

GOOD INTENTIONS

It is a new year — a time when it is customary to make New Year's Resolutions.

A number of years ago, I read an article that suggested that it is more effective to *create intentions* rather than *make resolutions*. The article talked about resolutions being more like “wishes” while intentions are more like... “intentions.”

It seemed like a plausible idea to me. And so, for the last few years, I have worked to create intentions rather than make resolutions each New Year. What I have found is that I am more focused on how I will carry out the intention than when I simply called them resolutions. My emphasis is not only on the desire for change, but also on how I will make the change.

It is in that spirit of *intention* that I invite you to join with me and others in a new opportunity at Wesley UMC...

Since the difficult and tragic events in Ferguson, MO this summer, there have been conversations about gathering small groups of people from the Wesley UMC family together for “Chats by the Fire/Fireside Chats.” These conversations would be an intentional effort to allow members of the Wesley family to get to know each other better and to listen to each other's hopes and struggles in a relaxed and informal atmosphere. The conversations would be “lightly facilitated” around a current topic of importance in the world as well as to Wesley UMC. The intent would be to co-create an environment that encourages good fellowship, a chance to listen deeply to each other, and an opportunity for commitment and action for further relationship and Christian fellowship/community building.

In the New Year's spirit of intent and action, the first of these “Chats” will be held on Sunday, January 25 from noon-1 p.m. in the Parlor. Other “Chats” will be held at various other times in February to allow for people's differing schedules. There will be sign-up sheets for different times/groups available beginning this Sunday (Jan. 11). Our goal is to have diversity within each group (age, race, time at Wesley, ethnicity, gender, interests) to allow for differing viewpoints and perspectives.

Continued on Page 3...

LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS...

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

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

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK...

- ✠ Mildred Olson celebrating her 96th birthday on January 9th. Cards can be sent to her at Beaumont Nursing Center, 378 Plantation Street, Room 323A, Worcester, MA 01605.
- ✠ Joshua Aidoo, born on December 26th. He is the grandson of Joseph & Rebecca.
- ✠ Marilyn Baptist who is recovering from surgery.
- ✠ Ethyl Sawyer recovering from a major heart attack. Her daughters are her constant support as they pray for her recovery.
- ✠ A friend of Carol Samanen's living in Michigan, whose husband is in the hospital with Alzheimer's.
- ✠ Jim Norcross in St. Vincent's ICU. Dorothy Norcross is in Millbury Rehab Center.
- ✠ Doris Piscitelli in the hospital recovering from respiratory failure.
- ✠ Linda, Cindy Muncey's cousin, for blessings and healing for Linda's mother and son who are both in the hospital.
- ✠ Phil Johnson and family on the death of his mother, Janice Chisholm.
- ✠ Anne Burrows and family on the death of her father, Bill Taylor.
- ✠ The family of Arlene Quimby who died on Monday, December 22.
- ✠ The family of Berwell Ewing who died on Monday, December 22.
- ✠ The family of Edward Mason, former Associate Pastor of Wesley UMC, who died in January 2014. Condolences can be sent to Edward Mason Jr., 86 Bayberry Hill Road, West Townsend, MA 01474.

2015 ALTAR FLOWER calendar is now available in the Welcome Office. If you would like to donate flowers on a particular Sunday in honor, celebration or in memory of a loved one or friend, stop by the office and reserve the date. 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. 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.

“Good Intentions” continued...

In keeping with the genesis of the idea for these “Chats,” the topic of our first conversation will be “Race and Ethnicity.” The plan is to hold these “Chats” quarterly and to have a different topic of conversation each time. The main point of these small groups is to build community and to deeply listen to each other... to be “Christ-like” with each other — listening with the heart and soul as well as with our ears. However, there may be some ideas that spring up from the “Chats” that folks want to work on as projects/ministries at Wesley.

I hope that you will prayerfully consider being a part of one of these small groups in the coming weeks and in the future. Please speak with me or e-mail/phone me if you would like to talk further about this opportunity or have thoughts about a topic for a future set of “Chats.”

