

Dear members of the Wesley Community,

What a treat it was this past Sunday to hear Debbie O'Driscoll play the prelude at the 10:30 service. She played one of my favorite pieces, J. S. Bach's setting of the tune *Wachet Auf*, or "Sleepers awake." I don't think I've heard Debbie sounding better, either – well done, Debbie!

I would probably like the piece even if I didn't know the title, but honestly, no topic hits closer to my heart than awakening. Our worship this Advent is built upon waking up, so Debbie's musical choice was particularly timely. *Wachet Auf* is a joyful piece, filled with optimism, forward movement, and exuberant bursts of energy. Waking up is a joyous act, celebrated with a smile and a skip in the air.

But sometimes waking up isn't so pleasant. Sometimes we ache to crawl back under the covers. Sometimes it's cold out, or we didn't get enough sleep, or we have days that we dread. Waking up can feel awful.

Can you recall waking up to something you were wrong about? Have you had the world seem to freeze around you when you took in a wider reality? Can you remember a moment when you turned your mind to the past, and you saw that things looked differently with your new understanding? That's a form of waking up, and it means we have to admit that we were partially asleep before. It's deeply humbling.

We often fear this process. We don't like going through the gates of acknowledgment. Fortunately for us, we often have no choice: the world has a way of pushing us through from time to time. What do we see on the other side, besides the embarrassment, discomfort, and guilt that hover as we pass through?

Light. Life. Understanding. Forgiveness. Growth. Enlightenment. The Kingdom of God. Nirvana. The Promised Land. Reality.

We must remember that difficult awakenings are more than just the unpleasantness of the moment: they are often the greatest sources of our future happiness and wellbeing. These moments of awakening are some of the most cherished constants in all of humanity. They have different names to different people. To John Wesley, it was an Aldersgate Moment. To an evangelical Christian, a rebirth. Yogis and Buddhists use the term enlightenment. Literary-inclined humanists describe epiphany moments.

We recognize them because we experience our hearts differently at these times, and our world forever changes. John Wesley said his heart was strangely warmed. Others describe a white light where the spirit of God comes flooding in. A Buddhist would say we are touching the quivering heart of *bodhicitta*, a spontaneous wish of empathy, compassion, and awakening for all sentient beings. (Did you know the name "Buddha" itself simply means "one who is awake"? Anyone in any religion can strive to be more awake.)

*Continued on page 3...*

## 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 their families.

## WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✠ The family of the Rev Donald Scott who passed to glory last Monday.
- ✠ Debi Ritacco's uncles, Joe Holliman hospitalized with congestive heart failure, and Al Holliman with severe lung disease.

## FROM THE CHURCH SECRETARY

**CHRISTMAS WREATHS FOR DEDICATION...** Once again this year, we have 3 wreaths on the outside doors (on Main Street and State Street). **There is one wreath available for dedication.** The cost of the wreath is \$30. If you are interested in dedicating a wreath in honor or memory of a loved one or friend, please contact me as soon as possible.

**POINSETTIA ORDERS are due to the church by Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>.** Please be sure to send your order into the office to Debi as soon as possible. Payment **MUST** accompany your order unless you plan to pay for it online via the Donate Now option on the website. Please be sure to check the box "Paid On-line" on the order form. Thank you!

**UPCOMING HERALDS...** There is only 1 Herald left for 2017. It will be mailed on December 20<sup>th</sup> (deadline date Dec. 18<sup>th</sup>). The first Herald of the new year will be on January 10<sup>th</sup> (article deadline date is Jan. 8<sup>th</sup>). Please plan your articles accordingly.

**ANNUAL REPORTS** are due in the office by Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>. You can email them to me at [office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org) as a Word document or drop off a printed report. If you submitted an article for the Church Conference book, please let me know if I can use this one or submit to me a revised report with any changes you need to make.

*Thank you, Debi Ritacco*

## CARTY CUPBOARD

Hi Everyone! It's that time of year again when we try to fill the Mitten Tree in Brewer Hall for those in need. So the items of the month for December are hats, mittens, scarves, and gloves; all new no used please. I would like to thank the person or persons who donated the bags of beautifully hand made items for the tree. They will be much appreciated by the clients. When someone is cold it's amazing what a nice warm hat or mittens can do to make that person's day!

*Thanks again, ~ Nancy*

*Cover continued...*

No matter how vigilant we try to stay, we often find ourselves asleep again, not just in our beds, but in our listening and understanding, too. So like Advent coming around again this year, we can know that awakening moments will return as well. How will we greet them? How will we prepare? This past Sunday, we sang, “*Wait for the Lord, whose days is near; wait for the Lord, be strong, take heart!*”

It takes strength, courage, heart, and perseverance to strive to stay awake. It takes a great commitment to seek out moments of awakening, but it is also the most rewarding path for one who wishes to be awake. The support of a community is invaluable, with its collected wisdom, experience, understanding, and forgiveness. I hope we are all able to see our work together as an ongoing, glorious celebration of a community striving to be awake together, learning, singing, serving, praying, and dancing.

