

This is the first week in the season of Advent; a time when we wait in hope, love, joy, and peace for the coming of the incarnation of God's love, the Christ Child, into our hearts and our world. No matter what the year or the goings on in our life and times, it seems there is always the need to be reflective and to wait expectantly for God's love to renew us again to ever be the Good News in a weary world. That is surely the case this year with the divisive election season we have just endured in this country.

As I was pulling together the Advent Devotional for this year (available at Wesley or by e-mail if you would like one and didn't get one on Sunday), the quote below spoke to me about Advent's promise of God's peace and love and righteousness... and the opportunity for each of us to be every day co-creators of that Advent-envisioned world. A word of thanks to Jean Grant for bringing this Howard Zinn quote to the attention of the Worship Planning Team...

*"To be hopeful in bad times is not just foolishly romantic. It is based on the fact that human history is a history not only of cruelty, but also of compassion, sacrifice, courage, kindness. What we choose to emphasize in this complex history will determine our lives. If we see only the worst, it destroys our capacity to do something. If we remember those times and places – and there are so many – where people have behaved magnificently, this gives us the energy to act and at least the possibility of sending this spinning top of a world in a different direction. And if we do act, in however small a way, we don't have to wait for some grand utopian future. The future is an infinite succession of presents, and to live now as we think human beings should live, in defiance of all that is bad around us, is itself a marvelous victory."*

This Advent, this very day: What candle of hope is alight in your soul? What is God's call on your life to live each day as if it is your responsibility to be the Good News in and to the world? What Christ-like actions are you called to take each day to be the love, peace, joy, and hope that is the promise of Advent? What will you do? Who will you be?

I invite you, individually and in your homes and communities, to make a commitment this Advent to be the change you want to see in the world. I invite you to practice an Advent intention each day...preparing your heart for the birth of the

## LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS

**The Rose** window lighting for December is given in loving memory of Alice R. (Kokernak) Rand, Wesley B. Rand, Mildred A. Kokernak and Henri H. Kokernak by Henry Rand.

**The Tower** lighting for December is given in loving memory of Jean and Calvin Williams by Debbie, Gail and families.

## WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✠ Marianne, who has become exhausted because of head pain , and needs long term help.
- ✠ Frances, who is alone after her husband's recent death, and must begin organizing.
- ✠ The family of Nana Apenteng who have their immigration interview this week.
- ✠ Judy Stern whose cancer has returned and is discouraged
- ✠ Cynthia Barry who asks prayers for guidance and courage as she prepares for a new job opportunity.
- ✠ John Fullen for his speedy recovery after having ankle surgery this past week.
- ✠ Anne Burrows who is in rehab at Fairlawn Rehabilitation hospital following surgery.
- ✠ Paul Keister who is in UMass Hospital.
- ✠ Jack and Jane Coccio as they are dealing with serious health issues.
- ✠ Jeff Robbins as he awaits biopsy results.
- ✠ Natasha Hayfron Benjamin who is going through a difficult time right now.
- ✠ Julita Crisostomo who is recovering at the Millbury CareOne Center rehabilitation after a fall.
- ✠ Members of the Mawokomatanda family who traveling to Zimbabwe for the next month. Prayers for safety for them and the people of Zimbabwe during recent protests and unrest.

Christ Child by reflection, prayer, and active hope. I invite you to take part in the many events and activities this season at Wesley UMC that offer wonderful opportunities for fellowship, worship, healing, outreach, and being present with our neighbors. I invite you to light a candle rather than to sit afraid and discouraged in the darkness. I invite you to know that you are not alone... God is ever with us, and your Wesley faith community is only a word to a friend, a phone call, or an e-mail away!

May this be a blessed and inspiring Advent for you and for our church. And, may God's Spirit guide us each and all to be an active blessing and beacon of hope for our weary and yearning world.

*Lisa Fagerstrom*



### **REMINDER – HEATING INFORMATION**

As we enter the peak season for heating the church, please help us conserve energy by closing windows and doors, and helping to manage the temperature by directing any concerns to either the custodians or to the office or program staff. There is only one thermostat in the building that is used to control the temperature, and we appreciate your efforts to keep it under control by notifying the staff first if you think things are too cold or too hot. They will address the situation by increasing/decreasing the appropriate thermostat, or checking to make sure the boiler is working properly. If the boiler is not coming on, an emergency call will be placed to our vendor. Thank you very much for your assistance!

### **FIRST NIGHT IS COMING!!!**

Once again we will be a venue for First Night. A signup sheet is included in this Herald for anyone who would like to volunteer for one of our teams. We WILL NOT be receiving soda and water donations—we will actually purchase a limited amount since we don't sell a lot of it, and we end up with lots of leftovers. We WILL, however, accept all cookie/brownie donations!!

Thanks for your support and assistance with this fun event! I look forward to seeing everyone once again!

