

MERCY AND JUSTICE

“What does the Lord require of you but to do justice, love mercy, and to walk humbly with your God.” ~ Micah 6:8

Recently, Wesley Church helped yet another homeless family that was in need. It was a couple with a three year old daughter. The couple had been working hard, trying to do all the right things, to secure housing for themselves.

When the family found themselves homeless, they used their meagre means to pay for a hotel. When they reached out to the Department of Transitional Assistance, they were surprised to hear that, if they could pay for a hotel, they technically were not homeless and thus could not qualify for housing assistance.

The family was then told that if they stayed in a shelter or a church for a night and came back with a letter from the church saying that they were homeless, then they could receive some assistance. So, that's when they came to Wesley. With the help of Lisa and other office staff, Wesley Church put the family up in a hotel for a night.

Lisa also called around to her connections in the city and was able to find helpful information for the couple. In particular, she learned that there is a policy that DTA is required to provide transitional housing for a homeless family with children under 18 if they meet certain conditions, which this family met. It was disheartening to realize that the staff interacting with the couple at DTA was aware of this policy but would not offer help simply because the couple didn't know to mention that they needed “presumptive housing,” the code word for the particular situation they were in. Needless to say, when the couple went back equipped with this “code word,” they received immediate assistance.

For us at Wesley, it was disheartening to learn that it was almost as if the couple was expected to be destitute before they could get help from those who have the resources to help. We wondered how many have been in similar situations and just didn't know that help was available to them if only they knew that “code word.”

In a couple of previous Herald articles, I posed the question about what sets apart our outreach ministries when they're compared to the work of other non-religious humanitarian agencies. I mentioned that I continue to wrestle with this question, especially, when situations like the one I described above come up. Surely, it's not enough to offer verbal prayers with and for a family that comes to us seeking help.

LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS

The Tower lighting for July is given in loving memory of Mable & Luther Marsh, and Evelyn & Martin Samanen and in honor and celebration of Dorothea & Lyndon Samanen by Carol Samanen.

The Rose window lighting for July is given in loving memory of my mother, Mary Barbe Kerns by Chris Kerns.

The altar flowers on Sunday, July 23rd are given in loving memory of Joanne Rokes by Bruce and Judi Nichols.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✠ Jan England for healing after surgery
- ✠ Chloe Sundberg for healing after a medical procedure
- ✠ Caroline Sherman for strength in her struggle with cancer
- ✠ John Angwanda who is grieving for his lost son, 23 year old Joseph.

Thank You, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

My sincere Thanks to everyone for making my Best of Friends book signing a success. A special thanks to Debi Ritacco for her support and friendship. Thanks are also due to the many friends, who over the years have been a part of the girls lives.
God Bless, Phyllis Yngve

LOOKING FOR SOME GOOD SUMMERTIME READING?

Check out the suggestions at: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/readingprogram

You'll find fiction and non-fiction for children, youth and adults, in various formats: print, large-print, e-books, audio. There's something for EVERYONE! Many are available through the online UMW store, other online sources, and public libraries.

To view the 2017 selections, with descriptions: www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/downloads/reading-program-catalog-2017

For an alphabetical listing of the 2012-2017 selections:

www.unitedmethodistwomen.org/reading-program/allbooks-a-z

Happy Reading!

Submitted by Barb Ingrassia

Prayer also needs to turn into some form action. And for the couple that came, Lisa's action of contacting people who were better connected to city resources for families was a life-saving action.

We could have put the couple up for a night in a hotel and felt good just for doing that, but without that "code word" the couple was surely destined for a much more desperate situation.

This situation reminded me of the scripture from Micah 6:8. As churches, we are very comfortable with doing works of mercy. We love to offer charity and meet people's immediate needs. However, we have a much more difficult time considering the justice matters for people in need. We all know the saying, "give a man a fish and he will eat for a day; teach him how to fish and he will eat for a lifetime." Mercy is akin to giving someone fish. Justice is teaching them how to fish, including helping to create the right conditions for bountiful fishing.

The justice ministry of the church is about finding ways to make sure that the people we feed at Carty and the community supper, or the people we serve at medical ministry, etc, can live lives where they will no longer need our charity. I know sometimes we pride ourselves in the number of people we serve at these mercy ministries. But, I believe that the call of justice invites us to pride ourselves in the number of people we lead to no longer need our charity. I believe that a truer sign of faithful and successful in ministry is leading people to the dignity of self-sustenance.

