

Awake, Thou Wintry Earth!

On Easter Sunday, the Wesley Choir sang an anthem by J. S. Bach called, “Awake, Thou Wintry Earth.” Programming it was a gamble; I knew that the winter we have all just lived through was a heavy one, and when the choir started rehearsing there was no guarantee that the snow would be done by Easter. How ironic those words would have been if Easter Sunday had seen yet again a fresh pelting of snow!

After all the shoveling, the sketchy roads, the schedules gone awry, I was all too happy with the stroke of luck that led to a truly springtime Easter. Crocuses are popping up seemingly everywhere, there is an intricate tapestry of bird song in the trees, warm air is blowing through the windows, and the community garden is showing signs of people again. Awake, thou wintry earth, indeed! Rebirth is happening on so many levels.

We’ve finished our Lenten series exploring wilderness emotions, and it’s time to move on to other focuses. Having started this series by writing a cover letter about wilderness experiences and their plethora of challenges, I’d like to take an opportunity to book end it with another thought about wilderness emotions.

Sitting in the garden is a wilderness experience. Closing your eyes and listening to the birds singing is a wilderness experience. Even holding hands with a loved one and going for a walk in the sunshine – that, too, is a wilderness experience. The sun is the source of all our physical nourishment. Grains will not grow without its energy, and even the animals some of us eat ultimately require the sun for their energy. Our body cannot make vitamin D without sunlight – how fun is it to think that sitting with a book in the sun is actually getting your vitamins!

The wilderness can challenge us and inspire, but it’s worth remembering that one of the great wilderness experiences is simply sitting among plants and animals and enjoying every breath you take. It’s a pleasant reminder that we are connected to all this life and beauty.

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.

The altar flowers on Sunday, April 12th were given in loving memory of my mother, Loree Fagerstrom, by Lisa Fagerstrom.

The altar flowers on Sunday, April 19th are given in loving memory of Dorothy Palmgren by the United Methodist Women.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK...

- ✠ Paul Keister waiting for final diagnosis for possible 4th surgery on his right shoulder
- ✠ Baby Brooklyn, 19 week old girl, facing a major surgery.
- ✠ Jesse Poku and other members in his unit are deploying to Germany this week.
- ✠ My friend who had both knees replaced at the same time. Pray that she heals with no complications.
- ✠ Rebecca Aidoo celebrating her birthday this week. May God grant her a good and fruitful life.
- ✠ Barbara Ingrassia's cousin who is facing her 2nd battle with breast cancer.
- ✠ Libby Robinson who is hospitalized.
- ✠ The Cronin family as they grieve the loss of John.
- ✠ Bob & Bill Cardwell whose mom passed away.
- ✠ The family and friends of Army Specialist John M. Dawson who was killed in Afghanistan.
- ✠ My mom who passed on February 1st, that she is living within her family and friends.
- ✠ John who is facing surgery.
- ✠ All students who are receiving college acceptances. Help them to decide what school will be best for them.

On Sunday, April 19th, Evelyn Johnson is have a Memorial Service for her late mother. All are invited to attend dinner in Brewer Hall following worship.

I'd also like to add that listening to music is also a great way to enjoy the spring! Coming up on May 3rd, the Wesley Choir will be joining several other area choirs for a choral festival at First Baptist Church in Worcester at 4:00 pm. If you're looking for a concert to kick off the season, please consider this one! Later in the month, the annual Ghanaian Choir Festival will be coming to Worcester the weekend of May 24th. Stay posted for details on that exciting event!

May you all enjoy your springtime, and breathe deeply as we start to let go of the hardships of the winter.

Brett Maguire, Director of Music



INFO ABOUT RETAINING WALL PROJECT AND PARKING AT WESLEY UMC DURING MAY AND JUNE

As mentioned in prior Herald articles, we will begin construction of a new retaining wall in the lower parking lot on May 1. This project is expected to take 8 weeks. After demolition, a large block wall will be constructed five feet closer from where the current wall is erected. The work will be done by the same company who constructed the retaining wall to the left of the warehouse – Hammond Construction.

This project will require the lower parking lot to be closed from parking and vehicle traffic. However, Gertrude Ave will remain open, and all entrance doors will be accessible as they are now. Temporary fencing will be placed alongside the current wall along Gertrude, but it will still allow for cars and foot traffic to move through.

