

ENGAGED IN ACTION

I popped over to one of my favorite websites, Merriam-Webster, (yes it really is a favorite) and looked up the word “busy”. The first definition is “full of activity”. We’ve all heard the “I’m so/too busy” replies from people which can be a frustrating blanket term. I will admit that I have had times of “being too busy” myself.

Often, we are indeed *too* busy – family, work, obligations – that we don’t take the time to be not-busy and enjoy life’s simpler, soul-feeding offerings. Birdsong at 5:30 a.m. when the sun peeks through the window, the kindness of a stranger, the comfort and joy of a cup of coffee with friends...each of us have our own version of these simple treasures that life has to offer.

Admittedly, it was the second definition that caught my eye: “engaged in action”. The daily grind will always have its responsibilities for us to fulfill, but what if we look at how being *engaged in action* can serve others? What if we turn the “I’m too busy (fill in the blank)”, into an “I am building relationships at the community supper by providing meals to those in need of companionship and food” or “I am engaged in action by going on a mission trip with the youth” or “I am laying the foundations of discipleship by teaching Sunday School” (okay, I had to put that plug in, right?).

Life will always be very full – taking kids to sports (even on Sundays), caring for elderly parents, fulfilling work and family and home duties... Yet I know we can all shift around our busy-ness and make being engaged in action in our church, in our community, and in our world a priority. Not only are we serving by our actions, but we are also enriching our lives in these moments.

Being engaged in action does not need to be a huge time commitment. We know how precious time can be. How can you be engaged in action this week? This month? This year? Where can you slip that time into your schedule? Perhaps it’s buying a can or two of meals for Carty Cupboard. Or offering to do some gardening for an elderly neighbor. Or committing to lead a Bible Study or discussion group. No action is too small. No action goes unnoticed. Where can you engage in action today?

Jean Grant, Dir. Children’s Christian Ed.

LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS...

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 August Tower and September Rose window lightings are available for dedication. The cost is \$40 for the month. If you are interested in one of these lightings, please contact Debi in the office at 508-799-4191, ext. 102. Thank you.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK...

- ✠ The birth of Mia Jett Woodring born on April 26th to Joann and Blair Woodring and big brother Blair of Wilmington, DE. Bill and Mary Jett Woodring are the very proud grandparents.
- ✠ Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah who is walking to end Breast Cancer on May 16 & 17.
- ✠ Polly Boyns who is giving thanks for getting her voice back.
- ✠ All mothers and strong women who lead by example everyday.
- ✠ The mother who lost her son on May 9 in a car accident on I-395, and his family.
- ✠ A family that is having a hard-time and might be losing their home and is praying for a miracle.
- ✠ Rebecca Aidoo who received the UMW Mission Recognition Award and all women who lead and serve.
- ✠ A friend of Rachel Danso who is battling a life threatening disease. May God give her the strength to keep fighting.
- ✠ Wesley Church and the Ghanaian Choir Festival to be held in Worcester, especially the worship service to be held at Wesley on Sunday, May 24 at 10am.
- ✠ The family of Tom and Ana Fahey who's youngest son, 3 yo Nicky, died suddenly on May 4th of unknown cause. He leaves his brother Tommy and sister JoAnna. Nicky is the nephew of Jimmy & Maria McManus (son of Sandy McManus).

OFFICE VOLUNTEER NEEDED... The week of June 1st—6th Debi will be out on vacation. We are looking for volunteer(s) to help answer the phones in the mornings (9-12). If you are able to help, please contact Debi in the office and let her know which day(s) you are available. *Thank you!*

SPECIAL WORSHIP SERVICE; WESLEY UMC

SUNDAY, MAY 24, 10:00AM – 1:30PM

On Memorial Day weekend, we will have the joy of welcoming over 200 choristers with the National Association of Ghana Methodist Choristers, of which our Ghanaian Choir is a part. Our worship schedule will therefore be impacted and changed to accommodate our friends. Each year the Association gathers for a weekend-long festival where they worship together, participate in music workshops to learn new music, and celebrate their music ministry with a concert and competition. The Ghana Choir Festival will begin on Friday, May 22 and will run through Sunday, May 24. The schedule of events is as follows:

Friday, 6:00PM: Gathering and Opening Worship (Location: Sturbridge Hotel & Conference Center)

Saturday, 10:00 AM: Music Workshops

Saturday, 6:00 PM: Festival Night with concert and competition

Sunday, 10:00 AM: Worship (Location: Wesley United Methodist Church)

The public is invited to the Opening Worship, the Festival Night and of course the Sunday morning worship. Please note that our Worship services will be impacted. The 10:30 service will be moved to an earlier time, 10:00 am, and the two-part worship service will run longer than usual. We look forward to seeing you all there.