Shalom,

*Brett Maguire, Director of Music*

***Thank you! Thank You!! THANK YOU!!!***

***THANK YOU*** to all those who contributed to the “UMW pre-Thanksgiving *Bake and Craft Sale*,” as bakers, crafters, or shoppers. The proceeds help provide camperships and other scholarships for Christian development. Thanks to Linda D’Acri and Kimberly Lindsey-Amoah for coordinating the tables.

*Barbara Ingrassia & Allison Hansen  
Co-presidents Wesley UMW*

***Many THANKS*** to all those who helped make the UMW Christmas program so special. We were so delighted to welcome our Sisters from Florence House: 5 Moms and 3 children. Sherry Culver and Susan Carney from the Central MA District UMW presented the Central MA District 2017 Mission Recognition Award to Margaret Watson. Our special guest Abigail Akosua Dankwah shared her life-changing experiences with 3,000 other youth from around the world during the summer 2017 pilgrimage to Taize, France.

For coming early to help set up: Carol Samanen, Judith Barton, Polly Boyns. To Beth D’Acri for coordinating the kitchen. To Chris Flagg for obtaining the gifts for our guests from Florence House. (*And to Allison Hansen for her support from Venice, Italy.*) Thank you to all who attended this true “potluck.”

*Barbara Ingrassia, Co-President*

### **GROCERY GIFT CARDS MAKE CARING GIFTS...**

Ready or not, the season of giving is upon us. Why not give a gift that gives back? Buy a gift card for your friends and relatives, Secret Santa or Thanksgiving basket and support Hope for Housing at the same time. The cards sold each Sunday in Brewer Hall help prevent homelessness, because a percentage of each card contributes to a fund to offset back rent, car repairs or utility cutoff.

Denominations range from \$10 to \$100 for grocery stores Big Y, Shaw's, Stop & Shop and Hannaford, plus CVS, Panera Bread and Dunkin' Donuts.

Stop by the Hope for Housing table near the coffee next Sunday, checks or cash in hand. Enjoy that warm feeling of helping others!

~ Allison Hansen

### **MISSION MATTERS**

#### **LINDA D'ACRI AND FAMILY IN CHARGE OF DECEMBER 30<sup>TH</sup> COMMUNITY SUPPER...**

Linda D'Acri and her family prepared a wonderful Thanksgiving dinner on November 25<sup>th</sup>, and many diners expressed their thanks for the great meal. The D'Acris volunteered to also bring us a supper on December 30<sup>th</sup>! Saying "thank you" to the family for their loyalty and service hardly seems adequate. The menu will be ham, potatoes, vegetables, salad, drinks and dessert. *If you could donate desserts, serve and/or clean up, please tell Linda.*

**COLLECTING FOOD FOR AT RISK AND HOMELESS YOUTHS...** Standup for Kids (SUFK) runs an Outreach Drop-in-Center where a youth can get a meal, shower, meet with a counselor, and get hygiene items. SUFK also does Street Outreach to find homeless kids and give them food bags. The Mission Committee is giving SUFK \$250 for bus passes and invites the congregation to donate snacks for the food bags such as the following:

- *single serving juices, water bottles, individual packs of crackers, cereal bars, pita chips and salsa, dried fruit, all in unbreakable containers. The Director said that the teens would NOT prefer items labeled "low salt, low sugar, or low fat."*

Your contributions may be left on Sundays in an orange box on a table next to the offices.

**SECRET SANTA GIFTS FOR IHN** children are covered. Thanks to those who offered.

## MISSION TREES AT WESLEY

*Once again in 2017 the mission tree tradition continues at Wesley Church. You are invited to participate in decorating these trees while helping others during the Christmas season.*

**THE "MITTEN" TREE** in Brewer Hall - Please help decorate this tree with warm hats, gloves, scarves and/or mittens. These practical ornaments bring happiness to those who enjoy seeing their variety and color and the needy Carty Cupboard clients who will receive and enjoy their warmth.

**THE "MEMBER" TREE** in East Hall - It is our hope that all families in Wesley Church will have a symbol - some ornament of their choice - among the decorations on this tree. If your family is not represented, please bring one and add it to our interesting and varied collection. (There are hangers under the tree.) All ornaments are carefully packed and stored so that they may be displayed annually.