I have been looking at the mission work we do here at Wesley. I have noticed that we seem to have a passion for work connected to homelessness, among other needs. I look at the people we feed at the Community Supper. I look at our faithful support of Interfaith Hospitality Network. I look at our support for Stand-up for Kids and our participation in Habitat for Humanity build days. I look at the increasing number of homeless families that call or come to our church looking for help. Since my Pastor's discretionary fund is not able to sustain paying for hotel nights for everyone who comes to the door, many times we turn these families away, referring them to other agencies and never knowing if they get the help they seek. So, I wonder.

Could it be that God is calling Wesley to consider the justice matters for homeless families? What might a justice ministry for the homeless look like? What would it take for us to recommit and redirect our energies toward a justice-centered ministry with the homeless? I feel a stirring in my spirit that this may be something that God wants us to consider as a church? Is there anyone else among you who is feeling the same?

In faith and hope, Pastor Shandi

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK *On behalf of the Church Council*

Last Fall, the Church Council voted that we wanted to lead the church toward breaking the cycle of deficit budgets that we have sustained over the years. To do so, we decided to spend this current year exploring a way forward that will help us meet our goal. The goal is to present a 2018 budget that is reflective of responsible stewardship, balanced, and sustainable for the ongoing future.

This Fall the Church Council will be presenting to you various scenarios for a way forward and inviting you to a discerning conversation on our options. In order to prepare you for these conversations, I am writing now to give a brief synopsis of the state of our financial ministry as context for our upcoming meetings.

In January, Wesley Church voted a 2017 budget that had a \$16,492 deficit. The initial deficit would have been over \$90,000 but the church council presented a final budget for your vote that included the following solutions to reduce the deficit:

- i) Increase the spending policy rule on the endowment from 6.75% to 7%. You approved this recommendation for 2017 only and this solution provided the church budget an additional \$6,355 dollars.
- ii) You approved the use of \$46,417 that was in the Galaxy Fund.
- iii) You affirmed our continuation in the Mission Share Relief program, of which we are in our third year. The conference reduced our mission shares by \$23,606 for 2017.

While you approved other small technical changes to the budget, the above three changes accounted for the most significant reduction in our deficit.

As we look toward 2018 and prepare for our financial ministry, the following are the facts that we know about our starting point:

- a) We no longer have the Galaxy Fund. We depleted those funds, which means that we are starting our 2018 budgeting process with \$46,417 less than 2017.
- b) The will of the church in prior years has been to reduce our spending policy rule on the endowment to a *sustainable* 5%. Whether this happens gradually or immediately is a question we will be exploring.

- c) 2018 will mark our fourth year in the Mission Share Relief program. The goal of the program is to provide temporary relief while annually moving us back toward paying full mission shares over the course of five years.
- d) We anticipate an approximate \$17,500 increase to our snowplowing budget. The vendor we were using closed their business. We had sustained a beneficial arrangement with them in which our snowplowing bill was significantly reduced to offset the cost of the vendor using our warehouse for storing equipment.

If all else stays the same (with the exception of the changes mentioned above), Finance Committee anticipates an initial deficit budget of approximately \$100,000 for 2018.

The solutions that the administrative committees of the Church Council (Finance, Stewardship, Staff-Parish Relations, and Trustees) will be presenting are seeking to address not only this deficit budget, but a vision of sustainability, growth and transformation in our ministries. This means that, we will need to look at both technical and adaptive solutions.

Technical solutions provide for immediate relief—like the decisions we made with the Galaxy Fund or spending rule on the endowment. By themselves, technical solutions are not sustainable if they are not accompanied by adaptive solutions. Adaptive changes are difficult, and their results are not immediate. Results take a long time so they require the strength and courage to stay the course. The challenge is always finding the right balance of adaptive and technical solutions that best position us toward growth and transformation.

Given this reality and the challenges we face, we recognize that we need God's help. We need God to give us wisdom, insight, and vision. We need God to grant us courage to make bold and difficult decisions, and the peace to trust that God is with us through this journey. We need God to give us strength in our faith to stay the course. So, we need to be praying—praying without ceasing—and turning our prayers into action. Faith, for me, is lived where prayer and action intersect. While we wait for God to respond, we can be doing our part.

So, I invite you to be in a time of fervent prayer as we approach the important conversations this Fall.

