

Sharing in the Gospel

"I thank my God every time I remember you, constantly praying with joy in every one of my prayers for all of you, because of your sharing in the gospel from the first day until now." ~ Philippians 1:3

Grace and peace to all of you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ! I would like to express my sincere gratitude to you all for the tremendous support you showed me over the last few months while I have been on leave. I know that many of you were lifting me up in prayer, and I want to say Thank You!

I especially want to thank all of you who stepped forward to serve Christ and his church in a new way during my absence. I give thanks to all the lay leadership for their faithful service: the council and all its representative ministry teams, and all the laity who often serve behind the scenes away from the lime light. I especially thank the SPRC for granting me this grace to take the leave of absence. I am deeply grateful.

I also wish to thank the Staff for confidently stepping forward and doing whatever was needed for the glory of God. I am very aware that all of them went above and beyond their duties, taking on new roles, sometimes out of their comfort zones, all for the glory of God. Your dedication and service has not gone unnoticed, and I am grateful.

I am especially grateful for the worship planning team and their service. If you were in worship during the last several months, you are aware of the dynamic leadership they gave. I have heard wonderful testimonies of how deeply moving and inspiring the worship services were during my absence. I am grateful for Rev. Rick Whitefleet-Smith, Debbie O'Driscoll, Lisa Fagerstrom, Brett Maguire, Jean Grant, Joseph Wilson and Kwaku Dankwa for all they put into planning worship. We are blessed to have such a great and dynamic worship team and I look forward to more wonderful experiences with them moving forward.

Finally, I wish to express a special note of gratitude to our Lay Leader, Debbie O'Driscoll. The role of the Lay Leader has historically been an important one for United Methodism. During the days when Methodist pastors were itinerate

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...

- † Someone who prays for a year of new beginnings.
- † Someone who prays for their family to successfully purchase a new home, and for the health and well-being of their family.
- † Someone who prays for their eyes to regain their sight, for their paperwork, their children and family: Prince, Randy, and Nicholas.
- † Someone who prays to find peace and love through Christ always.
- † Someone who has an interview this month.
- † Tim that he may get better.
- † Joanie, Linda's friend, who is undergoing some medical testing. Praying for good news.
- † All students who are graduating from high school and college.
- † All who are suffering in silence.

HELP UMW HELP OUR NEIGHBORS AT THE FLORENCE HOUSE... During this time we are collecting 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

CARTY CUPBOARD

We have just received a very generous donation of food from the people at Epworth Church, almost 900 items!! So I am updating our needs list.

The food items we really need at this time are...

Jelly, Ketchup, Mustard, Relish, and Mayo.

The needed non-food items are...

Toothpaste, Shampoo, Deodorant, and Diapers ...Sizes 4, 5, 6.

Thank You! Nancy Spencer

Sharing in the Gospel continued...

Circuit Riders, it was not uncommon that a local church would not see their pastor for weeks and sometimes months as they traveled from circuit to circuit. So the Lay Leader emerged as an integral position in the life of the church because the Lay Leader was responsible for overseeing the spiritual life and care of the congregation. Over the years, Debbie O'Driscoll has been demonstrating her God-given gifts for being a spiritual leader for us in the congregation. And these last few months she completely lived into the true role of a Lay Leader. I am so grateful for your support, counsel and leadership.

I am so grateful for all of you and for your sharing in this holy work. May the Lord bless you and keep always!

Pastor Shandi

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

<u>March YTD Budget Results</u>	<u>YTD Budget</u>	<u>YTD Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Budgeted Income	\$158,189	\$146,997	-\$11,192
Non-Budgeted Income	\$ 0	\$ 5,857	\$ 5,857
<u>Total Income</u>	\$158,189	\$152,854	-\$ 5,335
Budgeted Expense	\$176,114	\$166,292	-\$ 9,822
Non-Budgeted Expense	\$ 0	\$ 7,852	\$ 7,852
<u>Total Expense</u>	\$176,114	\$174,144	-\$ 1,970
<u>Net Income/(loss)</u>	-\$ 17,925	-\$ 21,290	-\$ 3,365

<u>Easter Results</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
	\$5,784	\$4,950	-\$ 834
<u>General Fund/Pledges</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Through 3/31/16	\$ 84,998	\$ 73,421	-\$11,577

Statements for donations through 3/31/16 will be mailed next week. Please feel free to contact me with any questions.