UPCOMING WORKSHOP FOR STAFF & LAITY ~ On Thursday, May 21, the Wesley Office will be closed. Pastor Shandi, the Staff, and some laity will be attending a workshop on increasing intercultural competency in cross-racial/ cross-cultural ministry to be held at Rolling Ridge Retreat and Conference Center.

Increasingly, North American churches are experiencing a diversity like never before. In the United Methodist Church, cross-racial and cross-cultural appointments are on the increase. In order to equip and support churches with cross-racial/cross-cultural ministries and appointments, the New England Conference is holding this one day workshop. The workshop is designed for both pastors and lay persons. The first half of the workshop will look at issues related to multicultural/ intercultural ministry. The second half of the workshop will explore the unique dynamics of cross-cultural/ cross-racial appointments. That is, the second half is especially interested in the role of the pastor and how church leadership in cross-cultural ministry can build a working partnership with their pastoral leadership. *If any laity are interested in going, please let Pastor Shandi know, ASAP.*

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!

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.

Thank You, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

We had a fantastic mission trip to Cunen Guatemala, where we were able to accomplish a lot of tasks which we were out to set. The water filtration systems were installed in the homes and a school. We were able to complete an overhang soffit which needed some work, and of course the medical team did an amazing job setting up clinics in and around the town of Cunen, serving an average of 100 patients a day. God is Good!!

I will be working on setting up a time where we will be showing pictures and trying to answer any questions you might have. Keep a watch out for more information.

Thank you again for **ALL** of your support in Ministry in Action!

~ Gerard Piscitelli

AN INVITATION TO WESLEY WOMEN: You are invited the Dorcas Circle meeting on Thursday, May 21 at 12 noon at the home of Chloe Sundberg, 58 Briarwood Cir. This is our pot-luck luncheon and planning meeting. Bring your favorite dish and new ideas for next year's program. If you are not a member of a UMW Circle and mid-day is a good time for you, please consider coming to our meeting as our guest. For further directions or details, call Chloe Sundberg at 508-595-0483.

A NOTE ON MISSION SHARES

from the Pastor's Desk

Mission Shares (or **Apportionments** as they are called in other conferences and in The Book of Discipline of The United Methodist Church) is a term that refers to a portion of the funds given by local congregations to support the Mission of the General Church. With these funds, each local congregation shares in the mission of the denomination and our mission is *“To make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.”* We fulfill this mission through a variety of ministries and programs on local, regional, national, and global levels. This type of shared mission is also known as “connectionalism.”

Connectionalism is a significant part of United Methodist DNA. It is who we are and how we function. We are connected in many different ways and on many deeper levels. As the Apostle Paul described it, *“Just as the body is one and has many members, and all the members of the body, though many, are one body, so it is with Christ... you are the body of Christ and individually members of it.”* (1 Corinthians 12). Mission Shares/Apportionments thus serve to better connect local congregations in the work set before us. We contribute to the whole in order to fulfill the mission of the whole.

In the same Corinthians passage, the Bible teaches that, *“if one member suffers, all suffer together with it; if one member is honored, all rejoice together with it.”* The connectional nature of the United Methodist Church reminds us that we are in this together.

There are three funds that make up our mission shares: Fund 1 supports efforts in World missions, Fund 2 supports New England Conference missions, and Fund 3 provides Ministerial support for the New England Conference. Through these funds, we as a congregation participate in extending our witness to places and people we would not be able to reach on our own. But, as a connectional church we are able to do so.

In The Book of Discipline, we are reminded that the paying of mission share/apportionments is “the first benevolent act of the local congregation.” This reminder underscores the fact that when we support the mission of the greater body we are simultaneously supporting the mission of our local body. For instance, pastors are appointed and pastoral authority extends also from the annual conference down to the local congregation. By supporting the ministry of the annual conference, we support the means through which local churches receive effective pastoral leadership. Local churches entrust their annual

conferences with the responsibility to equip, send, and supervise pastoral leaders, thereby freeing local congregations to focus their energies in other important ministries. Connectional ministry helps to make this possible, and mission shares help to support this process. This illustration is only one example of why it makes sense to say that, the first benevolent act of the local congregation is the paying of our mission shares.