With hope and faith, Pastor Shandi

SHOUT OUT FOR SUMMER SOLSTICE SINGERS... A chorus of thank-yous for the two dozen singers who showed up (with only a few days' notice) to join in the first-ever Make Music Worcester day on June 21 to celebrate the summer solstice in a citywide celebration. Wesley's group stood on the front steps for a noontime musical offering to anyone passing by on Main Street. We were one of 23 different locations for musical performances offered that day in Worcester. We were also one of more than 750 cities participating in 120 countries!

Special thanks to conductor Debbie O'Driscoll, conductor/composer Nan Gibbons and videographer Debi Ritacco. Singing with us that day were Christiana Amoah, Lucy Annan, Pauline Ansah, Alice Boateng, Deb Bock, Janice England, Lisa Fagerstrom, Bonnie Garriepy, Nan Gibbons, Matilda Hammond, Allison Hansen, Peter Hansen, Esi Korsah, Gail Liston, Lorna Mattus-Merrill, Shandi Mawokomatanda, Mercy Peacock, Gladys Poku, Gary Robinson, Carol Samanen, Dave Samanen, Emily Smith, Enoch Ukpogon, Martha Vigeant, Susan Williams and Grace Woode.

~Allison Hansen



MISSION MATTERS

July 29th Community Supper... The menu will be meatloaf, mashed potatoes, green beans, salad, rolls, beverages and dessert. Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah has volunteered to lead both the July and August suppers! She prefers that bakers make pies for the July supper, but other desserts are also appreciated. Please tell Kimberly if you can contribute dessert, and also if you could help cook, set up, serve and/or clean up. Thank you.

Walk for Suicide Prevention ~ September 16th... Worcester's annual Walk for Suicide Prevention is on Saturday, September 16th. Registration is in Institute Park from 9 to 10 am. Jennifer Tharp will be talking with the congregation about efforts to stop suicides, and you could ask her questions. You can also visit the website centralmawalk@gmail.com.

SUMMER WORSHIP SERIES OUTLINE: CULTIVATING COMPASSION

In his book, *A Mile in my Shoes*, Trevor Hudson writes: “We live in a day and age characterized by an unprecedented upsurge of spiritual searching. This widespread interest calls for careful discernment. On the one hand, the contemporary church has been inundated by various spiritualities that obsessively focus on inner matters yet reflect minimal concern for those who suffer. On the other hand, the church often endorses a spirituality of social struggle and liberation that sidesteps the biblical imperative for personal conversion and transformation. Such endorsement falls prey to the dangerous illusion that we can build a just and compassionate society while we remain the same. Indeed, our times cry out for a gospel-shaped spirituality that is both intensely personal and deeply aware of suffering of neighbor.”

With this in mind, we invite you to join us in our summer worship series on *Cultivating Compassion*:

Date	Sunday Theme	Preacher	Other observations
	<i>Developing An Awareness to Suffering</i>		
Jun 25	Learning to be Present	Shandi	Layman of the Year
Jul 2	Learning to Notice: Discerning the Presence of God	Shandi	Communion
Jul 9	Learning to Notice: Opening Eyes to Suffering	Lisa	
Jul 16	Learning to Listen	Debbie	Sunday after VBS
	<i>Developing Empathy</i>		
Jul 23	Uncovering our Inner Poverty and Weaknesses	Shandi	
Jul 30	Discerning the Systemic Enemies to Compassion	Lisa	Men’s Mini Harvest
Aug 6	Embracing our Capacity for Compassion	Shandi	Communion
	<i>Practicing Compassion</i>		
Aug 13	Becoming a compassionate neighbor to oneself	Shandi	
Aug 20	Becoming a compassionate neighbor to those closest to us	Lisa	
Aug 27	Becoming a compassionate neighbor to the stranger	Debbie	Women’s Mini Harvest
Sep 3	Developing a celebrative lifestyle , part 1	Shandi	Communion
Sep 10	Developing a celebrative lifestyle , part 2	Shandi	Ministry Fair

CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES AT WESLEY

“The critical test of our relationship with the Holy One always involves the quality of our love for those around us. If our communion with God isolates us from the painful realities of our world, inoculates us against feeling the pain of our neighbors, and leads into an excessive preoccupation with our own well-being, it must be considered suspect. If, on the other hand, our communion with God finds expression in greater compassion and a willingness to show care, then it passes the test for genuineness.”

