

READY OR NOT...

The Christmas spirit is that hope which tenaciously clings to the hearts of the faithful and announces in the face of any Herod the world can produce, and all the inn doors slammed in our faces, and all the dark nights of our souls; that with God, all things still are possible; that even now unto us a Child is born!

The Christmas Spirit, by Ann Weems

As I sat down to write this article, I didn't feel much "Christmas Spirit" in my heart and soul. Don't get me wrong. I love Christmas...love all of the music and the parties and the worship and the decorations and the times with family and friends. It's just that last week, within a 48-hour period, I lost a dear parishioner and friend and, then, my beloved cat and constant companion for the last 13 years.

So as I sat to write this piece for the Herald, I was feeling pretty sad and in a bit of a funk. It wasn't "Bah Humbug" ... but, it certainly wasn't joy and mirth either!

As I sat trying to figure out what to write, I decided to read some poems from the wonderful book that we're using during our Advent sermon series—*Kneeling in Bethlehem* by Ann Weems. And, there it was...the Christmas Spirit I had been looking for this day—a beautiful reminder of "that hope that tenaciously clings to the hearts of the faithful" and reminds us that regardless of the sadness, loss, grief, and seemingly bleak present "that with God all things are possible; that even now, unto us a Child is born."

For those of us who are in a life-season of joy and celebration...

For those of us who are experiencing the first Christmas without cherished loved ones...

For those of us who are separated from family because of physical or emotional distance...

For those of us who are reuniting with those from whom we have been estranged...

For those of us who are afraid and grieving for our country and our world...

For those of us who are in the midst of unwelcome change...

For those of us excited about hoped-for new beginnings...

Even now, unto us...a Child is born.

Regardless of how we wait, may these last few days of Advent bring all of us the courage and faith to open ourselves to the *Christmas Spirit*—the incarnation of God's hope, peace, joy, and love born in our hearts on Christmas and every day.

In hope and faith,

Lisa Fagerstrom, Director of Christian Formation and Discipleship

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.

The altar flowers on Sunday, December 31st are given in loving memory of Spencer Gutridge by Stanley Gutridge.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✠ The family of the Rev Donald Scott who recently passed.
- ✠ The Hansen family, Jan England and friends on the death of John Hansen on Wednesday, December 13th. His funeral will be held on Tuesday, January 16th at 1 pm at Wesley.
- ✠ A young woman in college facing difficulties.
- ✠ Elizbieta Karlowicz needing prayers for comfort and strength.
- ✠ Maxwell Mitchell, 7 years old, fighting cancer.
- ✠ Stan Gutridge in hospice at Knollwood Nursing Center.

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

Dear Pastor Shandi, Staff, Officers and Members:

We wish to express our sincere thanks and appreciation to you for attending and participating in the Gospel Musical Concert and Fundraiser of the Bishop John & Irene Innis Foundation which was held on December 3, 2017 here at Wesley. Pastor Shandi, you were very supportive. Thanks again for opening this church to us and making available your time and providing what ever we needed to make our program a success. Wesley exposed our concert through Debi by putting it in the Sunday News for three weeks. Also, Betsy and Allison distributed our flyers to many organizations and individuals while Debi again, posted the flyers on every floor of this church.

Wesley also made a donation of \$500.00 through the Mission Committee for our ministry in Liberia. We are very grateful and will forever remember your kindness and love for Jesus Christ. May The Almighty God reward you 100 times for what you have done. Your gift will give village children a chance to acquire an education.

Please be assured that as our partner in this worthwhile ministry, you will receive from us updates of the Foundation's activities.

May God bless you for helping us to help needy children and people in Liberia.

Please have A Merry Christmas and A Happy New Year.

Yours in Christ, Irene J. Innis

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

FROM THE CHURCH SECRETARY

ANNUAL REPORTS were due in the office by Wednesday, December 20th. If you have not already submitted your report, you can email them to me at 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.

OFFICE VOLUNTEER(S) NEEDED... With the change of our hours taking affect beginning January 2nd, the office is in need of volunteer(s) to help answer the phones, the doors, and other small office tasks. We are looking for someone to help from 9 am to 1 pm, Monday-Friday. This can be accomplished with more than one person. If you have time in the morning on one or more days and are interested in helping, please contact Debi in the church office (office@wesleyworc.org or 508-799-4191 ext 102). Thank you.

