

## Failing Forward

So...where do we go from here? We are fresh on the heels of Lent and Easter, and one of the first questions we may have as we exit the Dark Wood is “now what?”. In the first chapter and now the final one of Gifts of the Dark Wood (by Eric Elnes), which we have explored during our Lenten worship series, he refers to Jesus wanting to build his church on a sinking rock. Not on an unshakeable foundation. But to build it upon Peter (whose name means “rock”), the disciple who sank out of fear once he realized he was walking on water. He wanted the church built on a sinking rock! As Elnes says, “it is a Rock that cannot stand alone upon the water, but can only be held up by a power much greater than itself; a Rock upon which all failure no matter how bitter may ultimately be redeemed and all fear is swallowed by the sea.”

Jesus is walking beside us as we sink, as we fail, as we struggle, ready to scoop us right up and not only allow us to walk across that stormy sea (after sinking a bit), but to cross it. We are to fail forward. And fail greatly! Remember, too, that we are not alone while we fail. We are not alone as we step out onto that sea. This story of Peter resonated with me. Sometimes I feel that I take two steps forward, one step back. Yet here I am, continuing to move forward not *despite of*, but *in and through* my struggles and failures (as Peter had)!

So here we all are, in Eastertide, having gone through Lent and Holy Week. How are we to use the gifts of the Dark Wood that we have been given?

What have *you* learned through exploration of your struggles while on the Dark Wood journey? I encourage you to reflect upon Peter’s story as you ponder upon it. We have the gifts of uncertainty, emptiness, temptation, misfits, and being thunderstruck, and so had Peter. Where do we go from here?

I found Elnes’ final blessing prayer to be a great ending to his book, and I invite you to prayerfully read it as you emerge from the Dark Wood, embrace your struggles, and fail forward!

*Continued on page 3...*

## LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS...

**The Tower** lighting for April is given in loving memory of Margaret A. (Swan) Fuller by David, Kathy, Nancy, and grandchildren.

**The Rose** window lighting for April is given in loving memory of Doris L. Tremblay by Tammy, Tracy, Allison, David, Nancy, and families.

## WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK...

- † My family and everyone all around the world and all those in need for God to help them.
- † Edith and Fred Jackson with health problems.
- † Tina Kiefer in the hospital.
- † Our drummer who is now out of the wheelchair and using a walker for continued healing.
- † Lulu, asking that today's surgery will be that one that works! Lulu is not quite 2 years old and has already had too much struggle.
- † For all people and creatures of the earth and others who are no longer with us.
- † Those who are sad and hurting during this joyful time.
- † A dear friend Guido that has passed on. May he rest in peace.
- † We thank God for providing Michael with a job that is his heart's desire.
- † Daniel Morkeh, a general prayer for life challenge's and God's blessings.
- † World peace and everyone who is in need, and my family's friend and also for all the church members.
- † Monica Lund and her friend Elizabeth Yeager and her sister Marian as they travel to Israel for 9 weeks for Elizabeth to receive medical treatment for MS.

## EASTER DONATION RESULTS

Budget	\$	5,784
Actual	\$	<u>4,600</u>
Difference	\$	- 1,184

***Failing Forward continued...***

May the Spirit of the Living God,  
Made known to us most fully within life's Dark Wood:  
Go before you to show you the way;  
Go above you to watch over you;  
Go behind you to push you into places you may not necessarily go yourself;  
Go beneath you to uphold and uplift you;  
Go beside you to be your strong and constant companion;  
And dwell within you to remind you that you are surely not alone,  
And that you are loved – loved beyond your wildest imagination.  
And may the fire of God's blessing burn brightly  
Upon you, and within you,  
Now and always.  
Amen.

*- Jean Grant, Dir. of Children's Christian Ed.*

**HELP UMW HELP OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE FLORENCE HOUSE...** While we are bringing items in for the Worcester shelters to the purple bag in the church pantry, we can also bring new articles for the young mothers at Florence House who will be moving into their first apartments, as the United Methodist Women have done for several years. Please put the household supplies in the red basket in the church pantry on Sunday morning.  
*Thank you, Carolyn Bellil*

**THE BUILDERS FOR COMMUNITY** will meet on Tuesday, April 19, at 5:30 p.m. at the Worcester Islamic Mosque on East Mountain St. We will plan for a joint observance of Ramadan again this year.