Mission Share Relief

Earlier this year, the Finance and Stewardship Committee made a decision to apply for **mission share relief** from the annual conference. As a congregation, we have had a difficult time paying our full apportionments/ mission shares over the last several years. There were many reasons for this. One reason which I lift up is that, as a church we discerned together to make an investment in our program ministry with hopes of bearing a fruitful harvest of growth and deeper discipleship in the long term. We sought to position ourselves for growth, taking a leap of faith that God will meet us in our need.

I am pleased to announce that the annual conference recognized our efforts and approved our application for mission-share relief for 2015. Our original apportionment was \$78,521. The mission share relief provides a \$36,950 reduction to make our new apportionment \$41,571. This relief is intended to ease our present financial burden while we seek to implement intermediate plans to grow our church. The plan is for our apportionment to increase each year over a period of three to five years until we can pay our full mission shares. In that three to five year period, we are expected to be doing everything we can to grow our church in all the ways necessary: spiritual, numerical, financial.

While the mission share relief reduces the church budget deficit, it does not eliminate the deficit. If you recall, we approved a significant deficit budget for 2015, with a deficit of \$61,095. The conference has placed some faith in us that, with God's help, we can live into the vision of growth we have set for ourselves. The invitation and challenge for us is to have faith in God and in ourselves that we can take the necessary steps of faith toward our vision and goals. Will we be up to the challenge? By God's grace, I certainly hope and pray so!

I remain very hopeful that we can meet the challenge. I am working with the church council to clarify our goals for the next three to five years and to implement our plan. Our plan will include efforts to grow in our ministries of radical hospitality, passionate worship, intentional faith development, risk-taking mission

and service, and extravagant generosity. We are hopeful that these five ministry practices will lead us to be a fruitful congregation. We will need your faithful participation. After all, we are connected in ministry and in this work together. I invite you first and foremost to join in praying for the Pentecost Spirit to perform God's mighty wonders and signs in and through community. Will you pray with me?

In faith and trust, Pastor Shandi

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

YEAR TO DATE BUDGET RESULTS THROUGH APRIL

	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total Income	187,257	178,623	-8,634
Total Expense	239,843	225,896	-13,946
Difference	-52,585	-47,273	5,312
Add back unpaid			
Mission shares*	_____	<u>-19,040</u>	_____
<u>Adjusted Difference</u>	\$ -52,585	\$ -66,313	\$ 13,728

*Note: Wesley UMC has been granted a reduction in the 2015 mission shares which is not reflected in the April results. The original total of \$78,521 has been reduced to \$41,571 and the new budget numbers will be part of the May report.

Regards, 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.

Items for the following months are...

May & June: Condiments (in plastic please)

July: Diapers (sizes 1-6)

August: School Supplies (ages 6-14)

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

SUNDAY SCHOOL

THANK YOU... Wow, what a generous congregation we have! The numbers are not finalized yet, but we have already collected over \$725 for Heifer International! Thank you for your donations! Your donations will be given to help provide relief to those in Nepal. As of May 6, at least 7,100 project participant homes across Nepal have sustained major damage and Heifer families have lost at least 1,500 animals in the devastating earthquake.

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 (and free!) activity for your children during the summer? Seeking 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.

Children's and Youth Sunday... Mark your calendars for this special children and youth-led worship service on June 14th!

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 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.

No Sunday School May 24th: Please note that there will be no children's Sunday School during the 10:30 worship service this day due to the Ghanaian Choir Festival and holiday weekend.

MISSION MATTERS

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, May 17th, 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.

April & May Community Suppers... On Saturday, May 30, Linda D'Acri and her family will be preparing a meal of BBQ chicken, potato salad, macaroni salad, mixed veggies, green salad, beverage and dessert. Donations of cupcakes, brownies, or cookies are requested.

Thank you for the especially generous number of desserts given to the April supper which featured the choir in charge. They sang, 95 meals were served, and Brett played hymn requests at the 5:30 pm vesper service. People talked about how they especially enjoy Wesley's monthly supper.

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.

