centuries of Christian hymnody. Perhaps this feature is most obvious in the varied origins of the many beloved carols that we sing during the Christmas season. The strict musical definition of the word carol refers to a genre that first originated in England in the Middle Ages as a round or line dance with musical accompaniment. Eventually the term was used for songs with English or Latin texts related to Mary or some aspect of Christmas. In the vernacular of modern time we use an even more broad definition which encompasses similar songs not of English origin, but which have strophic (having multiple stanzas) texts related to Christmas.

This past Sunday our opening hymn was “Sing We Now of Christmas” (UMH 237) which our hymnal describes as a “traditional French carol”. The text of this carol is *macaronic* i.e. a mixture of two languages, in that it includes the French word *noel* in the midst of the English translation of the original French carol. Most people are aware that the French *noel* (or *noël*) is an alternate word for Christmas. The ultimate origin is from the Latin word *natalis* (“birth”). However did you know that the word *noël* is also a musical term for a French Christmas carol? Large collections of *noëls* were published in France in the 16th to 18th centuries. Beginning in the 17th century French composers began to write instrumental pieces comprising variations on the melodies of popular vocal *noëls*. Such pieces were most commonly written for keyboard instruments, especially the organ and were meant to be played during Christmas services. You may have noticed that the prelude and postlude pieces listed in the bulletin on Christmas Day were entitled *Noëls*. The composer of these pieces was Louis-Claude Daquin (1694-1722), and it is reported that during his lifetime the people of Paris would flock to churches where he played the organ during the Christmas season to hear him play such *noël* variations.

Submitted by, Deborah A. O’Driscoll

2017 HERALD SCHEDULE

Below are the next Herald mailing dates along with the deadline dates.

Article Deadline Date	Herald Mailing Date
Tues., Jan. 17	Thurs., Jan. 19
Mon., Jan. 30	Wed., Feb. 1

If you have an article, please email it as a Word attachment to:

office@wesleyworc.org

ALTAR FLOWERS on Sundays are available for donation in honor, celebration or in memory of a loved one or friend. Stop by the office and reserve the date in the Altar Flower book. You can reserve the chapel or the sanctuary. After church you are welcome to take the flowers home to enjoy or you may leave them to be delivered to a shut-in or member/friend in the hospital or in rehab. The cost for the two arrangements in either the chapel or sanctuary is \$50. Please be sure to complete a form with the dedication and return it to Debi with the payment as soon as you are able.



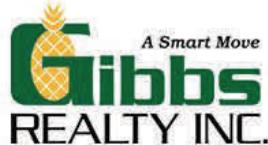
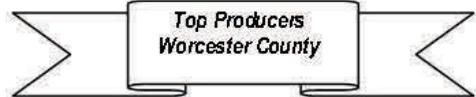
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WESLEY HERALD
JANUARY 5, 2017

***DON'T MISS OUT...
READ THE HERALD TODAY!***



WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Pastor Rev. Shandirai Mawokomatanda
- Director of Christian Formation & Discipleship Lisa Fagerstrom
- Director of Children's Christian Education Jean Grant
- Director of Music Ministries Brett Maguire
- Interim Director of Children's Music Nan Gibbons
- Music Assistant & Layleader Deborah O'Driscoll
- Toddler Care Leader Lori Conlon
- Building Superintendent
- Business Administrator Lorna Mattus-Merrill
- Church Secretary Debi Ritacco
- Custodians April Dylewicz
Tom Friend
Gerard Piscitelli
- Security Steve Boyns
- Head Usher David Dagle
- Church Council Tom Ingrassia
- Board of Trustees Yaw Enyim
Co-Chairs Gary Robinson
- Carty Cupboard Food Pantry Nancy Spencer
- Communion Steward Linda D'Acri
- Finance & Stewardship Co-Chairs Michael Edmunds
William Wong
- Ghanaian Association Paul Hayfron
- Hospitality Co-Chairs Vivian Assie
Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah
- Medical Ministry Ron Ramsay
- Mission Coordinator Betsy Pennino
- Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs Mark Muncey
Gifty Bentum-Asante
- Youth Directors Lisa Fagerstrom
Anthony & Adrienne Phillips
- United Methodist Women Co-Chairs Barbara Ingrassia
Allison Hansen