**WORCESTER INTERFAITH** met on Thursday, March 17 to discuss the refugee situation in Worcester. Twenty-six representatives from various houses of worship in Worcester attended, several from the mosque which is assisting about 85 refugees. About ten churches are supporting refugees through Ascentria Care Alliance. A followup meeting of Worcester Interfaith will be held on May 5. For further information or suggestions, please contact Margaret Watson.

**RESPONSE MAGAZINE**, the national publication for Methodist women, has asked the United Methodist Women to prepare a report on the program given by the Muslim panel in December of 2015. Margaret Watson agreed to write an article for Response. This should appear in the July/August issue.

**THE AMERICAN BAPTIST WOMEN'S MINISTRIES OF MASSACHUSETTS** will be meeting on Saturday, May 14 in Leominster to engage Baptist and Muslim women in dialogue concerning love for God and His Word, share common beliefs, and discuss ways to enlighten our world. The organization has invited Asima Silva to speak that morning. Asima is a member of Builders for Community and was our moderator of the Muslim panel that presented a program for the United Methodist Women here at Wesley in December. The Baptist Women Conference is called "Let Our Light Shine" for the greater the darkness, the brighter our lights must shine!

**SMALL GIFTS MUCH APPRECIATED...** Sarah Circle thanks everyone who donated socks, personal care items, and healthy snacks to Worcester shelters. There were enough donations to make collections for Abby's House (a shelter for battered and homeless women and their children), the Homeless Veterans' Shelter, the S.M.O.C. shelter for the homeless, and Worcester Fellowship (the outdoor ministry on Worcester Common). *Special thanks to the Youth Group* who did a great job of removing packaging and sorting the gifts according to which shelter has children and women only, which shelter is for men only, etc.

## **SUNDAY SCHOOL**

**Easter Egg Hunt...** Sarah Circle and Education hosted a successful and fun Easter Egg Hunt last weekend! Thank you to all the adult and youth volunteers! We had over 50 children attend, including 10 from the Korean church here at Wesley.

## **MISSION MATTERS**

**Community Breakfast on Easter Sunday...** Thanks to the Linda and Lou D'Acri family for the great (and plentiful!) food they served during the Easter Sunday Breakfast, and for the fellowship which their service encouraged. Over 50 of our usual Community Suppers guests joined us, and said they enjoyed seeing more of our congregation, especially the Ghanaian women's Easter clothing.

**April 30th Community Supper...** Maria Gorsuch-Kennedy will be leading members of the Youth Group and other volunteers in offering a meal of lasagna, salad, corn, bread, beverages and dessert on Saturday, April 30th. They are looking for additional volunteers for prep, set-up and clean up, and would like to know in advance how many can donate desserts (finger food). If you are able to fill any of those roles, please contact Maria, Adrienne or Anthony Phillips, or Lisa Fagerstrom.

**Leaders Needed for Future Community Suppers...** *June 25, July 30, and last Saturdays in the months following, are available for you or your group to volunteer to lead a supper.* Please talk with Betsy Pennino about which month to reserve and any questions you have.

**Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity on April 23rd...** *A major need now is several people to provide lunch.* Cookies for snacks/dessert have been offered, and cold water plus coffee will be available all day. We have the minimum number of volunteers which Habitat requires to work on their Homestead Ave., Auburn build site, and would like to hear from a few more. Our build date is Saturday, April 23, 8 am to 4 pm. Working for a half-day is possible. More info is posted on the new Mission Spotlight bulletin board. Please tell Betsy Pennino or Lisa Fagerstrom if you're 16 or older and would like to volunteer. Thank you.

## **WESLEY UMW INVITES PROPOSALS**

Wesley United Methodist Women invites proposals for the funding of mission projects that improve the lives of women, children, and youth (locally, nationally or internationally). This is in keeping with the vision of UMW: turning faith, hope and love into action on behalf of women, children and youth in the world.