~ Trevor Hudson, *A Mile in My Shoes*

For the last decade of Apartheid in South Africa, Trevor Hudson led his white Johannesburg congregation on yearly week-long pilgrimages to be with their black neighbors in nearby Soweto. In the spirit of our sermon series *Cultivating Compassion*, you are invited to a practice which Trevor and other pilgrims used in preparing to “open more deeply to the Spirit-generated current of awareness and recognition between yourself and your suffering neighbor.” Trevor writes:

- ✦ Next time you find yourself in the midst of a crowd, ask God to deepen your awareness of those around you who may be carrying heavy burdens. Usually I remind myself that every human being sits next to a pool of tears.
- ✦ Allow the presence of other people in all their inexhaustible mystery, burden, and need to impinge upon your awareness.
- ✦ Recognize the people near you as living sacraments of the Divine Presence, each of them potential Christ-bearers to our world.
- ✦ Intercede in prayer for those who seem particularly troubled and downhearted and lift them inwardly into the healing light and love of God.
- ✦ Throughout the day, reflect on your experience and the awareness it raised.

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### **Summer Sermon Series Companion Study—**

In concert with the *Cultivating Compassion* Summer sermon series, the 9:30 topical Sunday School class is studying Trevor Hudson’s book “A Mile in My Shoes”— the book that we are using for the series. Each week is a stand-alone lesson and discussion, so please join us in the John Wesley room on the Sundays when you are able.

### **Small Group Opportunities for the Fall—**

Several new small groups will be forming in the fall. Watch this space in the August Herald for further information.

Interested in starting or being a part of a small group, have ideas, and/or would like some resources? E-mail Lisa Fagerstrom at: [lisa.wesleychurch@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.wesleychurch@gmail.com), talk with her on Sunday, or leave a message at Wesley: 508-799-4191, ext. 106.

## **LAYMAN OF THE YEAR 2017**

The 2017 Layman of the Year Award, which was presented on Sunday June 25<sup>th</sup> went to Gerard Piscitelli, who grew up here in Worcester, off of Grove Street. After graduating from high school, he joined the US Army as a combat engineer. As a combat engineer, one of the duties includes building and/or fixing bridges, giving him some of those construction skills that he uses today. After returning to Worcester from the military, he worked for the City and State for over the past 30 years, still employed with the City of Worcester.

Gerard joined Wesley in the 90's looking for a church home for his 2 daughters. Since then he has given his time and talents to many missions that Wesley supports. He's been a member of the Mission Committee, worked on Habitat for Humanity projects, and participated in Community Suppers. He has gone on quite a few mission trips to places like Haiti, multiple trips to Guatemala and Louisiana, Brooklyn, NY and has worked with UM Army, to name a few. When he was in Haiti, someone approached him asking for his shoes. Gerard didn't give them up but instead sent a whole suitcase full of shoes after he got back. He has been a District Disaster Coordinator for the New England UMCOR District for several years, doing mission work for the District.

Gerard has and still is very instrumental in helping keep the Church clean and maintained. When either work or some project around the Church needs to get done, he's either volunteering for that effort or coordinating volunteers to help out. Gerard has mentored several of our young adults as they go through confirmation class, providing witness and helping these kids on their life journey.

Today, Gerard currently resides in Jefferson, MA. Although Gerard shy's away from the spotlight, he absolutely deserves to be recognized for his contributions to Wesley Church as the 2017 Layman of the Year.



**WESLEY CHURCH TEAM  
DAYS FOR GIRLS**

*Leaders: Violet Ansah, Deb Bock, Lorraine Kronberg*

***THANK YOU TO THE WESLEY CONGREGATION***

***YOU KEEP ON GIVING!!!***

**We have been given another new serger! It is too wonderful to believe but we now have three sergers in operation. We are able to get so much work done to make it to our September date for “Kit Sunday”. It will be an exciting morning as we invite you all to help us put the kits together.**

**You can continue to help by working with our team here at Wesley on most Friday mornings in the summer or at home. We have all types of needs from cutting, tracing and sewing. Call any team member for information.**

**WHY DOES DFG MATTER?**

**When a girl is educated, *everything changes*. It’s better for her health, her family, her job prospects, her community and her country. The point is: Girls do better when they stay in school.**

**EVERY GIRL...EVERYWHERE...PERIOD**

## DID YOU KNOW?

This week in Vacation Bible Camp our children are learning about the apostle Paul, Rome, and the early church. Concomitantly some adults are also learning about Paul through a DVD series, *Eclipsing Empire*, which uses Paul's journeys through the Roman Empire as a lens through which to reflect on his challenge to the imperialism of Rome and his relevance for today. Given the profound impact on Christian thought and practice of Paul's letters as contained in the New Testament it might not surprise you to learn that Paul is the subject of one of the stained glass windows in our sanctuary. The four large windows on the upper side wall of the sanctuary on the pulpit side are each dedicated to figures and events from the New Testament. The second window from the back is devoted to Paul.