With the reduced number of parking spaces, **Sunday parking** will be limited to 32 spaces in the upper lot. These spaces will be assigned to those members who are elderly or who have a disability or medical reason to park close to the building. Spaces on the street (Harvard, State, Main) will be available on a first-come, first-serve basis only. Please note that on Sundays, there is no charge for parking at a meter. On Sundays, members of the Wesley Hospitality Team

will be in the parking lot and at the State Street entrance to the lot to help with directions for parking and traffic flow.

From **Monday through Friday**, of the 32 spaces available, 26 will be reserved for our customers who pay to park. Staff will park in spaces rented from the Unitarian Church.

On **Saturdays**, parking will be available unless there is a community dinner. The lot may be filled with cars for dinner workers and guests from 3:30 pm to 7 pm.

With all of this said, please note the recommendations below for **coming to Wesley Monday through Friday and parking in the upper lot:**

Mondays – some availability between 1 and 5 pm

Tuesdays – some availability between 1 and 10 pm

Wednesdays – no availability

Thursdays – some availability between 3:30 and 10 pm

Fridays – some availability between 12 noon and 6 pm

(There are no guarantees that spaces will be available, but it is more likely during these timeframes.)

This construction project is much-needed and has been extremely well organized by Lorna and the Trustees. There will be an all-church meeting after the 10:30 service on Sunday, April 26th to provide information about the project and to address any questions that you might have about the parking during construction.

The parking limitations will be a challenge for us all. However, I have confidence that working together as a church family, we will meet the challenges presented with grace and patience and hospitality for neighbors, friends, staff, and members.

~ Pastor Shandi

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Budget Update: Below are the results for the period ending March 31, 2015. Please note the capital budget is being included as a separate item. I will continue to report these numbers separately.

Profit & Loss Statement Summary YTD through 3/31/15:

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Income	136,139	131,645	-4,494
Expense	183,955	172,862	-11,093
Net Loss	-47,816	-41,217	6,599
<u>Easter Results:</u>	5,900	5,384	-516

Capital Budget Summary YTD through 3/31/2015:

	<u>Budget</u>
Carryover from 2014	10,577
2015 Income from endowment	<u>30,000</u>
Total Income	40,577
Less organ maintenance	<u>-5,000</u>
Available for capital expenses	35,577
Expenses to date	<u>-833</u>
Remaining Balance	34,744

Project Updates:

The carpeting in the lower level is being installed as this goes to press. Also, the new carpet for the narthex is ready for delivery. I hope to schedule it for next week. A new stove was purchased for the parsonage. Quotes have been received from two vendors regarding the installation of an automatic door opener for State Street, and several other items are in the pipeline. Please be sure to read the article on the retaining wall project which is beginning on May 1, and mark your calendars for the all-church meeting on April 26 after church.

As always, if you have any questions, please give me a call.

Peace, Lorna

SUNDAY SCHOOL

THANK YOU to all who attended and helped with the Easter Egg Hunt hosted by Sarah Circle and Christian Education. Attendees included several families from Florence House, and altogether about 75 children, parents, and Wesley volunteers.

8:30 a.m. WORSHIP NURSERY CARE ... We are now happy to announce that nursery/preschool care is available during the 8:30 a.m. worship service.

HEIFER COLLECTION ARK BOXES

Our field trip to the Heifer farm is coming up soon, so be on the lookout - we will announce the date for collection of the donation boxes soon. Still need one? Boxes are on both children's tables (Narthex, Brewer Hall), and in the office. If yours is already full and you would like to turn it in early, please give it to Jean Grant or put it in her mailbox. **THANK YOU!**

SPIRITUAL FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

“ONE BOOK, ONE CHURCH”

The second “One Book, One Church” book for this program year is *One Day at a Time: Discovering the Freedom of 12-step Spirituality* by Trevor Hudson. All are invited to participate in reading this book in April/May. If you would like a copy of the book and have not already received one, please see Lisa at church this Sunday or e-mail Lisa@wesleyworc.org or call her at the church (x106).

If you are reading the book and would like to be part of an on-line discussion group, please contact Lisa with your name and preferred e-mail address. Also, there will be an in-person small group discussion after the 10:30 a.m. worship service in East Hall on Sunday, April 12th for all interested persons. The discussion on the 12th will center around the Introduction and first three chapters (Steps 1-3) in the book.

You are welcome to attend the in-person group as well as the on-line group if you would like.

THANK YOU, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!

My team and I want to thank you for your generous donations for the people of Guatemala. The vitamins will be given out at the self-made clinics as well as the health kits. Please pray for us for a safe trip to Guatemala and also for the people of Guatemala.