**THE SLENDER "RED BIRD" TREE** in Brewer Hall on the stage - Please don't toss out those labels from Campbell and Betty Crocker products. Instead, bring them in and place them in the basket near the slender "Red Bird" Tree. They will be sent to the Red Bird Mission in West Virginia where they will be collected and exchanged for needed items.

*Have A Wonderful Holiday Season!*



## CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES AT WESLEY

### **An Advent Invitation...**

This week is the first week in the season of Advent...the four Sundays and days before Christmas, and a time for preparing our hearts for the birth of Jesus and the incarnation of his love and light in our lives and the world.

During this season of Advent, you are invited to "practice" an Advent intention to draw you back each day to the anticipation and waiting for the birth of the Christ Child. Some possible intentions are offered below:

- Make a gratitude list of at least three things each day. At the end of the day, take time to remember the people, places, and things for which you are grateful.
- Pray for a different person each day. Spend the entire day praying specifically for that person throughout the day.

## CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES AT WESLEY (CONT'D)

Possible Advent Intentions (cont'd)...

- Use an Advent calendar or journal as a daily reflection (Advent calendar/coloring sheet available at Welcome Office or at: <https://thomasmousin.wordpress.com/>)
- Write (or read) a poem or prayer each day.
- Use the "For the Journey This Week" weekly bulletin reflection and spiritual practice daily.
- Do a walking prayer/meditation each day.
- Create art each day
  - \* Draw a picture
  - \* Make something from things you have
  - \* Sew
  - \* Color a mandala, etc.
  - \* Try something new
- Make up your own "intention!"

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### Three New Small Group Opportunities forming in December (for the New Year)—

- 1) ***Spiritual Formation : A Wesleyan Paradigm***—Based on a book of the same name by Diane Leclerc and Mark A. Maddix, this group's invitation is to help faithful disciples grow in their relationship with Jesus Christ, while learning more about Wesleyan spiritual practices.
- 2) ***Living in Sacred Balance***—Are you soul-weary? Do you struggle to make time for God in the midst of a packed schedule? In their book *The Cycle of Grace: Living in Sacred Balance*, Trevor Hudson and Jerry P. Haas invite participants to utilize practical spiritual exercises and devotional times to restore/keep balance and to live grace-filled lives.
- 3) How can we help transform the world? ***Make a Difference*** draws upon biblical wisdom to provide practical guidance to help people connect their passion with the world's great need. Real stories of how real people found their place to serve will inspire and encourage you to do the same.

**Interested in leading or being a part of one of these small groups?** Please contact Lisa Fagerstrom or sign-up on the sheets provided in Brewer Hall. We will be polling interested persons who indicate/have indicated interest in being a part of one of the groups and setting a day and time to meet beginning in January.

# *December 2017 Calendar*

## *Special Upcoming Events/Dates to make note of:*

- Sunday, December 10<sup>th</sup>**
  - Deadline for Poinsettia Orders
- Sunday, December 17<sup>th</sup>**
  - All Church Meeting, 12 PM
- Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup>**
  - Last Herald of the year—  
article deadline Monday, December 18<sup>th</sup>
  - **Annual Reports due to Debi Ritacco**
  - Silent Night Service, 7 pm
- Sunday, December 24<sup>th</sup>**
  - **Advent 4 Worship Service, 9:30 am \***
  - Christmas Eve Family Service, 4:30 pm
  - Christmas Eve Lessons and Carols, 11 pm
- Monday, December 25<sup>th</sup>**
  - Christmas, Office Closed
- Sunday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**
  - Worship, 8:30 am
  - Worship, 10:30 am
  - Watch Night Service, 8:00 PM  
Led by the Ghanaian Association
- Monday, January 1, 2018**
  - New Year's Day, Office Closed
- Wednesday, January 10<sup>th</sup>**
  - Herald mailing date—Deadline for articles  
is Monday, January 8<sup>th</sup> by 12 noon please.

*\*Please note that on Christmas Eve there is one morning worship service at 9:30 am.*

**SILENT NIGHT SERVICE...** You are invited to the Silent Night service on Wednesday, December 20<sup>th</sup> at 7 PM. In the midst of this Advent season, you are invited to pause and experience the calming and comforting presence of God.

Following the service there will be a time of fellowship and refreshments. We invite you to bring a small dish of appetizers or desserts to share. Please come and share with us in the beloved service. Please let Debi Ritacco or Pastor Shandi know if you are able to help. *Thank you.*

## **Stewardship Moment**

### **In this Christmas season, how to thrive and not just survive**

From Thanksgiving to Christmas to New Year, many of us are crazy busy. And if you are like my household, add a spouse birthday to the mix and that could just send us off to the deep end. And for some of us, the holidays can take priority over our marriage and family for a few months of the year.