ONECALL FOR WESLEY CHURCH... Winter is here. Be one of the lucky ones and receive a phone call to find out if a meeting has been rescheduled, or 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 are able to do any of this and more over the phone.

If you would like to sign up for this service, please stop by the Welcome Office and sign up on the clipboard. You can also email me (office@wesleyworc.org). I will need your name, home/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. If this is the case, please email me the information.

Thank you, Debi Ritacco

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Year End Reminders

As December comes to a close, please remember the following with regard to your 2017 donations:

**In order to post your donation to 2017, checks need to be dated 2017.
Any check dated 2018 will be posted to next year.**

All donations for 2017 should be postmarked or received in the office by 12/31/2017.

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...

We are going to extend our request for warm Hats, Gloves, and Mittens, for adults and children, to be our January items of the month. The recent cold weather has brought more requests for these items from our clients. The Mitten Tree will be coming down soon so please put your donations in the Carty basket in Brewer Hall. Thank You! I know that the clients are very appreciative of your giving. To everyone who has or will donate to the mitten tree, we Thank You!!!
~ Nancy Spencer

MISSION MATTERS

LINDA D'ACRI AND FAMILY IN CHARGE OF DECEMBER 30TH COMMUNITY SUPPER...

The D'Acri's volunteered to bring us a fourth 2017 supper on December 30th. 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.*

FOR 2018, OUR IHN WEEKS AND DATES OF COMMUNITY SUPPERS

Now that you have your 2018 calendars of blissfully unassigned time, we've received the dates for which we're responsible at IHN: *February 4 to 10 and October 21 to 27, 2018.*

Community Suppers in 2018 are all on last Saturdays of the months, except for March 31 which is the night of the Easter Vigil. There will be the Easter Community breakfast the next day. The supper will be on March 24. Thank you to groups who have volunteered to lead suppers through May.

2018 APPROVED BUDGET... On behalf of the Finance Committee, I am including the 2018 budget in this Herald which was approved at the all-church meeting this past Sunday. There will be a more detailed review of the budget in the annual report. Please contact Bill Wong, Chairman, with any questions or comments.
Thank you, Lorna

**Wesley United Methodist Church
 2018 FINAL DRAFT BUDGET #2**

December 17, 2017

<u>Budgeted Income</u>	2017 Budget	2018 Budget	Difference from 2017 Budget
Current Pledge & Plate Offering	\$349,155	\$355,000	\$5,845
Special Offerings (Easter, Thanks, Christmas)	\$15,300	\$17,479	\$2,179
Harvest	\$45,000	\$40,000	(\$5,000)
Korean Church	\$5,000	\$5,000	\$0
Building Use & Parking	\$38,845	\$43,532	\$4,687
Church School & Education Trust Funds	<u>\$6,921</u>	<u>\$7,329</u>	\$408
Sub-total Operational Income	\$460,221	\$468,340	\$8,119
Endowment Contribution	\$152,958	\$159,691	\$6,733
<i>Galaxy Funds</i>	<i>\$46,417</i>	<i>\$0</i>	<i>(\$46,417)</i>
Fund Income - Music	<u>\$7,814</u>	<u>\$8,341</u>	\$527
Sub-total Endowment	\$207,189	\$168,032	(\$39,157)
UMW - Annual Contribution	\$5,800	\$5,900	\$100
Bessie Carty - Special Contributions	<u>\$5,000</u>	<u>\$5,000</u>	\$0
Sub-total UMW & Missions	\$10,800	\$10,900	\$100
Other Income	\$3,784	\$2,000	(\$1,784)
Total Budgeted Income	\$681,994	\$649,272	(\$32,722)
Other Non-Allocated Income	\$0	\$6,358	\$6,358
Total Income	\$681,994	\$655,630	(\$26,364)
<u>Budgeted Expenses</u>			
Employee Wages & Benefits	\$408,660	\$363,591	(\$45,069)
Pastor Parsonage	\$5,984	\$6,714	\$730
Church Building & Maintenance	\$134,500	\$135,341	\$841
Office Expense	\$45,237	\$41,743	(\$3,494)
Program: Worship, Music, Ed, Membership, etc.	\$35,900	\$32,260	(\$3,640)
Conference Mission Shares	\$63,000	\$86,995	\$23,995
Misc Expense	\$5,040	\$3,950	(\$1,090)
Total Budgeted Expenses	\$698,321	\$670,594	(\$27,727)
Other Non-Allocated Expenses	\$0	\$3,766	\$3,766
Total Expenses	\$698,321	\$674,360	(\$23,961)
(Deficit) / Surplus	(\$16,327)	(\$18,730)	
Deficit Subtotal	(\$16,327)		
Expected 2017 Deficit		(\$13,300)	
Total Cumulative Deficit		(\$32,030)	