The large central panel depicts Paul's conversion.\* In a medallion to the left is an image of the shipwreck on the way to Rome, below which is a symbol of the viper which emerged from a fire but did not harm Paul. The medallion to the right of the central panel depicts disciples' receiving the Holy Spirit as Paul lays hands on them.

The tracery above the three main panels depicts those who were companions of Paul at various times. From left to right they are Timothy (with staff and book), Peter (with a net), Barnabas (with stones and a cross), and Silas (also with staff and book). At the very top of the window the quatrefoil contains Paul's symbols of an open book and a sword.

An image of Paul is also found at the front of our sanctuary. The niche on the right of the altar (as you are facing it) contains a carved statue of Paul holding the same symbols: open book and sword. The book makes obvious sense, given the number of epistles attributed to Paul, but you might be wondering why one of Paul's symbols is a sword. After all, the inscription across the bottom of the window contains a typical Pauline blessing: "The Grace of the Lord Jesus Christ be with you", not a bellicose call to arms. While many of the Biblical references to the sword are literally to the sword as a weapon of war, there are also more figurative uses of the term. In references that go beyond images of battle, the sword is also used as a symbol of judgment and authority. In both the Old and New Testaments one of the more positive images of the sword is as the Word of God. This imagery is appropriate in that the word of God penetrates into our very hearts and souls. Paul himself in his description of the armor of God in Ephesians 6 makes reference to "the sword of the Spirit, which is the word of God" (v.17b).

*Submitted by Deborah A. O'Driscoll*

\*Information about the window was obtained from the booklet *The Windows at Wesley Methodist Church, Worcester, Massachusetts*)

## 2017 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., Aug. 14                | Wed., Aug. 16              |
| Tues., Sept. 5               | Thurs., Sept. 7            |

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

**office@wesleyworc.org**

**ALTAR FLOWERS** on Sundays are available for donation in honor, celebration or in memory of a loved one or friend. Stop by the office and reserve the date in the Altar Flower book. 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 or member/friend in the hospital or in rehab. The cost for the two arrangements in either the chapel or sanctuary is \$60. Please be sure to complete a form with the dedication and return it to Debi with the payment as soon as you are able.



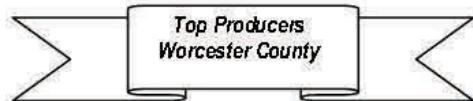
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**WESLEY HERALD**  
**JULY 12, 2017**

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

**WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM**

- Pastor Rev. Shandirai Mawokomatanda
- Director of Christian Formation & Discipleship Lisa Fagerstrom
- Director of Children's Christian Education Jean Grant
- Director of Music Ministries Brett Maguire
- Director of Children's Music Nan Gibbons
- Asst. Director of Ghanaian Choir Wesley Hall
- Music Assistant & Layleader Deborah O'Driscoll
- Toddler Care Leader Lori Conlon
- Building Superintendent Tim Murphy
- Business Administrator Lorna Mattus-Merrill
- Church Secretary Debi Ritacco
- Custodians April Dylewicz  
Tom Friend  
Gerard Piscitelli
- Security Steve Boyns
- Head Usher David Dagle
- Church Council Tom Ingrassia
- Board of Trustees Yaw Enyim  
Co-Chairs Gary Robinson
- Carty Cupboard Food Pantry Nancy Spencer
- Communion Steward Linda D'Acri
- Finance & Stewardship Michael Edmunds  
Co-Chairs William Wong
- Ghanaian Association Paul Hayfron
- Hospitality Co-Chairs Vivian Assie  
Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah
- Medical Ministry Ron Ramsay
- Mission Coordinator Betsy Pennino
- Staff-Parish Relations Gifty Bentum-Asante
- Youth Directors Lisa Fagerstrom  
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