

The Spiritual Practice of Hospitality

A number of years ago, I had the opportunity to live and work in New York City for a year. I'd fly down on Monday morning and back to Boston on Friday afternoon. The company that I was working for provided very nice temporary housing for me. I was *far* from being homeless...however, it never felt like being home.

Before I found community and friends in NYC, I was often homesick. I found myself walking—a *lot*—around the neighborhoods where I lived and worked. St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church was around the corner from my office, and I often ate at their café or attended community events and meetings or simply sat in the quiet oasis of their Sanctuary on my lunch hour. I always felt welcomed there and filled with a sense of belonging.

One day I saw a sign at the front entrance of the church building that said: "All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ." I realized that this was what I was feeling when there, and something that was at the core of who that church knew themselves to be—a place of welcome and radical hospitality.

When I was checking their website for the exact wording of that sign that I'd seen more than a decade ago, I saw this on their "About Us" page...

"We think of our sacred space as a gift—something bequeathed to us by our forbearers and a gift we are called to share with others. We practice what St. Benedict taught his monks and their households: 'All guests who present themselves are to be welcomed as Christ' - *Rule of Benedict 53:1*"

St. Bart's has a beautiful church building on Park Ave. in Midtown Manhattan. Those who walk through and past its doors represent a breadth and depth of diversity that stretches the imagination. "Welcoming all" isn't an easy thing to do on a day-in-day-out basis. However, "welcoming all" is what they did and what they do!

I realized in thinking about my experience at St. Bart's...that hospitality is indeed a spiritual practice. And...I wonder if that spiritual practice of hospitality begins with each of us welcoming Christ and God's Spirit into our hearts and lives? If our willingness to "be hospitable" to Christ allows us to be hospitable to others?

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 Tower lighting for May is given in loving memory of my parents, Norman and Mary Fletcher and my brother David Fletcher by Barbara Fletcher.

The Rose window lighting for May is given in loving memory of Dorothy Aho, Axel Swanberg, and Clara Swanberg by Nancy Aho, Heidi O'Leary and family.

The altar flowers on Sunday, May 10th are given in loving memory of Mrs. Florida Guttridge and Mrs. Estelle Clemons by Stanley Guttridge.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK...

- ✠ Health & healing—those who are grieving following loss.
- ✠ The people of Nepal.
- ✠ The family of Donald W. Harris, a former member of Wesley who recently died.
- ✠ Libby Robinson who is still in ICU.
- ✠ The family of Sharon and cousin Terry who have gathered around Terry for her last dying days. Please be with them at this time.



SUMMER CAMP IS NOT OUT OF REACH!... Summer camp experiences can last a lifetime for a child, and we want to make sure that any Wesley family interested in sending their child to a Methodist summer camp can do so. Thanks to the generosity of the hungry customers at United Methodist Women bake sales, we can offer "camperships" -- funding to help a child attend camp this summer. Children's Christian Education Director Jean Grant will have request forms for interested parents to fill out. Camp registration season is soon, so please let Jean know if you'd like to apply for a campership. All requests remain confidential.

As I reflected on this thought for my own life, I wondered where I am completely welcoming and hospitable to God’s Spirit in my life? And, where I might be keeping some doors closed—perhaps without even realizing it? I, also, wondered what that means to my intentions and efforts to be hospitable to others...

What I realized anew in reflecting on my experience in NYC...is that I want to re-dedicate myself to do what I can each day so that my actions help others feel welcomed—as I did when I was a “stranger in a strange land.”

What do you think? I **welcome** your thoughts and reflections!

Blessings, Lisa



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 4th. 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 in their golden years (75+) 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 for church business 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.

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

CAPITAL PROJECTS - UPDATE

Lower Level Carpeting Project: I am happy to report that all of the carpeting has been installed. Phil has also completed the painting of two out of the three rooms in the lower level, with the assistance of Nancy Cook. The Ghanaian Choir room will be painted next.

Narthex Carpet: As part of this year's capital budget, the Narthex was approved for new carpeting, and an anonymous donor contributed to the cost. This has been put in place and the feedback has been very positive. I'm so happy you like it!!

State Street Door Opener: Two bids have been received and reviewed by the Trustees, and a decision is forthcoming.