Blessings on the Journey, Lisa



IHN VOLUNTEERS... Wesley will be helping at the IHN house again February 8-15. A sign-up sheet is on the board. We are in need of additional people to support this outreach. It's easy to give 2 or 3 hours one evening. See Nancy Cook to learn what is involved.

MORE HOPE FOR HOUSING IN 2014... Thanks for a generous year, both in volunteer time and in grocery card sales. Together, we sold \$20,215 in gift cards for Worcester- area grocery stores, CVS and Panera Bread. That translates into help for 77 families offered through the Central Mass. Housing Alliance as payments for back rent, first or last month's rent, utility bills, security deposits or furniture. Our work, joined with 27 other congregations, helped to prevent homelessness!

Many thanks to our dedicated volunteers of 2014: Jean and Chris Grant, Donna and Amelia Hirtle, Bill and Quinton Wong, Cora Arsenault, Mark Muncey, Gerard Piscitelli, Nancy Cook, Earl Flagg, Cordelia Ferdinand, Judith Barton, Katherine Edmunds and Natasha Boateng-Wilson.

Want to learn more about this ministry? Stop by our table in Brewer Hall after the 8:30 or 10:30 service on any Sunday.

~ Allison Hansen

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR...

2014 Budget Preliminary Results

While I am still working on closing the books for 2014, I can share some preliminary numbers with you. For Christmas, we exceeded our budget of \$6,200. The total came to \$6,638, a difference of \$438.

For First Night, we had lowered our expectations because of a smaller menu, but we did make a profit of about \$525. With sales during the year of leftover soda and candy, the income account ended with a balance of \$918 versus a budget of \$3,000.

The General Fund and Plate Cash accounts ended the year at \$332,618. This was \$18,638 less than the budget of \$351,256.

Overall, it looks like we will break even for the year by not paying any further mission shares.

2014 Statements

My goal is to mail the year end statements on Monday, January 12, 2015. Any corrections will need to be received by Tuesday, January 20 in order to complete the statistical report on time.

First Night Thank You's

I am so grateful to all who worked on First Night, and for all of those who made cookies or provided donations of soda, water and food. I do not have all of the names of the folks who made donations, but please know they absolutely made a difference in our ability to make a profit. To the following who worked that night, my sincere thank you!--Deanna, Elliott and Quinton Wong, Susan Williams, Nancy Cook, Judith Barton, Peggy & Phil Favrot, Bruce & Betsy Pennino, Dolores Augustus, Linda Keister, Linda Carlson and her grandson, Gary Robinson, Phil Johnson, Brent Drajesk, Chris Kerns, Gerard Piscitelli, Ken Hedenburg, Chloe Sundberg, Gladys Adu-Poku, Linda and Louie D'Acri, Carol Samanen, Josephine Agyen, Stephanie Stephens, and Paul Arsenault. You did a great job!!!!

Peace, Lorna

SUNDAY SCHOOL ~ AN OPPORTUNITY TO SERVE

Exciting changes are coming to the children's Sunday School classes! Beginning January 18, we will now have 4 classes instead of 3: toddler/preschool, grades K-1, grades 2-3, and grades 4-5. With the increase in classes, we are looking for more volunteers to greet, teach, and assist/help as this ministry grows. It takes a village to raise and teach a child, and I have been grateful for the outpouring of service demonstrated by this church since beginning my position as director. If you are interested in helping, please contact Jean Grant at grantgirl05@yahoo.com or 508-886-6571.

Also, parents be on the lookout for monthly newsletters and weekly take-home applications about Sunday School.

Thank you, Jean Grant

CARTY CUPBOARD FOOD PANTRY

Happy New Year to All! We are gearing up for another very busy year at the food pantry. Our shelves are running very low on the following items.... **Meals in a Can**, **Hearty Low Sodium Soups** (parents often use this as an after school snack)... and **Instant Oatmeal in the variety packs**. If you can help us by bring in just one of these items it would be much appreciated.

The **Items of the Month** for the upcoming months are as follows...

January... Meals in a Can

February... Hearty Low Sodium Soups

March... Jelly... in plastic please

April... Diapers... sizes 1-6

May... Condiments... all in plastic please

~ Sincerely, Nancy Spencer

WESLEY YOUTH GROUP

Meeting Times: First Wednesday of the month from 6:30-8:30 PM, and the third Sunday of the month after church.