How do we not fall into that trap? Here are some tips on thriving during this holiday season instead of just surviving:

1. **Make a plan and stick to it.** Sit down with your spouse, loved one's, family, etc and communicate as to what can we as a family realistically do. That includes what holiday parties to go to, what events the kids are involved with during the season and what's needed from the parents (i.e. baked cookies, driving, picking up friends, etc.), and any travel to see family. Don't feel like you have to do everything, it's ok to say no. Letting go of some things will help you keep your sanity...and actually enjoy the holidays. And once the plan has been developed, stick to it!
2. **Decide how much you are going to spend on gifts and donations.** Determine how much you are going to spend on each other, the kids and family members. If you are on a tight budget, communicate with everyone that this year's gift giving may be sparse, may be more experience based or may include more homemade gifts. One tip that was given was to stick to four small gifts: something you want, something you need, something to wear and something to read.

And with the season of giving, which is the most fun you can have with money, talk about budgeting some extra money for random acts of kindness. It could be a slightly bigger tip to a server, handing out a \$5 Starbucks gift card to someone who looks like they're having a bad day, or giving to a specific ministry that's near and dear to your heart; several come to mind at Wesley.

3. **Be Present.** When you are spending time with friends and family, be in the present and engage. Facebook can wait after the event, it doesn't need to be looked at or updated real time. Remember that it's not about you and more about relationships and personal mission.

Finally, one last thought to summarize: You don't have to do it all. This holiday season can be a memorable one without having to have everything perfect, and that's okay. If we live based on comparisons, then we'll never survive the holiday season.

## DID YOU KNOW?

Given the prodigious number of hymns written by Charles Wesley (he wrote more than 6,500 hymn texts) you might be wondering whether he wrote many hymns for the Advent/Christmas season. The answer of course is “yes,” since Wesley actually wrote many collections of hymns for various seasons of the liturgical year. Somewhat surprisingly, however, of the 52 hymns written by him in the present edition of *The United Methodist Hymnal*, there are only two designated for Advent and Christmas — the Advent hymn “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” (UMH 196), first appearing in the 1744 tract *Hymns for the Nativity of our Lord* and the Christmas hymn “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” (UMH 240), originally published “Hymn for Christmas Day” in 1739 as part of a collection called *Hymns and Sacred Poems*.

Especially for Methodists “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” (more on “Hark the Herald Angels Sing” another time!) is a quintessential Advent hymn, one which we sing in our congregation pretty much every year during Advent. However it is significant not only for Methodists, as it also appears in most if not all hymnals published by major Protestant denominations in North America in the last 50 years. Wesley, often called “the most prominent hymn writer of the eighteenth century,” was known for writing deeply theological texts rich in scriptural allusions. “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” alludes to one or more Scripture passages in virtually every phrase, and in two stanzas includes references to the promised Messiah of the Old Testament as well as to the New Testament birth of a child who is the hope of all the earth. This hymn encapsulates the dual nature of the Advent season: remembering and preparing to celebrate again Jesus’ birth and also awaiting his second coming.

The central themes of this hymn “Hebraic messianic expectation—long-expected freedom, release, rest, and consolation, and hope—and Christian fulfillment of that expectation in the birth of a child whose birth brought and continues to bring deliverance from the bondage of sin for the whole human family and the establishment of God’s gracious reign in our hearts” remain as relevant for us now as when they were written. Church music scholar C. Michael Hawn reflects: “Although we live in a different time than Charles Wesley, the longings of people’s hearts are just as deep. We long for security, love, relationships, meaning. To those who open themselves up to its message, this hymn identifies with that longing at the deepest levels of our existence. Where there is no longing, there can be little meaning. Hope is central to Christian experience.” This Advent season, as we sing this hymn in the midst of the brokenness of our world, may we be released from our fears and live into the hope and freedom we find when we allow Christ to be born in our hearts.

*Submitted by, Deborah O’Driscoll*

## 2017 HERALD SCHEDULE

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

| <b>Article Deadline<br/>Date</b> | <b>Herald Mailing<br/>Date</b> |
|----------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Mon., Dec, 18                    | Wed., Dec. 20                  |
| Mon., Jan. 8 2018                | Wed., Jan. 10                  |

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

**office@wesleyworc.org**

## ALTAR FLOWERS

On Sundays altar flowers 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.



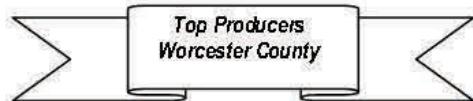
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**WESLEY HERALD**  
**DECEMBER 6, 2017**

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