Rose Window Lighting: As you may know, for some time we have struggled to get the Rose Window lighting to shine effectively through the window. Some light is shining through, but several approaches have not achieved the results desired. We met with a representative from the lighting supplier we use and he recommended a different fixture. There will be some testing done to see if this solves the problem.

2015 Budget – Electricity Costs

I thought it might be helpful for you to learn more about various aspects of the budget, and plan to focus on one account in my future Herald articles. Today, I want to share some information with you about the electricity costs. The church building is over 43,000 square feet, and contains 65 rooms. The sanctuary ceiling is approximately 60 feet high. So, it is understandable that energy costs would be a challenge to keep in line. This year, we went with a fixed rate of .11799 per KWH for the supplier portion of our bill. To date (Jan – Apr), we have spent \$5,898.69 for electricity, or an average of \$1,474 a month. In April we used approximately 6,100 KWHs.

With this in mind, here are some ideas about conserving energy and how you can help. We've already replaced our appliances and lighting fixtures with more efficient fixtures. Now, let's focus on being aware of lights that are turned on, and whether or not they need to be. On occasion, one of our custodians (who comes to work at 5:30 a.m.) has let me know that the lights in the kitchen and Brewer Hall were all turned on—and no one was using the space. If there is a meeting in one of the conference rooms, sometimes the lights are left on when the meeting is done.

Sometimes when I've left work later at night and I am driving out of the parking lot, I've stopped to go back and shut off a light I can see on in the building. Let's all try harder to be proactive in shutting off lights we don't need, and being aware of whether or not we are the last to leave the building. Everyone can help! Thank you so much!!

Peace, Lorna

CARTY CUPBOARD

Due to the closing of the lower parking lot Carty Cupboard is changing its schedule for the duration of the project. The Food Pantry will be open on Wednesdays from 12:00 to 3:00 PM. The Food Pantry will be **closed** on Fridays. As of now we are planning to be open the following Monday nights from 6:00 to 7:00 PM... May 11th, June 8th, and June 29th.

Thank You for your patience during this time.

******Carty Cupboard Food pantry is in desperate need of meals in a can.******

SUNDAY SCHOOL

Time to bring in your COLLECTION BOXES... This Sunday, **May 3rd**, we will begin collecting the Heifer Collection Arks for our upcoming mission field trip to the Heifer International Farm in Rutland, MA. Please bring in your filled collection ark to the worship services on May 3rd, where the children will be collecting them. Thank you for your donation!

Childcare Available: We now have childcare for infants through preschoolers during the 8:30 a.m. worship service.

Vacation Bible School! July will be here before we know it. Looking for an enriching activity for your children during the summer? Seeking out an opportunity to serve the church? Please see the VBS insert for child and volunteer registration. Volunteers can help in all aspects: before, during, or after VBS, from cooking to crafting to games or teaching. Thank you! Questions, ask Jean Grant.

Summer Sunday School...just because school ends for the year, doesn't mean that it will end at church! We will continue to offer the 10:30 a.m. Sunday School program throughout the summer. If you have never volunteered before and would like to help out, summer is a great time to start as a greeter or floater, so you can assist teachers, and observe our growing ministry. Contact Jean Grant if you are interested.

HELP PREVENT HOMELESSNESS ONE GIFT CARD AT A TIME!

The Hope for Housing ministry sells gift cards to grocery stores you shop in every week: Stop & Shop, Shaw's, Big Y, Hannaford's, plus CVS and Panera. Five percent of each card's face value goes to a fund that keeps people in their homes -- when they have difficulty paying rent or a utility bill, Hope for Housing steps in to prevent families from becoming homeless. Our ministry needs more volunteers to help sell these gift cards after the 8:30 and 10:30 services. Volunteer sign up sheets are at the table near the coffee and donuts. We'd like to set up a regular rotating schedule. Talk to Allison Hansen to find out more, email her at AChis4788@aol.com or give her a call at 508-853-5339. Thank you!

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 with your family, friends, and neighbors.

JOIN HABITAT FOR WOMEN BUILD 2015... Habitat for Humanity is inviting women to participate in National Women Build Week. The Worcester Build will run from May 2 to 16, with 4-hour shifts on Saturdays, Sundays, Tuesdays, & Wednesdays. The build is at 79 Kendig St.-- near the entrance to Holy Cross. Each builder is asked to fund raise and donate \$100. If interested, please see Betsy Pennino.