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK

Be the Light that Christmas Brings!

Read: John 1:1-14,16

The gospel of John reminds us that, in the beginning was the Word. The Word became flesh and lived among us, and the Word was the Light of the world. For four weeks in advent, we enact the kind of waiting and watching that characterizes our hope for the coming of the Messiah. As we wait with expectant hope, we remember that what God does on Christmas is the fulfilment of God's promise to bring light into darkened lives and a darkened world.

On Christmas we celebrate the advent of the Light. This Light is the hope of the world, made manifest for all the world to see. On the silent night, the holy night of Christmas Eve, we will remember what God did to send his son, and we will remember how God is still at work. We remember that God is Emmanuel—God with us—and that means that the Light of the world is now in us, for God has made us light after Jesus, whose love and life is now in and among us.

On Christmas we are therefore called to look within and look around and see what the Lord has done. God has made us reflections of the true light that shines upon the world. And you are the light shining in the darkness now. So, in this season, you are called to be the light you want to see in the world. Because Jesus is the Light shining in our lives, he makes us light after himself when he says, "you are the light of the world." So, this Christmas, be the light you want to see in the world.

Be the light that Christmas brings. Begin at home. Begin at work. Begin in the community. Begin in this very church because you are now his witnesses! You are the hope that Christmas brings - do not let the despairing of this world discourage you! You are the peace that Christmas brings - do not let the turmoil of this world suppress you! You are the love that Christmas brings - do not let the hate of this world repress you! You are the joy that Christmas brings - do not let the sorrows of this world restrain you. You are the light of the world - do not let the darkness of this world overcome you.

Be the light that Christmas brings!

*Merry Christmas,
Pastor Shandi*

SAVE THE DATE.... United Methodist Women Annual Meeting is on Sunday, January 14th beginning with a Luncheon in East Hall following the 10:30 service. Circle Chairs and Officers, please submit your reports by Friday, January 5th to Allison Hansen at achis4788@aol.com.

CHRISTIAN FORMATION OPPORTUNITIES AT WESLEY

“Welcoming the Light” is this Fourth Week of Advent’s worship theme, and the practice we invite you to is Imaginative Prayer. St. Francis of Assisi encouraged people to create nativity scenes at Christmas to imagine the holy family as living people (an early form of imaginative prayer). This practice is briefly outlined below...