YOUTH2015 EARLY REGISTRATION OPEN! Are you ready? Youth2015 is just around the corner (June 24-28)! Early registration ends on January 31st. Total trip cost is \$420+travel, and the \$105 registration fee goes toward the total cost. Please see Phil and Emi for more information on registration and on the event itself.

MISSION MATTERS

MISSION COMMITTEE REPORT 2014

As part of Wesley's effort to be transparent, the Mission Committee wants to share how much we've donated to various mission projects this year. A further explanation of our giving is in the 2014 Annual Report.

Mission Committee funding comes from a Bessie Carty endowment, rather than the Wesley operating budget. In 2014, we received \$16,508 from the Bessie Carty Special Purpose Fund, and supported the following mission activities:

Abby's House	\$ 1,000
Elm Park Ministries (day camp)	\$ 1,000
Full Dimension Ministry (Tanzania)	\$ 1,200
Habitat for Humanity	\$ 1,000
Interfaith Hospitality Network	\$ 2,000
Wesley Medical Ministry (hospitality)	\$ 45
Maine Economic Mission	\$ 250
Wesley Basketball Team (snacks)	\$ 100
Mission Field Work	
Youth Group Maine mission (US Army)	\$ 300
Gerard Piscitelli – 2015 Guatemala Trip	\$ 500
UMCOR Ebola effort	\$ 1,000
The Bridge of Central MA	\$ 500
Emerging missions	
Food for Community Suppers (in addition to \$600 from 2013)	\$ 2,605
Wesley Mission Shares (operating budget)	<u>\$ 5,000</u>
Total mission committee expenditures	\$ 16,500

MISSION TRIP ~ JANUARY 17-19, 2015 ~ HURRICANE SANDY... I am forming a team of people to go help rebuild and do repairs after Hurricane Sandy in New York from January 17-19, 2015. If you are interested in going, please see Gerard Piscitelli or email him (gerbeloli@yahoo.com) for more information.

HOSPITALITY FOR MEDICAL MINISTRY NEEDED... Pastor Shandi has noticed that people seeking eye exams and glasses start lining up hours before our doors open. Since the cold weather has arrived, volunteers are needed to offer light refreshments and give out numbers from 4:30 to 6 pm on Mondays. We will start with two people every other Monday, when the optometrist is here giving eye exams and prescriptions. There isn't such a large crowd on the alternate Mondays, when people are dropping by to pick up glasses. If you could volunteer to offer hospitality, please tell Pastor Shandi or Betsy Pennino.

JANUARY 31ST COMMUNITY SUPPER... UMW is in charge of the next community supper, led by Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah and Sandy McManus. They will be preparing and serving BBQ chicken, rice pilaf, green beans, salad, rolls, beverage and dessert. Donations of cupcakes, brownies, or bars are requested. Additional workers are welcome! Also, could someone put together a craft for children?

2015 COMMUNITY SUPPERS ARE LAST SATURDAYS... Easier to remember this year is the plan that the community suppers will be on the last Saturday of each month, except for October. (Halloween is on Saturday, October 31st, so our supper will be on October 24th) It worked out this way for 2015, because holiday weekends such as Memorial Day and Labor Day do not fall on last weekends.

Thank you to all who are "stepping out in faith" to lead community suppers which can have one or more unforeseen aspects! We work together to keep those to a minimum.

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

UMW Annual Meeting Sunday, January 18, noon... It's a new year and a fresh start for United Methodist Women at Wesley! You are invited to attend the annual meeting for our UMW unit. We will have lunch and a program that looks back at the year just passed and looks forward to new ways we can be a force for good in the world.

Reminder: To prepare our annual report, all officers and circle chairs should submit their reports by email (ideally as Word documents) to Allison Hansen at AChis4788@aol.com or typed up in the UMW mailbox in the church office by **Sunday, January 11.**

Questions? New ideas? Give Allison a call at 508-853-5339 or send her an email.

STOP WONDERING WHERE YOUR MONEY WENT AND START TELLING IT WHERE TO GO!