Free Meals in Worcester... There's now a schedule of free hot meals that are available in Worcester, with a map of the locations on the back. You can give this sheet to anyone you meet who is looking for assistance, or leave copies in places where needy people might find them. The Mission Committee gathered the info, and Debi Ritacco produced the chart and map. Help yourself to copies which are outside the Welcome Office window.

Worcester organizations have worked together to offer breakfast M - F at St. John's Church, and on Saturday at the John St. Baptist Church. Sally's Place at the Salvation Army has food from 9 am to 2 pm M - F, and dinner on Sunday. Mustard Seed provides dinner M - F, and 3 churches (including Wesley) offer dinners on the various Saturdays. Questions? Ask Betsy Pennino.



MISSION RECOGNITION AWARD 2015 ~ *Rebecca Aidoo*

On Sunday, May 10th, during the 10:30 service, we recognized a woman of Wesley who is a true bridge-builder. Ever since she started coming to church here back in 2003, she has worked hard to connect with members of the congregation, especially women, even if their backgrounds may have been different from hers. Early on, she participated in a program begun by Pastor Vicki to pair up newer members with those who had been coming for years. In this way, she gained a few new “family” members – a brother and sister-in-law, she would call them.

She has created new life in our church, by bringing drama into worship services, organizing a fashion show for a United Methodist Women tea party, introducing African liturgical dance into our Harvest celebrations, and birthing a new fellowship circle within UMW.

Not surprisingly, she has served on the Hospitality Committee on occasion, and currently serves on the Lay Leadership Nominations and Development Committee, as well as Staff-Parish Relations.

In her not-always-quiet way, she is a friendly instigator and an organizer. She helped with a women’s mini-Harvest and last year’s Imagine No Malaria lunch. She remains a strong advocate for diversity in our leadership committees. For her tireless work to foster greater understanding among Wesley’s members from both Ghana and the U.S., I am very pleased to present this year’s Mission Recognition Award to Rebecca Aidoo.

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 dates for some Dining for a Cause events. Have a night off from cooking and support the youth!

May 18th at 2Ovens 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...)

May 28th at Texas Road House, Lincoln St., Worcester (Need to bring a flyer when you dine—Wesley will receive a percentage of those that present a flyer). Please share the flyer with others too.

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!

CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES

Upcoming Christian Formation Retreat—

On Saturday, June 13th from 9 a.m. -1 p.m. there will be a retreat at Wesley UMC focusing on “The Soul of Hospitality.” We talk often in churches about our call as Christians to offer hospitality to others. What about offering hospitality to ourselves? While at first glance this question may seem like a self-centered one... this retreat will invite a different perspective as we focus on what “self-care”/ “self-hospitality” means for our capacity to offer hospitality to others.

A light breakfast and lunch will be provided. There will be a basket available for donations. However, there is no fee for attending the retreat. All are welcome to this day of spiritual reflection and renewal!

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: Conversations as Ministry (May 17th), No Sunday School on May 24th—Special Worship Service beginning at 10 a.m., A Culture of Prayer (May 31st), Race and Excessive Police Force—Part 1 (June 7th), Race and Excessive Police Force—Part 2 (June 14th), “Nones” and Faith: What the church has to offer those who currently don’t attend church—Part 2 (June 21st), Water Crises (June 28th). 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. and will last approx. 45 minutes. The labyrinth will be available for walking anytime between 10:30 a.m. and 9 p.m. on the 19th. The Taizé services and Labyrinth Walk will be held in the Chapel.

New Small Groups Forming—

In May/June, 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 10:30 a.m.-Noon. This group will meet first on Tuesday, June 1st and for their second session on Tuesday, June 29. [This group will meet twice in June because of scheduling challenges in May.] There will also be an evening group that will meet at the church from 7-8:30 p.m. A regular day and week of the month will be selected for the evening group once the group members are determined.