Servant of God and this church, Gerard Piscitelli

SMALL GIFTS FOR SHELTERS MUCH APPRECIATED

Thank you to everyone who donated socks, snacks, or personal care items to Worcester shelters during Lent. This year, you donated enough items to give cartons to Abby's House, the Homeless Veterans' Shelter, SMOC (the new People in Peril shelter), and Worcester Fellowship (an outdoor ministry which meets Sundays on Worcester Common for a meal, fellowship, and a worship service). The socks and baseball caps were scooped up first! ~ *Betsy Pennino*

MISSION MATTERS

MAY 17TH EVENT AT WESLEY ~ IMAGINE NO MALARIA (INM) is a nationwide effort of the UMC to wipe out malaria in Africa. With the UMC's program, \$10 would save a life by improving prevention, treatment, and education. This fight can be won, as was shown by 11 African countries' succeeding in maintaining zero cases in 2013. Thus, on Sunday 5/17, the Mission Committee will sponsor an event of brief videos about the challenges faced by INM, followed by a free-will lunch. There will also be singing by our Ghanaian choir and INM items for sale.

A new feature is that the first \$50,000 raised in April, May, and June will be matched. We have set a Wesley goal of \$2,000 which will save 200 lives (or 400, with the matching funds!) The INM event is also Wesley's project for Change the World Weekend, when United Methodists try to build community with small acts of kindness. Please plan to attend!

COMMUNITY SUPPER LEADERS NEEDED FOR JULY...

All months (starting with July 25) are available for you to volunteer with your group! Suppers are on last Saturdays, except for Oct. 24, and Linda D'Acri has volunteered for Nov. 28. Quite thorough guidelines have been developed and written, based on experiences with the first 18 suppers, and needed support will be given. Food purchases will be reimbursed by the Mission Committee. If you can volunteer, please tell Pastor Shandi or Betsy Pennino.

APRIL COMMUNITY SUPPER

On April 25, Kimberly will be leading the Wesley Choir in producing a meal of ham, mashed potatoes, mixed vegetables, salad, rolls, beverage and dessert. Donations of cupcakes, brownies, or cookies are requested.

A SIDE NOTE... At the Easter Egg Hunt, we learned that the Florence House moms and children have been greatly enjoying our Community Suppers.

JOHN IN ULTRA-HIGH CONTEXT: JOHN 6:25-59

(notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, April 12, 2015)

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A Challenge to Jesus at Capernaum on the Other Side of the Sea (6:25-31)

(vv. 25-27) Typical of John, the question put to Jesus in v. 25 has a double meaning: (1) stereotypical status ranking by birth family/location; and (2) hidden possibilities in his origin as the result of seeing great deeds from a low-born person – in this case the feeding of the multitude the previous day. Food as a metaphor for the divine gift of **life** was widespread in antiquity, especially in situations where the vast majority of people lived at the bare subsistence level. Having bread meant having **life**.

(vv. 28-29) Working for bread was a given, so the question of v. 28 (responding to Jesus' command in v. 27) was an inquiry into what type of work would be required for bread of eternal **life**. Jesus' answer was that they believe **into** the one sent by God, i.e., that they exhibit trust rather than simple assent, extremely deep loyalty, and long-term solidarity.

(vv. 30-31) The crowd responds by asking for a sign to elicit belief, but they used the simple present tense of "believe" instead of the present perfect continuous (progressive) tense that Jesus used in v. 29, verbally signaling that they wanted to avoid the long-term loyalty implications of Jesus' demand. Jesus had in fact given them just the day before a sign (the multiplication of the loaves), at which time they had acknowledged Jesus as "the prophet who is to come into the world" (v. 14). Now, he is just a teacher ("Rabbi"; v. 25), expected to upgrade yesterday's sign to "everlasting bread", so that they might believe him to be the one sent by God. This is a serious public honor challenge to Jesus {perhaps a reaction to his criticism of them in v. 26}. The crowd would have been familiar with the story of bread from the sky (Ex 16). Had not Moses provided them with security and sustenance? Why should they switch their loyalty to Jesus?

Jesus Explains the Passage Cited from Exodus 16 by His Challengers (6:32-59)

(vv. 32-34) Overall, Jesus' response to his challengers is a modulating and repetitive explanation of Exodus 16, pointing out that God was the patron providing the manna and the quail to the Israelites, not Moses. Moses was a broker. Jesus is asserting that he is the new broker of God, for **life**-giving bread.