Project Updates:

Stage Curtain

Although the Trustees had budgeted for a new stage curtain this year, we received a very generous gift to purchase the curtain and valences from a member who wishes to remain anonymous. We are so grateful for their donation and very pleased with the curtain that was installed this past Friday. The three remaining valences are under construction and will be installed later. Thank You!

Choir Bathrooms

Plumbing issues were addressed in the choir room bathrooms, replacing old fixtures that were leaking. This project totaled approximately \$2,600, and our thanks to Jerry Warren, one of our Trustees, for his leadership in overseeing this project to completion.

Third Floor Men's Room

The project to renovate the third floor men's room is almost complete. We are waiting for the plumber to re-install the toilet, and also for our electrician to install a new light fixture. Everything else is done, and, once again, we are grateful to Gary Robinson for leading this project, and to Gerard Piscitelli for all of the plastering work he did.

Chancel Lighting

This project has two components. One is the purchase of the fixtures which is coming from one company with a cost of over \$4,000, and the second is the labor to install them which will be done by another vendor. We are currently waiting for this second piece of information, and hope to have it in time for review at the next Trustee meeting.

Many other projects are in the pipeline and will be reported once final decisions are made.

Update on Phil Johnson, our Building Superintendent

As many of you know, Phil has been out of work since January 1, 2016 from an injury he sustained at work and complications from a car accident he was involved in three years ago. We are constantly praying for Phil and his recovery. Please keep him in your thoughts and prayers. While Phil is out, we have been fortunate to have April Dylewicz and Doug Cassidy helping us with breaking down tables and chairs in Brewer Hall, mopping and washing the floors, and other odd jobs as needed. We appreciate your patience as we get through this time with limited resources.

Peace, Lorna

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Vacation Bible School!

Please see the VBS page for information about this free, fun camp. Pre-registration form can be turned into the office or to Jean Grant, grantgirl05@yahoo.com.

Volunteers needed!!

Vacation Bible School relies on the combined effort of its many volunteers. We had a great turn out of over 45 kids last year with over 20 volunteers! Interested in helping with our children's ministry? This is a great way! We can use help in ALL areas - behind the scenes (donations, decorating, preparation, shopping, cooking, cleaning, set-up) or hands-on with the kids (station leaders, youth crew leaders, registration, music/sound). All help is welcomed! Please see Jean Grant to inquire. I'd love your help! grantgirl05@yahoo.com or 508-886-6571.

Teachers, Greeters, and Helpers Our Sunday School program also relies on its dedicated volunteers. We are seeking anyone interested in helping - from helpers (youth, adults), to greeters (youth, adults), or teachers (adults). See Jean. Scheduling is flexible and based on your own personal availability.

Closet Clean up I would love some hands-on helpers to spend a few hours with me to sort through two of the Sunday School closets. If you are available to help out, let me know. We can schedule the clean up for a weekend or a weekday. Thanks so much!!

MISSION MATTERS

Leaders Needed for Community Suppers — Starting with June... *June 25, July 30, and last Saturdays in the months following, are available for you or your group to volunteer to lead a community supper.* Please talk with Betsy Pennino or Lisa Fagerstrom about which month to reserve and any questions you have. Note: The May supper will be early (on May 21) because of the Memorial Day Weekend.

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.

Volunteering with Habitat for Humanity on April 23rd... Thanks to those who have now volunteered sandwiches, beverages and homemade cookies for our lunch! 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, and transportation will be leaving from Wesley. Please tell Betsy Pennino or Lisa Fagerstrom if you're 16 or older and would like to volunteer. Those who volunteer receive a lot more information.