*Regards, Lorna*

## 2016 HARVEST RESULTS

<u>Category</u>	<u>Received</u>	<u>Post-Dated</u>	<u>Pledged</u>	<u>Bal Due</u>	<u>Total</u>
Appeal for Funds	20,499	900	2,400	-	23,799
Sanctuary Auction	2,395	301	-	-	2,696
Supporters	4,360	-	1,290	-	5,650
Kofi & Ama	2,325	-	-	-	2,325 *
Silent Auction	<u>598</u>	<u>70</u>	<u>-</u>	<u>72</u>	<u>740</u>
<b>Totals</b>	<b>\$ 30,177</b>	<b>\$ 1,271</b>	<b>\$ 3,690</b>	<b>\$ 72</b>	<b>\$ 35,210</b>
Beginning Balance in Harvest Account 1056 from Mini Harvests	\$ 8,439				\$ 8,439
Balance on 11/17/16	\$ 38,616				
<b>Projected Ending Balance</b>					<b>\$ 43,649</b>
<b>2016 Budget</b>					<b><u>39,000</u></b>
<b>Variance from Budget</b>					<b>\$ 4,649</b>

### \*Kofi & Ama Results

Monday	193	
Tuesday	349	
Wednesday	291	
Thursday	258	
Friday	359	
Saturday	364	
Sunday	461	"The Winner"
No day indicated	<u>50</u>	
Total	\$ 2,325	

## ADVENT-CHRISTMAS 2016

Do you want to live as one who is bursting with God-news? This Advent and Christmas season, you are invited to join with Mary, the mother of Jesus, in *magnifying* God for the God-news revealed to the world. Mary's Song of Praise – the *Magnificat* – declares the good news of a God who gives strength to the weak, uplifts the lowly, and fills the hungry with good things. This Advent and Christmas season, you are invited *magnify* an alternative vision for life which leads to true joy. You are invited to *magnify* with your life the call to embody *love, hospitality, hope, grace, and the incarnation*: all this, as we celebrate the God-news of the coming of the Promised-One. The following is an outline of the *Magnify* worship series during this Advent and Christmas.

**Advent 1, 11/27:** Magnify Love (Romans 13:7-12): Advent reminds us that we are a community of faith because of the love God demonstrated for the world in sending Jesus, and Jesus sends us to love as he loved. As Alyce McKenzie puts it, "Paul says there is one claim on our lives that [supersedes] all others: the claim of love. Advent invites us to let love be the ringtone that wakes us up each day."

**Advent 2, 12/04:** Magnify Hospitality (Romans 15:2-13): Advent reminds us that we are already a part of God's beloved community and we make room for others as God made room for us. As William Loader puts it: In this passage, "Paul is not making vague and pious statements about scripture but drawing attention to a particular orientation of scripture towards inclusivity and compassion."

**Advent 3, 12/11:** Magnify Hope (James 5:7-12): Advent is a season of enacting hope for the fulfilment of God's promises. As Frederick Buechner puts it, "to wait for Christ to come in his fullness is not just a passive thing, a pious, prayerful, churchly thing. On the contrary, to wait for Christ to come in his fullness is above all else to act in Christ's stead as fully as we know how."

**Advent 4, 12/18:** Magnify Our Calling (Romans 1:1-7) Advent reminds us that our calling and identity are intimately tied to Christ's calling and identity. As David Wood puts it, "The culminating call of the Advent season is a call to renew our commitment and devotion to Christ and his purposes for us in and for the world."

**Christmas Eve, 12/24** – Two services: 4:30 family service with an interactive children's pageant, and 11:00 evening service of lessons and carols with Holy Communion.

**Christmas Sunday, 12/25:** Magnify Incarnation (Hebrews 1:1-12) Advent points us to the coming of Jesus in whose incarnation we receive the promise that we too receive the imprint of God's image in our lives. As David Wood puts it, this text is a witness not only to the full meaning of the incarnation but also our knowledge of ourselves and the significance of our bodily existence.

**HERALD...** The last Herald for 2016 will be mailed on December 14<sup>th</sup> (deadline December 12<sup>th</sup>). Please pay special attention to this date and any articles you may want to put in. The first Herald of the year will be on Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup> (weather permitting, deadline for articles is Tuesday, January 3<sup>rd</sup>). Please mark your calendars and prepare your articles accordingly. Thank you.

### **ONECALL FOR WESLEY CHURCH...**

This warm weather won't last much longer. Let's face it, we live in New England and we will get snow! So get a jump start and put your name on the OneCall list. Be one of the lucky ones and receive a phone call to find out if choir has been cancelled, or a meeting has been rescheduled, or even if worship has been cancelled. OneCall is not only for storms and closings, it's for those unexpected cancellations or change of location of a meeting or even a reminder of a special event at Wesley — we will be able to do any of this and more over the phone.