(vv. 35-40) This is the first of the seven “I am” statements in John’s Gospel. Because bread provided 50% of the caloric intake for most nonelite people, Jesus is saying that he is the sustenance of **life** at its most basic level. The parallelism of v. 35 equates the phrase “**coming to**” with “**believing into**”, both of which are coded for UHC interpretation. Verses 38-40 nearly summarize the central message of John’s Gospel.

(vv. 41-42) The crowd returns to the issue of Jesus’ origins (as in vv. 25-27). If Jesus were “from” his earthly parents, whom they knew to be village nonelite, then he could not be “from” the sky with all of the honor status that would imply.

(vv. 43-46) Jesus carefully counters their objection by deferring to God the drawing power that brought them to Jesus in the first place, i.e., that their **coming to** Jesus has been learned from and taught by God, quoting Isaiah 54:13 (v. 45).

(vv. 47-51) Jesus repeats as before (vv. 29 and 40) that those who place their loyalty in him will be rewarded with new (i.e., endless) **life**. His second person plural phrasing of the phrase “your fathers” (i.e., ancestors) places considerable social distance between Jesus and his opponents. The bread that their ancestors ate in the wilderness did not produce the quality of **life** available to those who form a dyadic bond with Jesus.

(vv. 52-59) The controversy introduced by Jesus’ use of the UHC term “**flesh**” (v. 51) is violent, as suggested by the verb in v. 52 – *Emáxonto* (“fought”; “disputed” in the RSV & NRSV). However, for his insiders, to eat Jesus’ flesh and drink his blood is synonymous with UHC verbs such as **to welcome**, **accept**, **receive**, and **believe into**. The metaphorical meanings offered in vv. 55-57 redefine the terms for the later Johannine insiders, and serve to create the kind of dyadic relationship with Jesus that brings eternal **life** (v. 56).

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. 129-135.

DID YOU KNOW?

As part of our celebration of Easter Sunday, we experienced the lighting of the Paschal Candle, symbolizing the triumph of Resurrection over the darkness of sin and death. Did you ever wonder about the meaning of the word paschal? In both Greek and Latin the word Pasch is used for the observance of the celebration of the resurrection. This in turn derives from the Hebrew pesach for "Passover". There are of course many links between the Christian celebration of Easter and the Jewish observance of Passover, not only in chronology, but also in symbolism. According to Laurence Hull Stookey in *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*:

"The first Christians...inescapably saw a symbolic continuity between the slaughtered lamb of the Passover Seder and the crucified Lamb of God. Further, as Moses led the Israelites through the sea into freedom from bondage to Pharaoh, so Jesus Christ through the resurrection provides 'the way out' (the literal meaning of exodus) of bondage to sin and death. To speak of Christ as 'our Pasch' can be an affirmation that Christianity is a development out of Judaism, not a drastic displacement of the Hebraic faith."

In contrast, the word Easter is derived from secular sources (as is Lent). It is believed to be a variant of Eastre, a Teutonic goddess of springtime and fertility. Certainly in the climate of the Northern hemisphere (especially after this winter!) the metaphors of spring and new life do reinforce the themes of Easter, but the true meaning is better embodied in the word Pasch. In fact in many other languages (e.g. Spanish pascua, French paques, Italian pasques, Welsh pasg) the word for the observance of the resurrection does derive from Pasch.

We have only begun our celebration of the resurrection, which is commemorated by a day of the week (Sunday), a special day of the year (Easter Sunday) and a liturgical season (the Great Fifty Days). Wishing you all a joyous Pasch!

*Submitted by,
Deborah 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>
Mon., April 27	Wed., April 29
Mon., May 11	Wed., May 13

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

office@wesleyworc.org

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.



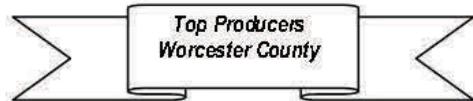
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114 Main Street
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Church Phone: 508-799-4191
Fax: 508-799-3725
E-Mail: office@wesleyworc.org
Web page: www.wesleyworc.org

WESLEY HERALD
APRIL 15, 2015

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

WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

- | | |
|---|---|
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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,
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| Administrative Council | Ron Ramsay |
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| Ghanaian Association | Emmanuel Okrah |
| Events & Fellowship | |
| Layleader | Deborah O'Driscoll |
| Medical Ministry | Ron Ramsay |
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