The proposals should include:

- ◆ A description of the project and how it will build the lives of women, children, and youth. Link to relevant website(s), as appropriate.
- ◆ Amount of money requested and how it will be used (brief budget)
- ◆ Evaluation criteria. Include how the positive impact will be sustained going forward without the expectation of additional monies from UMW.
- ◆ How Wesley members will be involved in the project.  
(e.g. Hands-on, if possible, and/or regular progress reports, etc.)
- ◆ Name and contact info for person(s) submitting the proposal.

**Deadline for submission of proposals: April 20.**

For further information, please contact Barbara Ingrassia (508-829-6359 or [Barbaraingrassia@hotmail.com](mailto:Barbaraingrassia@hotmail.com))

## WESLEY'S CHURCH DIRECTORY

An updated Wesley Church Directory will be available as of April 1<sup>st</sup> to access online or for a copy to be picked up after church on Sunday, April 3<sup>rd</sup>. If you are unable to come to church and would like a copy of the directory, please call me or email me to make arrangements.

*Thank you, Debi Ritacco*

***How can you access the directory online?*** First you have to be in the church directory, and second, you need to have an active email address listed within the directory as well. If both these are the case for you, follow the instructions below.

If you would like to access this but your email is not currently in the directory, please email me with your name, address and phone number and I will be sure to add you to the directory. After I add you, you will receive an email from me that you are all set to access the directory.

### ONLINE ACCESS TO WESLEY CHURCH DIRECTORY

If you have a computer/laptop and a valid email address that is published within the directory, you can now have instant online access to the church directory on your item.

Follow these easy steps:

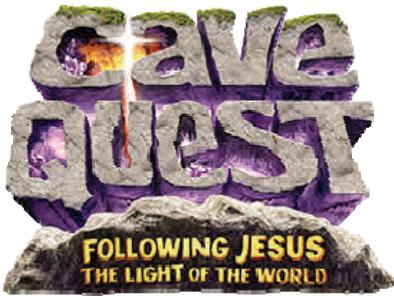
- ◆ Go to: <https://members.instantchurchdirectory.com/>
- ◆ Select: [Create a login now](#)
- ◆ Type in the email address you have given Debi to list within the directory
- ◆ Enter a password, then reenter the password to confirm it.
- ◆ Within a couple of minutes you should receive an email. Within the email, select the link provided.
- ◆ You can then log into the directory at any time.
- ◆ Be sure to bookmark the directory page for future use.

When the directory is updated in the office, the directory online is automatically updated as well. Therefore, you will always have current information.

Questions? Please email me.

*Thank you, Debi Ritacco  
(office@wesleyworc.org)*

# VBS 2016!



It's time to pre-register for Vacation Bible School. This free camp will be offered **July 11-15**, from 5 – 8 p.m. (dinner for kids at 5 p.m.). Our theme this year is **“Cave Quest: Following Jesus, the Light of the World”**. The kids will “spelunk” through VBS while deepening their faith to learn who Jesus is. It will ground kids in the rock-solid foundation of Jesus’ love, a love that takes us through dark times. Registration is open to children

in grades Kindergarten through 8th. We will also have a special group for middle-schoolers (grades 6-8) to meet in discussion on the same theme. See Jean Grant to pre- register or volunteer or submit the form below to the box at the office. Pre-Registration information is at the Front Office Desk. Final Registration forms will be mailed to you.

Thinking about volunteering? How would you like to support the church in this ministry? More info to come... Dinner Prep \* Donate Supplies \* Volunteer as helper/teacher \* Decorating \* Clean-up \* Transportation

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## VBS Pre-Registration Form

Parent/Guardian/Volunteer name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

Children’s names: \_\_\_\_\_ Ages: \_\_\_\_\_

E-mail & Phone #: \_\_\_\_\_

My child requires transportation to  and/or from  VBS.