IHN Fundraiser... Thank you to everyone who bought food at Panera Bread on March 10th. The fundraiser earned \$450 for the Worcester Interfaith Hospitality Network (IHN).

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)

WESLEY'S CHURCH DIRECTORY

An updated Wesley Church Directory is now available to access online or for a copy to be picked at church. 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

John in Ultra-High Context: John 20:24-21:14 **{notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, April 3—10, 2016}**

Second Descent/Third Appearance

(vv. 24-25) Thomas was not with the other ten disciples who experienced the appearance of the risen Jesus (vv. 19-23), and at some point thereafter when they informed him, he rejected their testimony, demanding forensic evidence. {A milder form of skepticism would have applied to the ten who apparently rejected the report of Mary Magdalene (v. 18) – their fear (v. 19) turning to joy on experiencing the risen Jesus (v. 20).}

(vv. 26-29) Eight days after Jesus' appearance to the ten (i.e., the following Sunday), Thomas is with them in the same place. {The doors are again shut, but no explanation is given. After all, the ten now know that Jesus has been resurrected.} Jesus comes and stands in the midst, and greets them as before: *eirēnē umîn* ("Peace to you"). Then, apparently aware of Thomas' prior skepticism, the risen Jesus accommodates his demand (v. 25b), inviting a physical examination of his scars with the command ... *mē gínou ápistos allà pistós* {"be not faithless but faithful"). {At this point, likely both ashamed of his prior demand and overwhelmed by Jesus' presence}, Thomas acknowledges the risen Jesus with a statement of submission to his authority ("My Lord and my God"). The risen Jesus concludes this second appearance to the disciples by affirming the honor (blessedness) of those not seeing and yet believing. This would apply particularly to those of the late first century Johannine group, as well as all who hear the Gospel read and come to believe. {Believing *only without* seeing – or without any confirmatory sensory experience, is arguably pure faith.}

Epilogue-1

(vv. 30-31) This marks the formal, original conclusion of John's Gospel. The first point is that this is a record of only a selection of Jesus' significant and witnessed deeds. The second point is that this Gospel is presented for two related reasons: that members of John's group may *continue* to believe that Jesus is the Messiah (Israel's redeemer, the Son of God); and that by such belief, they will maintain "life in his name."

Third Descent/Fourth Appearance

This segment of the chapter forms a literary unit, bracketed by the repetition in vv. 1 and 14.

(vv. 1-3) Of “the twelve” (6:67, 70, 71; 20:24), only seven disciples are mentioned here, three by name {one noted for his impulsivity and the other two for their skepticism}: Simon Peter; Thomas called the Twin, and Nathanael of Cana {“Can anything good come out of Nazareth?; 1:45-49)}. Moreover, this is the only mention of the sons of Zebedee in the entire Gospel, and neither is explicitly connected with the “other disciple”, i.e., “the disciple whom Jesus loved”. The Synoptic trio of Peter, James, and John does not figure in John’s Gospel, nor do the Synoptics give any prominence to Nathanael (possibly the Synoptic Bartholomew, but this is disputed), Andrew, Philip, Thomas, or Lazarus, whom Jesus loved (11:3, 5, 36).

At Simon Peter’s suggestion, the seven return to fishing near the shore of the Sea of Tiberias (i.e., Sea of Galilee), but catch nothing that night.

(vv. 4-8) {In a pattern reminiscent of Mary Magdalene’s encounter with the risen Jesus}, just after daybreak Jesus is standing on the shore, but unrecognized by the brethren {after the two previous appearances where he *was* recognized}. He calls to them, *paidía* (“children”) [children of God? (1:12)], “do you not have any fish?” They answer, “No”, and he directs them to cast the net on the starboard side, whereupon they make a very large catch {reminiscent of the story in Luke 5:4-7}. The disciple whom Jesus loved is the first to recognize Jesus, this time as “Lord”. Simon Peter accepts this witness, dons appropriate clothing, and springs into the sea, leaving the others to sail to shore (two hundred cubits, ≈ 100 yards), dragging the net full of fish.

