

Good News of Great Joy

“But the angel said to [the shepherds], ‘Do not be afraid; for see—I am bringing you good news of great joy for all the people.’ ~ Luke 1:10

One of my favorite movie versions of Charles Dickens’ novel, “A Christmas Carol” is “Scrooged” starring Bill Murray who plays the Ebenezer Scrooge character. I’m not sure why I love this movie, but it possibly has to do with the fact that it was the first version I saw before all the others. Nevertheless, even though it is a comedy, I always tear up at the very end, when Bill Murray’s character gives his final speech and he says he gets it now. To quote him, he says:

“I’m not crazy. It’s Christmas Eve. It’s the one night of the year when we all act a little nicer, when we smile a little easier, when we cheer a little more. For a couple of hours out of the whole year, we are the people that we’ve always hoped we would be. It’s our miracle.”

Isn’t that the truth? The season of Christmas is often the one season of the year that brings out the best in all of us. I believe it has something to do with the Advent promise. The promise of Advent is that hope, peace, joy and love will come. We all yearn for it, and for a time we are able to experience it. The question becomes, why is it that this joy is often short lived? Why is it that we cannot be the people we always hope we would be throughout the year? This is not to mention that there are some for whom the joy of the Christmas season is hard to come by during the season itself. To quote Bill Murray:

“There are people having trouble of making their miracle happen. There are people that don’t have enough to eat. There are people that are cold. You can go out and say hello to these people. You can take an old blanket out of the closet and say, ‘here!’ You can make them a sandwich and say, ‘O by the way, here!’”

I believe that, as the people entrusted with the Advent message, we have a special calling to proclaim this message every day, beyond the Christmas season. I believe that we are invited to make the joy of Christmas eternal. I believe we are called to be the people we always hoped we would be, every day. I believe we are called to echo Bill Murray when, in the movie, he says:

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 families.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✠ Gabriela, a coworker of Beth Vietz, who is recovering from back surgery.
- ✠ Nancy Piscitelli, Isabella and Olivia Piscitelli who are grieving the loss of Nancy's father and grandfather of Olivia and Isabella. May God comfort them and give them strength.
- ✠ Patricia Shackett recovering at home after having surgery.
- ✠ Delores, a family friend, who suffered a stroke while visiting Israel.
- ✠ Paul Kiester at Beaumont Rehab.
- ✠ Anne Burrows recovering at home.
- ✠ John and Florence Annobil who are grieving the loss of John's mother in Ghana.
- ✠ Pastor Vicki who is grieving the loss of her brother.
- ✠ Those in the Mawokomatanda family who have traveled to Zimbabwe for the month.
- ✠ Julita Crisostomo who is recovering at home from an earlier fall.
- ✠ Jan's friend Min hospitalized in Florida.
- ✠ Someone who doesn't like to be around people, I hope that person learns to like to be around people.
- ✠ The Hammond Family as they all travel to Ghana for a family reunion.
- ✠ My family, for peace, togetherness and forgiveness.
- ✠ Nicole and Steve Wakadilo as they remember their dad, Bishop Ngoy Kimba M. Wakadilo, who left them on December 11, 1994.
- ✠ The victims of the collapsed Nigerian church.
- ✠ Daniel Kwakye
- ✠ Health and Healing

"I get it now. If you give, then it can happen – then, the miracle can happen to you. It's not just the poor and the hungry. It's everybody... If you believe in this spirit thing, the miracle will happen, and then you'll want it to happen again tomorrow. You won't be one of these [people] who says 'Christmas is once a year and it's a fraud.' It's not. It can happen every day."

For us Christians, the Advent promise and the joy of Christmas is an eternal one. We are the church because we have embraced the message that God, Emmanuel, is with us now. We are the church because we believe that we are entrusted with the special calling to share the promises of Advent. We are the church because we believe that we embody the incarnate Spirit of Jesus the Messiah as our living witness. May this incarnate witness remain a part of who we are.

Merry Christmas!

~ *Pastor Shandi*

ANNUAL REPORTS were due in the office by December 11th. If you have not turned a report in, please do so immediately. You can email (office@wesleyworc.org) 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*

Mark Your Calendar...

- | | |
|---|--|
| Sunday, December 18th | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• All Church Meeting, 12 PM• Youth Group Caroling, 12 PM |
| Saturday, December 24th | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worship & Christmas Pageant, 4:30 PM• Worship, 11 PM |
| Sunday, December 25th | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Worship, 10:30 AM• Community Lunch, 12 PM |
| Saturday, December 31st | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• First Night, 5 PM• Watch Night Service, 10:30 PM |
| Sunday, January 1, 2017 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Communion Breakfast, 9 AM• Worship, 10:30 AM (NO 8:30 AM SERVICE) |

You are Invited to
Christmas Lunch

Sunday, December 25, 2016 from 12 pm—1:30 pm
[Immediately following the Christmas Day (10:30 am) Worship]

Our Advent worship theme is magnifying love, hospitality, active hope, and incarnate light in community with all of God's people. We have a wonderful opportunity to live out this theme with our lunch on Christmas Day. The Wesley church family, our relatives, friends, visitors, community neighbors...all are invited to fellowship together on this joyous day of celebrating the birth of the Christ Child.