YOUTH2015

FUNDRAISING HELP NEEDED!

As you may know, Wesley has a strong contingent of 15 youth registered to attend the Youth2015 United Methodist Church national gathering in Orlando, Florida June 24-28th. Including travel, we are estimating the cost to be approximately \$900 per youth. In order to enable everyone to attend, we are doing fundraising activities to help subsidize the cost.

Please save the date for two Dining for a Cause events. Have a night off from cooking and support the youth!

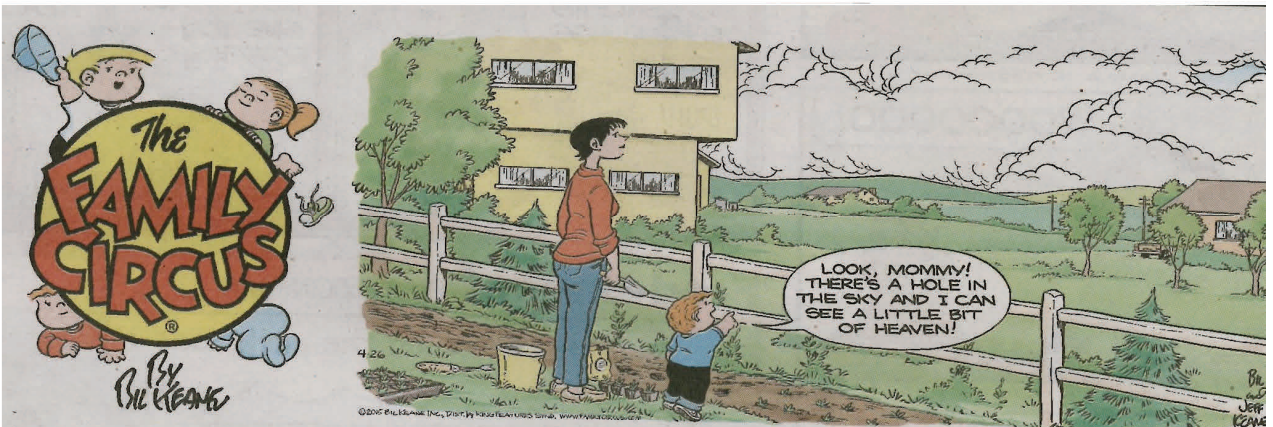
May 18th at 20vens Pizzeria in Shrewsbury (Need to bring a flyer when you dine – Wesley will receive a percentage of those presenting flyer). Even if you can't go, it would help us if you would share the flyer, (email friends, Facebook, put a pile in your office lunch room, etc...)

June 9 at Mexicali Restaurant in Holden. No flyer needed Wesley gets 10% of all sales.

More nights to come!

Two ways to help:

- ∞ If you are able to eat out at these restaurants on these nights, that would be great. Remember the flyer if necessary.
- ∞ One of our goals is to do some fundraisers that will allow people outside of Wesley to support the cause, so if you can share the flyers that would be great!



Reprinted from Sunday Telegram, April 26, 2015

CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

TOPICAL DISCUSSION ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS—

All are welcome to this class which meets on Sundays in the John Wesley Room from 9:40-10:25 a.m. The class uses the Faith Link curriculum from Cokesbury Publishing to engage in rich and diverse discussion about each week's topic. Upcoming topics are: The Affordable Care Act (May 3rd), "Nones" and Church—what the church has to offer those who currently don't attend church (May 10th), Conversations as Ministry (May 17th), Race and Excessive Police Force—Part 1 (May 24th), A Culture of Prayer (May 31st), Race and Excessive Police Force—Part 2 (June 7th), Water Crises (June 14th). If you would like to be added to the e-mail list for notifications about the class and distribution of materials, please contact Lisa at Lisa@wesleyworc.org.

LABYRINTH WALK AND TAIZÉ WORSHIP SERVICE—

On Tuesday, May 19th, there will be an opportunity to walk Wesley UMC's new labyrinth and to join with others in Taizé worship. Taizé worship services will be held at noon and at 6:45 p.m. The labyrinth will be available for walking anytime between 10:30 a.m. until 9 p.m. on the 19th. All of these events will be held in the Chapel.