Financial Peace University is a 9-week program that teaches you how to make Bible based money decisions to help you achieve your financial goals. Through a special grant, cost is **\$50** per family for people attending Wesley. Don't miss out on this life changing class that could save you thousands.

In depth coverage of:

- Building a Budget
- Eliminating Debt
- Planning for College
- Investing for Retirement
- Understanding Insurances
- Understanding Real Estate and Mortgages

Contact Bill Wong, Wesley Finance Committee member, at bill922@gmail.com or (508) 320-5620.

Begins January 11, at 5pm in East Hall, for 1.5 to 2 hours each time.
Child care will be provided.

For more information about Dave Ramsey and FPU, visit www.daveramsey.com and look for Financial Peace University.

2015 CENTRAL MASS DISTRICT "MOVERS & SHAKERS" LEADERSHIP WORKSHOPS ~ FEBRUARY 28, 2015...

The CMA District Congregational Development Team will be sponsoring the annual Church Leadership Workshops and we are inviting you and members of your church to come and experience a world-changing journey. There will be great music and outstanding work-shops, life-changing conversations, yummy food, and authentic people. All of our workshops will be designed to equip church leaders to bring about a personal and cultural transformation to their local congregations. The workshops seek to give practical tools you will need to begin the work or to share with your congregation. More details to come soon. For more information please visit the CMA District website: www.neumc.org/cma.

JOHN IN ULTRA-HIGH CONTEXT: JOHN 1:10-34

(notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, Dec. 21, 2014 - Jan. 4, 2015)

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Verses 10-18 complete the second half of John's opening poem. Verses 19-34 report the witness of John the Prophet – about himself (vv.19-28), and about Jesus (vv.29-34).

v.10 With few exceptions, John most often uses the noun “world” in the context of humanity, human beings, the subject of personal activity and the object of interpersonal relations – more specifically, the world of Israelite society. **v.11** The verb “received” in this context referred to showing hospitality to those with whom one was in solidarity. **v.12** Here occurs the first use of John's UHC preposition *eis* (“into”) within the context of belief, meaning “embedded in” or “remaining loyal to”. The noun *onoma* (“name”) was the 1st century equivalent of what would later become the psychological term “person”, and in this context, to “believe *into* Jesus *name*” meant to be interpersonally attached to Jesus... **v.13** ...and to all that attachment implied – solidarity and honor of this new surrogate family that Jesus had created. **v.14** the verb *eskēnōsen* (“tabernacled”; RSV “dwelt”, NRSV “lived”) alludes to Israel's exodus story [the tent/tabernacle symbolizing the presence of God in the midst of the Israelites (Ex 26)], but in this context implies the presence of God via Jesus in the midst of this new family. The Hellenistic noun *dóxan* (“glory”) commonly referred to opinion, honor, or reputation; but the author has elevated the noun to UHC status, to refer specifically to *Jesus'* honorific status, i.e., the special honor that attaches to an only son of a father. **vv.16-17** The noun *cháris* (L. *gratia*) may be translated as either “grace” or “favor”, and is the language of patronage [provision of favors to clients (to whom nothing is owed) in return for respect, honor, and general obedience]. The favors were understood to be “gracious”.

vv.19-23 John's symbolic river dipping, a prophetic act in Israel, would have been out of character with his birth status, prompting concern by the Judeans from Jerusalem about some special status for John of which they were unaware, and thus their question, “Who are you?” **vv.24-28** John suggests that his questioners had sharply misread the situation – that John's status was in fact much lower than they had thought, and that his actions were simply a prelude to the coming of one greater than he. **v.29** In the lore of antiquity, the constellation Lamb (Gk *Amnōs*; L. *Aries*) was considered the first of the celestial bodies created by God, and the leader of the periodic changes in the night sky. To call Jesus the “Lamb” of God was to designate him both a divine servant and cosmic leader. **v.32** John's vision of God's power alighting on and *remaining* (UHC verb) with Jesus gave divine legitimation for Jesus' public activity. **v.34** In Semitic cultures of the time, the title “Son of God” meant “having the quality of God” (divine creativity and control).