Check this box if you are interested in volunteering for VBS

(CORI check is required)

### Areas I would like to help (circle all that apply):

Pre-VBS: **Decorating Team, Staff Support team (curriculum prep), Publicity Team, Gathering/Donating Supplies**

During VBS: **Teacher, Helper, Music, Snacks, Dinner, Photographer**

Post-VBS: **Clean up, VBS publicity follow-up**

## **John in Ultra-High Context: John 20:11-23**

{notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, March 20-27, 2016}

### **First Appearance**

(vv. 11-12) Following her discovery of the empty tomb, and its subsequent inspection by Peter and the other disciple, Mary remains standing in the garden outside, weeping. She stoops to look into the tomb {or to look into it *again* – the language in vv. 1-2 is unclear} and *theōreî* (“beholds”) (a vision?) “two angels in white, sitting where the body of Jesus lay, one at the head and one at the feet”. The tomb has thus become sort of an arcosolium (L. *arcus* “arch” + *solium* “throne”, lit. “place of state”) – an arched recess cut from “living rock”. {Such arcosolia were excavated from the soft volcanic rock in the rooms of the Roman catacombs from the second century onwards, and used for memorial services and celebrations of the anniversaries of Christian martyrs.}

(vv. 13-14) Mary’s answer to the question by the two angels, “Woman, why are you weeping?”, is that “...they took my Lord, and I do not know where they put him”, which could be interpreted as her grief over the interruption of the body decay/purification process. {On some unstated cue}, she turns back and beholds (a vision?) but does not recognize Jesus.

(vv. 15-16) Jesus asks Mary exactly the same question, then adds, “Whom do you seek?” Thinking that the object of her vision is a gardener, she asks about the body of Jesus (then turns back to the tomb). When Jesus says her name, she turns again and answers with the Aramaic *Rabbouni* (lit. “My Great One”), which John translates as *didáskale* (“Teacher”).

(vv. 17-18) {Possibly anticipating an emotional reaction}, Jesus reveals his status: “Do not *áptou* (“touch”) me, for I have not yet ascended to the Father... [The Greek verb also means to “cling to”, “fasten on” or “grasp” an object, and is in the present tense, signifying continuance of an act or habit. To touch Jesus at this point would assume a condition not yet accomplished, i.e., the necessity to ascend to the Father to achieve a permanent closeness of union in His presence. The arrival of the Paraclete to abide permanently with Jesus’ followers (14:16-17) depended on Jesus first going to the Father (16:7). For Mary to cling now to a visible presence would prevent this permanent presence – a hard truth.]

Jesus continues, “... but go to my brethren and say to them, I ascend to my Father and your Father, to my God and your God.” This would remind the readers of Jesus’

prayer, that the disciples (now elevated to the rank of brothers), he, and the Father may all be one (17:21). Mary then goes to the disciples, recounts her vision and delivers Jesus' message.

### **First Descent/Second Appearance**

(vv. 19-20) Jesus' Galilean core group (minus Judas Iscariot), still in fear of the Judeans on the evening of the first day, are gathered in an unnamed location, *tōn thurōn kekleisménōn* ("the doors having been shut"; not "locked", as in the NRSV). Jesus "came and stood in the midst" of the group, and gives the traditional greeting, *eirēnē umîn* ("Peace to you"). Saying this, he showed them both of his hands and his side. *Echárēsan oûn* ("Rejoiced therefore") the disciples seeing the Lord.

This appearance to the disciples assumes that the risen Jesus has ascended to the Father after the prior appearance to Mary (vv. 14-18) and then descended, because he now offers himself for examination.

{The context of the appearance is vague – no information is given on the activities of the disciples at the time. However, the disciples "rejoiced *therefore*" *after* the risen Jesus' appearance, greeting, and showing of scars, suggesting that one or more of the audible or visible cues, including the scars of the crucifixion, were key in their recognition. In this context, Mary's prior report (v. 18) seems not to have been taken seriously, or else the disciples would not have been in fear.}

(vv. 21-23) With another wish for peace, the risen Jesus commissions the core disciples (now apostles): *kathōs apéstalkén me o patēr, kagō pémpō umâs* ("as has sent me the Father, I also send you"). Saying this, *enephúsēsen* ("he breathed in") and says to them, *lábete pneûma ágion* ("Receive ye Spirit Holy"). Lastly, he corroborates the discretion of his apostles to forgive or not forgive offenses against their in-group (which would apply to John's antisociety).

Marshall, A. *The R.S.V. interlinear Greek – English New Testament. The Nestle Greek Text with a literal English Translation.* London: Samuel Bagster and Sons Ltd., 1958.

Malina BJ, Rohrbaugh RL. *Social-Science Commentary on the Gospel of John.* Minneapolis: Fortress Press, 1998. pp. 280-281.

*Arcosolium.* Wikipedia. 17 May 2015.