Our menu is: Turkey, Ham, Vegetarian Entree, Stuffing/Dressing, Sweet Potatoes, Green Beans, Salads, Cornbread, Rolls, Cookies, and Beverages.

How can you be a part of this warm and festive event? In many ways...

Attend the lunch, donate money to offset the cost of food, bring in a "reverse Advent Calendar" gift box (see insert in bulletin for details), help with setup, cleanup, or cooking (**sign up sheet in Brewer Hall or e-mail or call Lisa: Lfager@aol.com or 781-413-6386**), bring a salad to share on our salad bar (also on signup sheet).

Hope to see many of you at this time of celebration and sharing!!



CONFIRMATION 2017

Confirmation classes will begin on Sunday, January 15, 2017 at 9:30am in the Youth Room. The meeting on January 15 will be an orientation and overview to the class. We will determine meeting times based on student and teacher availability. Tentative options include meeting from 9:35-10:20am or 1:00pm to 2:00pm on Sundays. If you or someone you know is ready to take the next step into faithful discipleship and participate in confirmation classes, please contact Pastor Shandi or Lisa Fagerstrom by January 1st. Thank you!

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

2015 Harvest Pledges will be due by 12/27/16. Please make every effort to fulfill your Harvest pledge so it can be included in your 2016 statements.

Year to Date Budget Results through November

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total Income	558,958	573,825	- 14,867 less than budget
Total Expense	579,362	605,621	- 26,260 less than budget
Difference	- 20,404	- 31,797	11,393 less than budget
Pledges	290,623	315,838	- 25,215 less than budget

Year End Forecast for 2016 based on November Actuals

	<u>Forecast</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Forecasted Income	619,180	622,792	- 3,612 less than budget
Forecasted Expense	651,262	667,668	-16,406 less than budget
Forecasted Loss	- 32,082	- 44,876	-12,794 less than budget
Quimby Funds applied	25,000		
Adj Year End Deficit	- 7,082		

Thanksgiving Results

Budget	3,459
Actual	3,393
Difference	- 66

Envelopes for 2017

The 2017 envelope order has been placed and should arrive before the end of December.

First Night

Volunteer request forms are in this Herald for the last time and in Sunday bulletins. Thanks to all for the responses to dessert requests and working at First Night. I really appreciate it!!!

Year End Reminders

As December comes to a close, please remember the following with regard to your 2016 donations:

In order to post your donation to 2016, checks need to be dated 2016. Any check dated 2017 will be posted to next year.

All donations for 2016 should be postmarked or received in the office by 12/31/2016.

Once December deposits have gone to the bank and all accounts are reconciled, I will send your statements no later than the third week of January. You will have one week to notify me of any corrections before I begin my statistical report for the New England Conference.

Please call if you have any questions, ok?

Peace and many blessings during this Christmas season and in the coming new year!

Lorna

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 rices, 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.

The items of the month for January are... minute rice, low sodium beans like kidney, cantinelli, or black beans.

The item of the month for February is... Jelly in plastic please.

The items of the month for March are... diapers sizes 1 to 6.

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

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. Thanks!

REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR



For Advent this year at Wesley UMC, you are invited to create a Reverse Advent Calendar gift box to give to our neighbors at our Christmas Day dinner (following the 10:30 a.m. Christmas worship service). Instead of receiving a candy or trinket in a traditional Advent Calendar, you will give a small needed item to your gift box.

Please place the item of the day (listed below) in a box each day throughout Advent.

Bring your completed (and wrapped) gift box to worship service on either Sunday, December 18th or Sunday, December 25th.

Nov. 27: Toothbrush

Nov. 28: Toothpaste

Nov. 29: Gloves

Nov. 30: Cheese/peanut butter crackers
or Goldfish

Dec. 1: Wash cloth

Dec. 2: Socks

Dec. 3: Tissues

Dec. 4: Hot cocoa packet(s)

Dec. 5: Instant oatmeal

Dec. 6: Meal in a can

Dec. 7: Christmas card

Dec. 8: Band-Aids

Dec. 9: Small toy or puzzle

Dec. 10: Macaroni and cheese

Dec. 11: Canned vegetable

Dec. 12: Nail clippers

Dec. 13: ChapStick or lip balm

Dec. 14: Bar or bottle of soap

Dec. 15: Pens or pencils

Dec. 16: Tea bags

Dec. 17: Tablet of paper/small notebook

Dec. 18: Canned tuna or chicken

Dec. 19: Christmas decoration

Dec. 20: Hand lotion

Dec. 21: Canned fruit

Dec. 22: Juice box or bottle

Dec. 23: Hand sanitizer or wipes

Dec. 24: Hershey kisses or candy canes

ONECALL FOR WESLEY CHURCH...

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), 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 or cell phone number. 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.

MISSION MATTERS

New Year's Day Breakfast... 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 to Linda D'Acri. Signs for this event (and a Christmas Lunch described elsewhere) are posted around Wesley.