(vv. 9-14) Now on shore, the disciples see a charcoal fire with fish on it, and bread, presumably prepared by Jesus [reminiscent of the loaves and fishes story, where the Galilean crowd recognizes Jesus as a prophet, and desires to make him king (6:5-15)]. When Jesus asks them to bring some of the fish freshly caught {for a larger breakfast group?}, we’re informed that the count was 153, although not tearing the net (unlike the story in Luke 5). Jesus asks them to share breakfast, and none of them questions his identity, *knowing* that it is the Lord.

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. 281, 285-288.

DID YOU KNOW?

The cross is probably the most universally recognized symbol of the Christian faith even outside of the church, and is also the one symbol that is used in perhaps every tradition of Christian worship. It thus is a symbol that is central to the identity of the church, but did you know that the cross did not play a prominent role in Christian worship until the 5th or 6th Century? Prior to that time it was not used because of what was felt to be a shameful association with crucifixion, which of course was the death penalty for the worst criminals. There is complete absence of representation of the crucifixion in the paintings of the catacombs in Rome, although some earlier Christian symbols, such as the Chi-Rho and anchor of hope, incorporated crosses in a subtle and unobtrusive way.

Initially when used in worship the cross was not a stationary object but was carried in processions and then placed behind or to the side of the altar or communion table during the worship service. Such processional crosses are still used in many denominations today. At Wesley we have a small processional cross which has been used to lead the procession for various festive worship services as a symbol that all Christians are followers of the cross. When not in use in a procession, our processional cross is placed in a stand on the communion rail near the baptismal font.

The altar cross, which serves as the central furnishing of the altar (as in our sanctuary), is a later development (13th Century). Other uses of the cross in worship spaces include the pendant cross, which is suspended in the sanctuary of a church and the rood cross which is mounted on a beam high above the entrance to the chancel in some churches. The latter use is a symbol of the belief that the entrance to heaven must be by the way of the cross.

There are several different basic forms of the cross. The empty (or resurrection) cross such as is on our altar is an early form. Crucifixes, which have a representation of a suffering figure of Christ, did not appear until the 12th or 13th Century. Another form has a triumphant reigning and exalted Christ upon it. There actually are more than 400 different shapes of crosses! The most common and also one of the earliest of these shapes is the Latin cross we see in our sanctuary. It is an upright cross with the lower portion of the vertical twice as long as the upper part above the cross arm. The addition of a circle around the center of the cross is a symbol of eternity as well as of the worldwide kingdom of Jesus' final sovereignty.

As prominent and powerful a symbol as the cross is in Christian worship spaces, it is good for us to remind ourselves that in the setting of the worship space, it is considered a "secondary" liturgical furnishing which enhances the primary symbolism of the altar/communion table in terms of celebration of the Eucharist, one of the central acts of Christian worship.

Submitted by Deborah A. O'Driscoll

2016 HERALD SCHEDULE

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

<u>Article Deadline Date</u>	<u>Herald Mailing Date</u>
Mon., April 25	Wed., April 27
Mon., May 9	Wed., May 11

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.



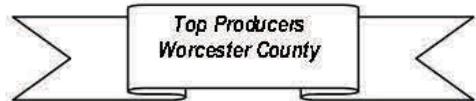
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WESLEY HERALD
APRIL 13, 2016

***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 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
- Board of Trustees Annelle Benson
- Carty Cupboard Food Pantry Nancy Spencer
- Communion Steward Earl Flagg
- Education Work Area Chris Flagg
- Finance & Stewardship Co-Chairs Michael Edmunds William Wong
- Ghanaian Association Paul Hayfron
- Hospitality Team Paul Arsenault Vivian Assie
- Layleader Deborah O'Driscoll
- Medical Ministry Ron Ramsay
- Memorial Gifts Carolyn Bellil
- 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

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