If you would like to sign up for this, please email me ([office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org)), call me in the office, or sign up in the Welcome Office on Sunday when you're here for church. I will need your name, home phone number and one cell phone number for each family. This is just another way for us to help keep you informed of what is going on at your church.

If you signed up last year, you are still on the list and there is no need to do anything, unless you have changed/removed a phone number.

### **CARTY CUPBOARD...**

Changing with the healthier times at Carty Cupboard...

With the coming new year we are going to be more conscientious about what we pack in our client's bags. We are starting by eliminating high sodium foods from the bags that we distribute such as...meals in a can, mac and cheese, regular and dry soup. We will not be accepting these items any longer. In place of these items we will be packing minute and regular rice, brown is best but, white will be fine too. To ensure the client's get a good source of protein we are also going to pack low sodium beans like kidney and black beans. Thank You for your cooperation in helping our client's to stay fed with healthier foods.

We are still looking for a volunteer to do the set up for distribution on Friday mornings...from about 8:30 to 9:15 AM. You must be able to lift heavy grocery bags. If you are interested please call, Nancy Spencer at 508-887-1481.

## CHILDREN'S CHRISTIAN EDUCATION

### Upcoming events:

**Children's Choir and music worship** is back and being led by our new Children's choir director, Nan Gibbons. Choir meets after Sunday school until 12:30 p.m.

Parents, please pick up children on the third floor in Wagner Hall/Sunday School area. We are excited to enter into a new season of worship and Christian formation with the youngest of our church!

**December 18: Children's special Music & Reading presentation during the 10:30 a.m. worship service. Please have children arrive at 10 a.m. for song and reading rehearsal in Front Parlor. (Parents of readers will receive an email with more information on their part)**

### **'Twas the Light Before Christmas!**

Our Christmas Pageant this year will be held as a component of the **4:30 p.m. Christmas Eve worship service on Saturday, December 24th**. It will be a multi-generational inclusive pageant that will get the congregation involved with special pageant props (crafts) and Christmas songs. We look forward to sharing in this worship with all of you! **We are seeking volunteers to help with the pageant. You do not need to be a teacher or involved in Sunday School to help** - in fact, we would love to offer this opportunity for others to step in and help!!! The pageant is easy and streamlined for anyone to help volunteer! Please see Jean or Lisa if you are interested! Jean- [grantgirl05@yahoo.com](mailto:grantgirl05@yahoo.com)

**Please Note:** In honor of the holidays so that families can celebrate together, there will be **no childcare or Sunday School** on Christmas, Dec 25 and New Years Day, Jan 1st. Thank you!

**Children's Christian Education** is seeking childcare workers in the infant-preschool childcare room and for special events. Many times in order to enable parents to participate in events such as retreats, meetings, etc, we need childcare. CORI checks are required. This is a paid position. Love helping out with the littlest members of our church? Drop Jean an email [grantgirl05@yahoo.com](mailto:grantgirl05@yahoo.com). Thanks!

## MISSION MATTERS

### **Community Suppers -- November's and Open Dates in 2017...**

Linda D'Acri and her family served about 153 turkey dinners on Nov. 26th. It was great to see a number of new volunteers for that mission, and the large number of pies donated! Many thank yous for the delicious and plentiful meal were heard.

The D'Acris and UMW have signed up to be in charge of the Jan. 28, March 25, and May 20, 2017 Community Suppers. Another group is considering doing April 29's supper. Is there a volunteer to lead the Feb. 25 supper? Summer months (the last Saturdays of June, July, Aug.) are also open.

**Last Saturday of December is New Year's Eve...** Since the last Saturday in December is First Night, we have invited our Community Supper folks and all of you to a New Year's Day Breakfast. The menu will be the same as for a Communion breakfast, thanks again to Linda D'Acri. Signs for this event (and a Christmas Lunch described elsewhere) are posted around Wesley.

**Abby's House...** The Mission Committee will be taking a \$1,500 check to Abby's House which helps battered and homeless women and their children. This will provide 6 families with food and a safe place to live for a week. If you're looking for a worthy place to give to this holiday season, Abby's House has helped over 12,500 women (and their children) since 1976 -- for 40 years. Their values are Hospitality, Compassion and Respect, Women's Self-Determination, and Shared Community Effort.

**Volunteers Needed to Play with Homeless Children...** If you have 2 hours/week to play with homeless children in a central MA family shelter, please read the info on the Mission Spotlight bulletin board, or speak with Betsy Pennino. Training sessions held monthly.



## YOUTH GROUP

Calling all Wesley Youth and Parents:

See our calendar of events for the rest of the school year. All 6<sup>th</sup>—12<sup>th</sup> grade students are invited to join, even if they have not attended youth group meetings in the past. In Youth Group we will learn more about living a Christian life, bonding as a group, being a leader in the church, and doing mission activities throughout the year. We encourage all youth to apply what they have learned during youth group and to discuss it at home with their parents.