*Catacombs of Rome.* Wikipedia. 24 February 2016.

Watkins HW. *The climax of faith. Resurrection and appearances of Jesus.* In: Commentary on the Whole Bible (ed Ellicott CJ), Vol 6, The Four Gospels. Eugene, OR: Wipf & Stock, 2015, ch 20.

## DID YOU KNOW?

On Easter Sunday our worship service began with the lighting of the Paschal candle during the call to worship as a symbol of Christ's resurrection. The most notable feature of the Paschal candle is its size — it is significantly larger than any other candle ever used by the church. Some of the larger ones in history were used during medieval times, with the one at Salisbury Cathedral being thirty-six feet tall and the one at Westminster Abbey weighing three hundred pounds — ours is quite modest in comparison! Since the Old Testament story of the Exodus from Egypt foreshadows the New Testament resurrection of Jesus, much of the symbolism of Holy Week and Easter is rooted in the Jewish Passover. The Paschal candle is reminiscent of the Pillar of Fire that led the Israelites in the desert just as Christ is our guide who leads us out of bondage to sin and death. In many denominations a new Paschal candle is lighted each year as part of the Service of Light in the context of an Easter Vigil. Since we do not presently have an Easter Vigil as part of our Holy Week services, our Paschal candle was lighted at the beginning of our Easter Sunday morning worship to celebrate Christ our Light.

In the historic liturgical church the Paschal candle is usually lighted at every service during the Great Fifty Days (i.e. from Easter through Pentecost). Often during this time it is placed in a more prominent position in the worship space, usually near the altar. For the remainder of the liturgical year it is commonly located near the baptismal font and is lighted only for funerals or services of baptism. Although we may associate the Paschal candle with Easter, throughout the year it serves as a reminder of an important symbol of baptism: light. In a custom that actually dates back to the eleventh century, a candle lighted from the Paschal candle is often given to the newly baptized (or a sponsor or parent in the case of an infant). According to Laurence Stookey in *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*, "These uses outside the Easter season remind us that baptism is our enlightenment and promise of resurrection, and that Christ, our Light, precedes us in death to show the way to eternal life."

*Submitted by,*

*Deborah A. O'Driscoll*

## 2016 HERALD SCHEDULE

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

Article Deadline Date	Herald Mailing Date
Mon., April 11	Wed., April 13
Mon., April 25	Wed., April 27

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

**office@wesleyworc.org**

**2016 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.



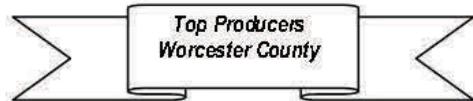
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**WESLEY HERALD**  
**MARCH 30, 2016**

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

**WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- |   |   |
|---|---|
| Pastor  | Shandirai Mawokomatanda                             |
| Director of Music Ministries                      | Brett Maguire                                       |
| Music Assistant                                   | Deborah O'Driscoll                                  |
| Director of Children's<br>Christian Education     | Jean Grant  |
| Director of Christian<br>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,<br>Gerard Piscitelli,<br>Steve Boyns |
| Head Usher  | David Dagle   |
| Administrative Council                            | Ron Ramsay  |
| Board of Trustees                                 | Annelle Benson                                      |
| Carty Cupboard Food Pantry                        | Nancy Spencer                                       |
| Communion Steward                                 | Earl Flagg  |
| Education Work Area                               | Chris Flagg   |
| Finance & Stewardship<br>Co-Chairs                | Michael Edmunds<br>William Wong                     |
| Ghanaian Association                              | Paul Hayfron  |
| Hospitality Team                                  | Paul Arsenault<br>Vivian Assie                      |
| Layleader   | Deborah O'Driscoll                                  |
| Medical Ministry                                  | Ron Ramsay  |
| Memorial Gifts                                    | Carolyn Bellil                                      |
| Mission Coordinator                               | Betsy Pennino                                       |
| Staff-Parish Relations<br>Co-Chairs               | Mark Muncey<br>Gifty Bentum-Asante                  |
| Youth Directors                                   | Pastor Shandi &<br>Lisa Fagerstrom                  |
| United Methodist Women<br>Co-Chairs               | Barbara Ingrassia<br>Allison Hansen                 |

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