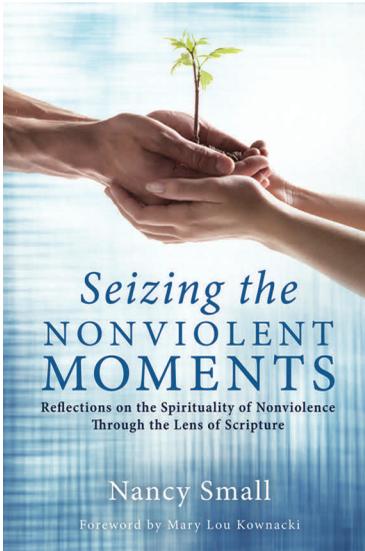
The groups will meet once a month and will begin with prayer and fellowship time followed by a facilitated discussion of one of the practices. The plan is to spend two months discussing each practice detailed in Schnase's book. The first month's discussion will focus on the Scriptural and theological 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. There will also be a table with information about the book and sign-up sheets in Brewer Hall on Sunday.



ALL FAITHS CEMETERY celebrates 129 years on Memorial Day. A worship service will be held as usual at the Pavilion located in the center of All Faiths Cemetery on Monday, May 25th at 10 AM. We would like as many people as possible to enjoy this day with us. The service will be followed by coffee and pastry at the Pavilion.

JOIN US FOR AN EVENING WITH NANCY SMALL



Nancy will share from her new book, *Seizing the Nonviolent Moments*, and discuss ways we can practice nonviolence in our daily lives. The evening will draw upon stories from Scripture and contemporary peacemakers, offering wisdom for living a spirituality of nonviolence for our times.

Nancy is a hospice chaplain, spiritual director, and a seeker of peace. She is a former national coordinator and a current Ambassador of Peace with Pax Christi USA, the national Catholic peace movement.

“At a time when church teaching has once again embraced Jesus’ radical rejection of all violence, most Christians still struggle to follow him. With her deep insights from Scripture, prayerful reflections and challenging questions, Nancy Small enables us to ‘seize the nonviolent moments’ of everyday life as a path to profound conversion.” - Bishop Thomas Gumbleton

TUESDAY MAY 19, 2015 ~ 7-9 PM

Free and Open to the Public. Parking is available on the street and in the lot at Institute Rd and Grove St. Please use the upper ramp entrance for Merriman Chapel (signs for CMHA and United Worship).

Books will be available for purchase.



United Congregational Church of Worcester

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JOHN IN ULTRA-HIGH CONTEXT: JOHN 7:14B-52

(notes from the Brewer Hall Study Group, May 3 & 10, 2015)

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At Sukkot in Jerusalem: Initial Challenge to Jesus about His Authority (7:14b-18)

(vv. 14b-18) Having chosen this moment to go public in Jerusalem – and in the temple – Jesus faces the second challenge of this unit (chapter 7-8): “How is it that this man has learning (‘knows his letters’), when he has never studied?” Jesus’ initial response to this challenge is to assert that his teaching is not his own (and therefore, his lack of formal education is irrelevant), but from God, which would be recognized by anyone who resolved to do what pleases God (the “will of God”). The language about “being sent” is that of patronage – here, Jesus being the intermediary (the broker) between the ultimate patron (God) and those for whom the message is intended (cf. 5:36-37).

Jesus’ Riposte: Moses Gives the Law, but You Do Not Observe It (7:19-28)

(vv. 19-20) Jesus continues the verbal sparring with his opponents by placing them on the defensive with the charge that they do not keep the law. In so doing, he brings to the surface their motives – their wish to kill him (noted in 7:1) provoked by the healing of the lame man in Jerusalem on the Sabbath, and the ensuing controversy (5:2-20). The Jerusalem crowd is losing the argument on its merits and responds with an ad hominem attack, accusing Jesus of being “demon-possessed” (v. 20).

(vv. 21-24) Jesus refutes their charge by simple repudiation (v. 21: “I did one deed, and you all marvel at it.”); by denial of an injury or victim (v. 23: “... I made a man’s whole body well...”); by appeal to higher authority (v. 23: the law of Moses allows analogous action on a Sabbath); and by condemnation of their charge against him (v. 24: “Do not judge by appearances, but judge with right judgment.”)

(vv. 26-28) This epilogue to Jesus’ riposte redirects to the question of his origins, and the critical information that his *ascribed* honor is from his origin from God.

Second Challenge in Jerusalem: Attempts to Arrest Jesus (7:29-36)

(vv. 29-33) Jesus’ continued insistence that God sent him {cf. vv. 18, 28, & 33} provokes his opponents (who have lost the battle of wits) to resort to force. Some in the crowd are beginning to **believe into** Jesus do so because of his actions (great deeds always imply a great person; here, perhaps a Messiah). Concerned that this incipient crowd speculation is beginning to identify Jesus as the Messiah, the Jerusalem elites (chief priests, Pharisees) try to salvage the failed attempt to arrest Jesus (v. 30) by sending in their attendants (retainers/temple police).