NEW SMALL GROUPS FORMING—

In May, two new small groups are forming to discuss Robert Schnase's book "Five Practices of Fruitful Congregations: Radical Hospitality, Passionate Worship, Intentional Faith Development, Risk-taking Mission and Service, and Extravagant Generosity. There will be a group that will meet at the home of Lorraine and George Kronberg from 11 a.m.-12:30 p.m., and a group that will meet at the church from 7-8:30 p.m. The groups will meet once a month and will begin with prayer and fellowship time followed by a facilitated discussion of one of the practices. The plan is to spend two months discussing each practice detailed in Schnase's book. The first month's discussion will focus on the Scriptural and theological perspectives of the practice, and the second month's discussion will focus on practical steps that we can take as a church to implement the practice.

Please call or e-mail Lisa (Lisa@wesleyworc.org) if you are interested in being a part of one of the groups. The dates for the groups will be established once the members have been gathered.

JOHN IN ULTRA-HIGH CONTEXT: JOHN 6:60-7:14A

(notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, April 19 & 26, 2015)

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Insider Talk Unmasks Disloyalty to Jesus' Group (6:60-66)

The term *disciples* here signifies Jesus' entire entourage – the twelve core members, plus the peripheral members whose commitment was more fluid. It was these peripheral members who were troubled by the flesh and blood symbolism of vv. 51-57.

(v. 60) {The Greek verb *akoúō* (“hear”) has multiple meanings, depending on the context (Strong's, G191) – physiological, psychological, or information processing. The verb form at the beginning of the verse, *akoúsantes* (“hearing”) refers to the psychological aspect. The form at the end, *akoúein* (“to hear something”) refers to information processing.} The NRSV translates *akoúein* as “accept”, implying either that the teaching was hard to accept, or that because of the teaching, Jesus was hard to accept (more probable in this context, with Jesus' demands of group loyalty).

(vv. 61b-62) Faced with peripheral group disloyalty, Jesus asks how they would react to seeing him return to the patron from whom he came {i.e., implying that they would require a sign for giving their loyalty}.

(v. 65) Although John records no response by this group to the question in v. 62, Jesus makes clear that it is God, the patron, who determines the composition of his group.

Reaction of the Twelve (6:67-71)

This passage is the only explicit mention of the twelve core insiders of his group, and is one of only two in John's Gospel where Jesus talks to them alone [the other is Jesus' final words (13:1-17:26)]. They do not play a major role here as they do in the Synoptics. {Only seven are mentioned by name throughout John's Gospel. In order of appearance: Andrew (4 verses); Simon Peter (30 verses); Philip (11 verses); Nathanael (6 verses); Judas Iscariot (8 verses); Thomas (7 verses); and Judas (not Iscariot) (1 verse).}

(vv. 68-69) Peter's response to Jesus' question is often assumed to be the Johannine equivalent of his confession in {the Synoptics (Mark 8:27-29; Matt 16:13-17; Luke 9:18-20)}. However, the Synoptic context of the question was Jesus' request for feedback from his core group about his social role and identity. In John, Jesus' question implied a request for feedback on their belief that he was the genuine broker of God. Peter spoke for the core group in acknowledging their loyalty to Jesus as “the Holy One of God” (chosen, special, designated). {In the Synoptics, Peter used the title “the Christ” (Mark 8:29), “the Christ, the Son of the living God” (Matt 16:16), or “the Christ of God” (Luke 9:20).}

(vv. 70-71) Because peripheral members often divide their loyalties between their own group and outside organizations in the establishment, they undermine group effectiveness. Tests of loyalty to determine who's in and who's out were common. Here, Jesus knows that one of his core group is disloyal, and that will cause trouble.

The hostility against Jesus that is so prevalent in John builds in chapters 7-8, which forms a single unit describing Jesus' teaching in the temple. That the Judeans sought to kill Jesus is noted first in this unit introduction (7:1), and is repeated at the end (8:59).

Around the Feast of Sukkoth in Galilee: A Challenge from Jesus' Brothers (7:1-9)

(v. 1) The clear distinction between Galilee and Judea makes clear that Jesus was being received differently by Galileans and Judeans.

(vv. 2-5) Jesus' brothers are portrayed as outsiders. Their demand (vv. 3-4) is the first of three challenges to him in this two-chapter unit.