– Charles Kiefer, for the Brewer Hall Study Group (an open group meeting most Sundays at 9:30)

Marshall, A. The R.S.V. interlinear Greek – English New Testament. London:Samuel Bagster & Sons Ltd., '58
Malina BJ, Rohrbaugh RL. *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John*. Minneapolis: Fortress Press, '98

DID YOU KNOW?

The Twelve Days of Christmas come to an end with the observance of Epiphany on January 6. Traditionally in the Western church the observance has been related primarily to commemorating the arrival of the Magi. In a larger sense Epiphany serves to identify Jesus as the Messiah for all the world, Gentiles as well as Jews. If you look carefully in the Bible, you will note that only Matthew relates this part of the Christmas story, and there is not a lot of detail. Did you ever wonder about those details and how or when they became part of the Christmas story as depicted in pageants and in visual art?

The term *Magi* as used in the Bible derives from the Persian word that refers to a priestly caste of ancient Media and Persia who were experts in astrology. There are representations of the Magi in the Roman catacombs and in other forms of early Christian art such as carved sarcophagi, but they were not depicted as kings until the 10th Century, after which time they were often shown with a large retinue of servants and wearing crowns and luxurious clothing. The use of the term ‘Wise Men’ is even later, first appearing in the King James translation of the Bible.

The traditions surrounding the story of the Magi have evolved over the centuries. Matthew reports that three gifts were brought to Jesus, and over time, three has become the traditional number of Magi, but at one time it was believed that there were twelve, one for each tribe of Israel. In the Western Church the Magi have had names since the 8th Century. The names—Caspar (sometimes Gaspar), Melchior and Balthasar—do not carry any obviously specific meaning. In the Eastern tradition there are various different names given to the three.

The “Adoration of the Magi” has been a popular subject for visual art. To emphasize the universality of Jesus as Messiah, the Magi are traditionally depicted as of various ages—young, middle-aged, and elderly—and of three different ethnic backgrounds—Caucasian, Black and Oriental. More important than all the details, however, is the Epiphany message that that God has revealed Himself to the world through Jesus Christ.

*Submitted by,
Deborah A. O’Driscoll*

2015 HERALD SCHEDULE

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

<u>Article Deadline Date</u>	<u>Herald Mailing Date</u>
Tues., Jan. 20	Thurs., Jan 22
Mon., Feb. 2	Wed., Feb. 4

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

office@wesleyworc.org

ALTAR FLOWERS...

Beautiful floral arrangements on the altar during Sunday worship is a special gift we offer to God as part of our praise and worship. The arrangements are usually dedicated in celebration of or in memory of a loved one. By your choice, you may take the flowers home to enjoy or you may request the flowers be delivered to a shut-in or member/friend in the hospital. If you are unable to join us in church, arrangements can be made for the flowers to be delivered to you at home after the service. A calendar of available dates and order forms are available in the Welcome Office. The cost for altar flowers is \$50. If you are not able to come to church but would like to dedicate flowers, please call Debi in the office (508-799-4191). Thank you.



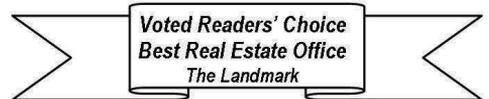
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WESLEY HERALD
JANUARY 7, 2015

***DON'T MISS OUT...
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Ghanaian Choir Master	Kwaku Dankwa
Music Assistant	Deborah O'Driscoll
Director of Children's Christian Education	Jean Grant
Director of Christian Formation & Discipleship	Lisa Fagerstrom
Toddler Care Leader	Lori Conlon
Building Superintendent	Phil Johnson
Business Administrator	Lorna Mattus-Merrill
Church Secretary	Debi Ritacco
Custodians	Carol Flionis, Gerard Piscitelli, Steve Boyns
Head Usher	David Dagle
Administrative Council	Ron Ramsay
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Carty Cupboard Food Pantry	Nancy Spencer
Communion Steward	Earl Flagg
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Ghanaian Association	Emmanuel Okrah
Events & Fellowship	
Layleader	Deborah O'Driscoll
Medical Ministry	Ron Ramsay
Memorial Gifts	Carolyn Bellil
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