(vv. 34-36) Jesus' concluding comment to this attempt at arrest ("Ye will seek (*zētēseté*, "seek out") me and will not find", v. 34) uses the same verb as in 7:1, 19, and 25, where the intent to kill him is clear. The reply of the Jerusalem elites (vv. 35-36) pretends to misunderstand Jesus' comment, that he will attempt to escape to the Hellenistic realm of the Roman empire, where the elites would give up tracking him down for fear of becoming unclean. However, they knew exactly what Jesus meant by "seek out" because they use the same verb in v. 35.

Last Day of the Feast: Jesus' Proclamation (7:37-52)

(vv. 37-39) On the last (great) day of the seven-day Feast of Sukkot, Jesus proclaims that {metaphorically}, he is the life-nurturing water – {for which the pilgrims gathered in music and dance in the intermediate days of the festival (Celebration of the Place of Water-Drawing). This celebration commemorates the drawing of the water for the water-libation on the Altar, an offering unique to Sukkot, when water was carried up the [Jerusalem pilgrim road](#) from the [Pool of Siloam](#) to the [Temple in Jerusalem](#).}

(vv. 40-44) This declaration again divides public opinion, and once again, judgments on Jesus' possible role as the Messiah return to his birth origins. Galilean birth does not sound promising for a great person. Another attempt at an arrest fails.

(vv. 45-49) The attendants report back to their handlers that not only did they fail to arrest Jesus, but that they were impressed by what they heard (in the first century, great speaking implied positive and powerful character). This report offended the Pharisees, who had assumed that they were granted the role of setting the social order.

(vv. 50-52) Nicodemus, a Pharisee who had approached Jesus prior to this in private conversation (3:1-10), here in the assembly of these elites defends Jesus by raising an objection on a point of judicial procedure. But he doesn't force his point after his colleagues rebuke him for not conforming to their judgment of Jesus based on his place of origin (place of origin determines status and character). In the minds of his colleagues, Nicodemus' poor judgment raised the possibility that he had a matching origin.

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. 146-155.

Sukkot. Wikipedia. 18 April 2015.

DID YOU KNOW?

This past Sunday we heard the story of Dorcas as part of the reflections offered about some of the Biblical women after whom our circles of the United Methodist Women are named. One of those women was Dorcas, also known as Tabitha, a Christian woman from Joppa known for her generosity and charity. We heard the story of her death and subsequent restoration to life by Peter as related in Acts 9:36-42. Did you know that Dorcas is pictured in the stained glass of our sanctuary? In fact all of the panels in the windows on the main wall in the South balcony (lectern side of the sanctuary) are devoted to women of faith.

Dorcas is depicted in the window on the right as you face the South balcony from the sanctuary floor. This window depicts three significant women of the Bible. From left to right they are:

- Dorcas
- Mary Magdalene, who is usually mentioned first in any listing of the women disciples of Jesus who served him throughout his ministry. She is also foremost among witnesses at the Crucifixion as well as at the empty tomb.
- Ruth, who is known for her loving loyalty and faithfulness. Her son was the grandfather of King David, and her name appears in the genealogy of Jesus as listed in the Gospel of Matthew.
- The window on the left depicts women of more recent times. From left to right they are:
 - Frances Willard (1839-1898) who was a suffragist and temperance leader.
 - Isabella Thoburn (1840-1901), born in Ohio, she was the first woman Methodist Episcopal Church missionary to India. She founded a girls' school in Lucknow, North India, which became Thoburn College, one of the first women's colleges in Asia.
 - Barbara Heck (1744-1804) who is often referred to as the "Mother of American Methodism." At her urging, her cousin Philip Embury held the first Methodist meeting in America in his home and built the first Methodist chapel in America.

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>
Tues., May 26	Thurs., May 28
Mon., June 8	Wed., June 10

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.



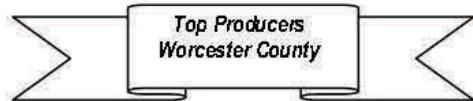
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MAY 13, 2015

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- 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
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- Head Usher David Dagle
- Administrative Council Ron Ramsay
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