(vv. 6-9) Jesus points out to his brothers that their solidarity lies with the larger society ("the world" = Israelite society), which has disattached itself ("hate" = disattachment, nonattachment, or indifference) from him. That his brothers wish to see Jesus' reputation grow is motivated by their self-interest (honor gained by Jesus would reflect on every member of his family). Jesus' riposte to his brothers' challenge is simply to reject it for the present. Rejecting their challenge out of hand would imply that he considered his brothers inferiors, but suggesting that his hour has not yet come implies that it soon will. Thus, he's not running from the challenge, but rather staying in control of its timing.

Around the Feast of Sukkoth in Jerusalem: Divided Public Judgment about Jesus (7:10-14a)

John's original division of this passage at the half-verse is marked by the parallel verbal bracket (10b:14a). Such a parallel bracket is a repetition of words &/or phrases to facilitate remembering how the document went when one recited it aloud. The Greek term for such a parallel bracket was a *chiasm*, after one-half of the Greek letter "Chi" (X), thus making the two bracket halves ">" and "<".

(vv. 10-12) One of the pervasive concerns of the Gospel writer for the Johannine Jesus group is sorting out insiders and outsiders {cf. 6:64-66}. The mention of feasts provides the hearer with the appropriate emotional key to allow the story to have its maximum in-group impact.

(v. 14a) The fact that Jesus arrives privately in the middle of the feast makes it clear that he knows of Judean hostility, and allows him to pick the moment to go public. The conflicting opinions of Jesus that are dividing the Jerusalemite crowd, i.e., "good man" or "deceiver" (v. 12), are put to the test in the challenges and responses that follow.

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. 137-146.

DID YOU KNOW?

This past Sunday as we celebrated the sacrament of baptism, part of the congregational response consisted of reciting the Apostles' Creed. We did not recite the creed as an uninterrupted whole, however. Instead it was divided into three sections each of which was spoken in response to a question asked in the liturgy by the pastor. The Apostles' Creed, the full text of which dates back to AD 500, is believed to have its origins in the baptismal services of the early Christian church during which candidates for baptism were required to confess their personal belief in the presence of the congregation. Evidence suggests that in these early times it was used as an interrogatory creed divided into sections, each of which was a response to a question about belief posed to the initiates.

The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means "I believe". A creed is a summary of the faith that is proclaimed in common by Christians throughout the ages and affirms the universal faith of the church. Other ancient creeds, an example of which is the Nicene Creed found in our hymnal, begin with "We believe". Such creeds, known as conciliar creeds, are based on the authority of a council of church leaders and usually came about in order to define the true faith as opposed to some form of heretical teaching, and again serve as a summary of the basics of the Christian faith that can be committed to memory (especially important in ancient and Medieval societies when many people could not read).

A third type of credal statement that is more ancient than the forms above is what is known as the "credal hymn", the oldest examples of which are Biblical. The most basic is the Hebrew *Shema*, (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) which confesses the God is One. However, there also are several examples in the New Testament as well, with many scholars believing that Paul's letters often quote statements of belief that probably served a liturgical function in early Christian worship (e.g. Philippians 2:6-11, Ephesians 4:4-10).

What all credal statements illustrate is that we live a faith that is historical in character, and need to remind ourselves of God's saving acts in history. Whenever we recite or sing one of these ancient creeds that summarize basic beliefs, we are united not only across geographical and denominational boundaries with the church universal in our time, but also across boundaries of time itself to the church eternal of past, present, and future.

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., May 11	Wed., May 13
Tues., May 26	Thurs., May 28

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.



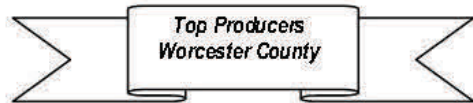
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WESLEY HERALD
APRIL 29, 2015

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

WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

- Pastor Shandirai Mawokomatanda
- Director of Music Ministries Brett Maguire
- 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
- 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 Emmanuel Okrah
- Events & Fellowship
- Layleader Deborah O'Driscoll
- Medical Ministry Ron Ramsay
- Memorial Gifts Carolyn Bellil
- Mission Coordinator Betsy Pennino
- Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs Brent Drajek Mark Muncey
- Youth Directors Phil & Emily Smith
- United Methodist Women Co-Chairs Barbara Ingrassia Allison Hansen