- ◇ Settle in a comfortable and quiet spot. Prepare to spend some time in imaginative prayer. You might open your hands on your lap and ask God to open your heart and imagination, and invite the Christ Child into your heart.
- ◇ Read the Christmas Nativity story from Luke...Luke 2:1-20. As you read, imagine yourself in the story. In your mind’s eye, look around the scene that you are in and take it all in...What is around you? Who else is there? What do I hear, smell, touch in the scene? What is the mood of the scene—tense, joyful, confused, angry? What is the meaning of this scene for your life? After reading the story and spending time in imaginative prayer “in” the scene, spend some time in silent reflection.
- ◇ Close your time by re-reading the last verse of the story...Luke 2:20. “The shepherds returned, glorifying and praising God for all they had heard and seen, as it had been told them.” What does it mean for your life? How does the incarnation of the Christ Child in our hearts call for us to daily “glorify and praise God” in the world?

~~~~~

### Three New Small Group Opportunities forming in 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?** Please contact Lisa Fagerstrom or sign-up on the sheets provided in Brewer Hall on Dec. 24th and 31st. 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.

## DID YOU KNOW?

As mentioned in a previous article there is only one Christmas hymn by Charles Wesley in *The United Methodist Hymnal*. However, that one Christmas carol is so generally known and loved that many people don't even realize that it comes from our Methodist heritage. It is in fact one of the most popular Christmas carols ever written and has the distinction of being one of only two carols included every year in the Festival of Nine Lessons and Carols at King's College, Cambridge. "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" (UMH 240) was originally entitled "Hymn for Christmas Day" and published in 1739 as part of a collection called *Hymns and Sacred Poems*. And the first line of that hymn as written by Wesley was "Hark, how all the welkin rings," not the now familiar "Hark, the herald angels sing." It was Wesley's friend and perhaps less well-known co-founder of Methodism, Anglican priest George Whitefield, who altered the text of the opening line and published it in his 1753 *Collection*. He likely saved the text from obscurity, as the term "welkin" (defined variously as firmament, vault of heaven, celestial sphere) was a poetic term rarely used even in Wesley's time. Over the years there have been many other revisions of the text; most recently our 1989 *United Methodist Hymnal* embraces changes eliminating gender exclusive language.

In the same way that we cannot imagine singing the text of this beloved carol without Whitefield's altered first line, most of us would find it hard to imagine singing it to any other tune than MENDELSSOHN, the "traditional" tune with which it is paired in our hymnal. As the tune name suggests, the melody was written by Felix Mendelssohn (and later adapted and arranged by William H. Cummings.) It was not written, however, as a hymn tune—it was originally the melody of a chorus in a cantata composed by Mendelssohn in 1840 to commemorate the 400<sup>th</sup> anniversary of Gutenberg's invention of mechanical movable type printing. Cummings adapted the tune for Wesley's text in 1856, and it first appeared in American Methodist hymnals in 1878.

Believe it or not, one of the tunes with which this text has been paired beginning in 1754 is the tune now known as EASTER HYMN, the tune to which we sing another Wesley text "Christ the Lord is Risen Today" (UMH 302). In fact the 1966 *Methodist Hymnal* printed "Hark! the Herald Angels Sing" with both tunes. In a way the pairing of the text with what we consider to be an Easter tune highlights the broad theological scope of this text, for "Hark! The Herald Angels Sing" does more than tell the Christmas story. Described in *Companion to the United Methodist Hymnal* as an "extraordinary hymn on humankind's re-creation, reformation, and reconciliation in the life and witness of Jesus Christ," this text encapsulates the entire Gospel message.

*Submitted by,  
Deborah O'Driscoll*



## 2018 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., Jan. 8 2018                | Wed., Jan. 10                  |
| Mon., Jan. 22                    | Wed., Jan. 24                  |

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.



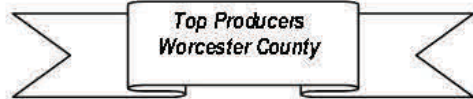
**United Methodist  
FEDERAL CREDIT UNION**

Providing full-service financial products  
and services to United Methodists

New England Branch  
207-591-6449

**www.umfcu.org**

California Headquarters  
toll-free 800-245-0433



**Gibbs** REALTY INC.  
A Smart Move



Jeffrey Gibbs  
Broker/REALTOR®



Christy Gibbs  
REALTOR®

Your Wesley Family REALTORS®  
Proudly Servicing All of Worcester County

GibbsRealtyInc.com • 508-886-6100



**Wesley United Methodist Church**  
**114 Main Street**  
**Worcester, Massachusetts 01608**

**Church Phone: 508-799-4191**  
**Fax: 508-799-3725**  
**E-Mail: [office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org)**  
**Web page: [www.wesleyworc.org](http://www.wesleyworc.org)**

**WESLEY HERALD**  
**DECEMBER 20, 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                         | Giftly Bentum-Asante                              |
| Youth Directors                                | Anthony & Adrienne Phillips                       |
| United Methodist Women<br>Co-Chairs            | Barbara Ingrassia<br>Allison Hansen               |

NON-PROFIT ORG.  
U.S. POSTAGE  
**PAID**  
WORCESTER, MA  
PERMIT NO. 236