Our goal is to provide the youth of Wesley with the tools they need to grow as disciples of Jesus and have some fun along the way!

*Looking forward to seeing you soon,  
Anthony, Adrienne and Lisa*

<p><b>December 2016</b> 11<sup>th</sup>: Youth Group 18<sup>th</sup>: Christmas Party &amp; Caroling</p>	<p><b>May 2017</b> 21<sup>st</sup>: Youth Group Date TBD: Service project TBD</p>
<p><b>January 2017</b> 16<sup>th</sup>: MLK, Jr. Holiday, Mission/Service activity 22<sup>nd</sup>: Youth Group</p>	<p><b>June 2017</b> Camp or Mission trip</p>
<p><b>February 2017</b> 19<sup>th</sup>: Youth Group 25<sup>th</sup>: Community Supper ("Love" centerpieces)</p>	<p><b>July 2017</b> Summer Break... no Youth Group or Mission/Service activity</p>
<p><b>March 2017</b> 19: Youth Group Week of 26<sup>th</sup>: Mission/Service activity</p>	<p><b>August 2017</b> 13<sup>th</sup>: Cookout at Anthony &amp; Adrienne's</p>
<p><b>April 2017</b> 23<sup>rd</sup>: Youth Group 29<sup>th</sup>: Community Supper</p>	<p><b>September 2017</b> **Youth Group will resume for the new school year. Dates TBD**</p>

## DID YOU KNOW?

On the first Sunday of Advent, the hymn “People, Look East” was sung as the opening hymn. Did you wonder about the use of a compass direction in a hymn calling us to prepare for the coming of Christ? Geographical directions play a role in many worship traditions of all types. It was the Jewish tradition to offer prayer in the direction of the Temple in Jerusalem as the earthly location of the presence of God. In early Christianity, too, direction was important. It is believed that in early Christianity, prayer was offered facing the east. In part this custom may have derived from pagan sun worship which understood the east as the direction of good divine powers. However the New Testament itself suggests that the second coming of Christ will be from the east: For as the lightning comes from the east and flashes as far as the west, so will be the coming of the Son of Man (Matt 24:27). The early Christians lived in daily expectation of Christ’s imminent return; thus they offered prayer towards the east. Because the east is where the sun rises, this direction has been associated with Christ, as the “dayspring from on high” and the “light of the world.” Another example of the liturgical use of direction in the early centuries of the church is when candidates for baptism would face west to renounce the forces of evil and east to recite the creed.

Beginning in the fourth century Christians began to build churches with the sanctuaries pointing to the east. This preference for an east-west orientation persisted in church architecture for centuries. Over recent time, of course, the literal application of geographical direction has come to be largely ignored in the orientation of churches, giving way to the practicalities of accommodating a building to a given site. Our church building is built into a hill, so our altar is in the geographical west end of the building and the narthex is on the geographical east end. However the allegory and symbolism of orientation are still used in many traditions. For example, regardless of actual compass direction, *eastward position* refers to a minister or priest facing the altar and *westward position* refers to a minister or priest facing the congregation across a communion table.

So in this season of Advent when we focus on the comings of Christ—both his birth in Bethlehem and his coming at the end of time—we are called to “look east” in our hearts and orient ourselves towards Christ.

*Submitted by, Deborah A. O’Driscoll*

## 2016/2017 HERALD SCHEDULE

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

<u>Article Deadline</u> <u>Date</u>	<u>Herald Mailing</u> <u>Date</u>
Mon., Dec. 12	Wed., Dec. 14
Tues., Jan. 3 <b>2017</b>	Thurs., Jan. 5

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 \$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.



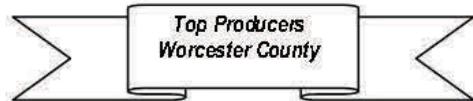
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**WESLEY HERALD**  
**NOVEMBER 30, 2016**

***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
- Interim Director of Children's Music Nan Gibbons
- Music Assistant & Layleader Deborah O'Driscoll
- Toddler Care Leader Lori Conlon
- Building Superintendent
- Business Administrator Lorna Mattus-Merrill
- Church Secretary Debi Ritacco
- Custodians Carol Flionis, Gerard Piscitelli, 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 Co-Chairs Michael Edmunds  
William Wong
- Ghanaian Association Paul Hayfron
- Hospitality Co-Chairs Vivian Assie  
Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah
- Medical Ministry Ron Ramsay
- Memorial Gifts Linda Carlson
- Mission Coordinator Betsy Pennino
- Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs Mark Muncey  
Gifty Bentum-Asante
- Youth Directors Lisa Fagerstrom  
Anthony & Adrienne Phillips
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Allison Hansen