Community Suppers... The D'Acris have signed up to be in charge of the March 25th and May 20th Community Suppers. UMW and then the Youth Group will run the Jan. 28th and Feb. 25th events. Thank you to all who have volunteered, and to the bakers who send those yummy desserts!

Abby's House... The Mission Committee voted 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. 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

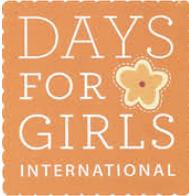
Calling all Wesley Youth and Parents:

See our calendar of events for the rest of the school year. All 6th—12th 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>December 2016 11th: Youth Group 18th: Christmas Party & Caroling</p>	<p>May 2017 21st: Youth Group Date TBD: Service project TBD</p>
<p>January 2017 16th: MLK, Jr. Holiday, Mission/Service activity 22nd: Youth Group</p>	<p>June 2017 Camp or Mission trip</p>
<p>February 2017 19th: Youth Group 25th: Community Supper ("Love" centerpieces)</p>	<p>July 2017 Summer Break... no Youth Group or Mission/Service activity</p>
<p>March 2017 19: Youth Group Week of 26th: Mission/Service activity</p>	<p>August 2017 13th: Cookout at Anthony & Adrienne's</p>
<p>April 2017 23rd: Youth Group 29th: Community Supper</p>	<p>September 2017 **Youth Group will resume for the new school year. Dates TBD**</p>



DAYS FOR GIRLS

North Worcester MA Team

United Methodist Women

Lorraine Kronberg, Team Leader

**FRIDAY MORNINGS FROM 10:00 TO 12:00 OR
SEW AT HOME**

JOIN THE TEAM – WE NEED YOUR HELP

**We have many jobs that do not require sewing and would welcome
you to our team of outstanding volunteers.**

We are in need of the following:

**Girls cotton briefs....size 10, 12, 14....colored or patterned....no white,
words, faces, animals or camouflage designs.**

Ziplock brand gallon freezer bags (non-zipper/slider)

**Our last sewing for the year is Friday is: December 16...starting the
new year with sewing Fridays on January 6, 13, 20, 27 (weather per-
mitting).**

**MAKE IT A REALITY
EVERY GIRL... EVERYWHERE... PERIOD**

Did You Know?

Throughout the four weeks of Advent the text of the *Magnificat* (Luke 1:46-55), also known as the *Canticle of Mary* or *Song of Mary*, has provided a scriptural thread for our Sunday morning worship. In the Gospel story this song praising God's mighty acts and proclaiming liberation and salvation for the lowest of society is offered by the pregnant Mary during her visit to her cousin Elizabeth in response to the blessing offered to her by Elizabeth. The text of the *Magnificat* emphasizes that God's message of salvation can be seen in and experienced by those who are marginalized—the poor, the humble, the homeless, the parentless, and the hungry.

In addition to hearing the Biblical text read in various translations including *The Message*, we have also sung (or will be singing) metrical paraphrases of this text as hymns. (A metrical paraphrase captures in poetic form the themes of a Biblical text so that they can be sung.) Two hymns in *The United Methodist Hymnal* provide us with such paraphrases: *Tell Out, My Soul* (UMH 200) and *My Soul Gives Glory to My God* (UMH 198).

In the historic liturgy of the church the *Magnificat* traditionally is sung during evening Vespers services and is placed between readings from the Old and New Testaments. In the Revised Common Lectionary the text is read each of the three years on either the third or fourth Sunday of Advent; however, the words of the text and its themes of salvation and justice as well as its proclamation of God's enduring love are applicable and relevant throughout the year. In the words of the author of *My Soul Gives Glory to My God*, Dr. Miriam Therese Winter, Catholic Medical Mission Sister and founder of the department of liturgy, worship, and spirituality at Hartford Seminary: "Often through the centuries the *Magnificat* has been considered a dangerous hymn because it sings of overturning the status quo, promising food for the hungry, power for the powerless and a reversal of economic fortunes...It is a song of hope for times of disparity and for any situation in which we feel personally or systemically overwhelmed. It is just the song for a time such as this."

The "time such as this" of which she spoke was in 1987 after the hymn text originally written in 1978 was revised for inclusive language. However *Mary's Magnificat* is also for a time such as our time, and all times in human history, demonstrating the paradoxical timelessness of Biblical texts in terms of their relevance to human life and their ability to speak to many circumstances and contexts. Our hurting world needs us to continue to sing songs proclaiming God's love and justice.

Submitted by, Deborah A. O'Driscoll

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>
Tues., Jan. 3 2017	Thurs., Jan. 5
Tues., Jan. 17	Thurs., Jan. 19

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.



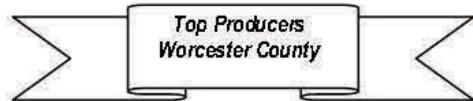
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WESLEY HERALD
DECEMBER 14, 2016

***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
- Mission Coordinator Betsy Pennino
- Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs Mark Muncey
Gifty Bentum-Asante
- Youth Directors Lisa Fagerstrom
Anthony & Adrienne Phillips
- United Methodist Women Co-Chairs Barbara Ingrassia
Allison Hansen