

DISCIPLES' RESOLUTIONS FOR A NEW YEAR

Every time that I begin a new year, I find it important to go back to certain scripture and to be reminded of my baptismal vows and covenantal relationship with God. The passage from Acts 2:39-47 is one of those scripture passages.

According to Acts 2, all baptized Christians are called to be: 1) *Faithful in Worship*, 2) *Faithful in Learning*, 3) *Faithful in Stewardship*, and 4) *Faithful in Witness*. So, this year, I am inviting you to join me in recommitting to these practices of our covenantal faith.

Faithfulness in Worship: *"Day by day, as they spent much time together in the temple, they broke bread..., praising God and having the goodwill of all the people."* As we begin a new year, I pray that we at Wesley will experience transformation in worship. Worship is about celebrating the presence of God in our midst and celebrating the blessing it is to be the children of God. I hope we can all experience worship as a communal act that we actively engage in and not passively receive.

Faithfulness in Learning: *"Those who welcomed Peter's message were baptized... They devoted themselves to the apostles teaching and fellowship."* We know Jesus as the Great Teacher (Rabbi). What the first disciples learned from him, they passed it on to others, and thus it has been from generation to generation. The Great Commission is being fulfilled when Christians commit to *"make disciples of all nations... teaching them to obey everything that I have commanded."* (Matt.28:19-20) My prayer this year is that we will find new ways to learn together and grow deeper together in faith.

Faithfulness in Stewardship: *"All who believed were together and had all things in common; they would sell their possessions and goods and distribute the proceeds to all, as any had need."* I believe that a community thrives when all its members contribute to the wellbeing of the community. I believe God gives us gifts to be able to help us build the community God envisions. My prayer this year is that we will use our gifts in a way that glorifies God by giving and sharing of our self, our time and our resources for the sake of the kingdom God is establishing on earth.

Faithfulness in Witness: *"Awe came upon everyone, because many wonders and signs were being done by the apostles... And day by day the Lord added to their number those who were being saved."* The calling which we all share is ultimately about bearing witness to the One who has the power to save, the God whom we worship. My prayer is that ultimately, the lives we lead, and the missions and ministries we do will point people to God and help people connect with God even more deeply. So, this year, I invite you to join me in re-affirming our baptismal covenant, and recommitting our lives to a life of faithful discipleship.

May God bless you and keep you,

Pastor Shandi

LIGHTINGS AND ALTAR FLOWERS

The Tower lighting for January is given in loving memory of my mother, Mary Fletcher and my brother, David Fletcher by Barbara Fletcher.

The Rose window lighting for January is given in loving memory of Mrs. William B. Smith by the United Methodist Women.

The altar flowers on Sunday, January 13th were given in loving memory of Mrs. William B. Smith by the United Methodist Women.

WE LIFT UP IN PRAYER THIS WEEK

- ✝ Paul Keister who is at Fairlawn Rehab after another fall.
- ✝ John Adams, who is a dear friend looking for work and whose family is struggling to make ends meet.
- ✝ The Family and friends of Isabell Basinsky, a long-time Carty Cupboard volunteer, who passed away on Monday, January 14th.
- ✝ The Sjoberg family on the death of their father and grandfather.
- ✝ Chris Flagg and family and they grieve the passing of Chris's brother.
- ✝ Aunty Elizabeth Osei-Boateng and family as they grieve the passing of her brother in Ghana.
- ✝ Debbie O'Driscoll, Tom Friend, Afua Henaku and Lucy Wisner who recently celebrated their birthdays. May God continue to shower blessings upon them.
- ✝ Wesley Church as we seek to find solutions for our ministry with the homeless.

AN ALL CHURCH MEETING will be held today following the 10:30 service. The agenda for the meeting is to discuss the concerns that have been shared with the Church Council regarding our ministry to the homeless, and to explore together any possible solutions for moving forward. So please bring your questions, and ideas. We hope to see you there.

FROM THE PASTOR'S DESK...

A WORD ABOUT OUR MINISTRY WITH THE HOMELESS

Beloved in Christ, as you know, our church for a time has been opening our doors to welcome the homeless on Sunday mornings so that they can have a meal in the warmth of our space and community. However, recently, I announced to our guests and to the church that we would be suspending this ministry until further notice. We are suspending the ministry and spending the next few weeks to discern a way forward.

A number of issues and concerns have come up since we began this ministry. We have had people voice concerns about the general safety of church members and of our guests. We have received questions and concerns about whether we are well equipped to sustain such a ministry. Our ministry with the homeless began because we saw a basic need to feed the homeless. The ministry has since been evolving as we have been presented with other needs and challenges associated with our efforts to feed our guests. To address these challenges, the Church Council has been gathering feedback and brainstorming solutions.

On Sunday, January 20th, after the 10:30 worship service, I will be sharing a report on behalf of the Council of some of the concerns and questions that have come up as a result of us offering this ministry. I will also be sharing some recommendations about what is required should we as a church feel called to continue offering this ministry to the homeless in our community.

I am grateful for everyone who has come to me or a member of the Council to voice their concerns and questions. I am also grateful for everyone who has come to me or Council members voicing your support for the ministry and offering ideas for solutions. We have been compiling as much of this feedback as we could, and they will be part of my report on January 20th.

I am writing to invite your continued prayers as we discern together about how God is leading us through this. Hopefully, in the next Herald article, I will be writing with a more definitive decision and discernment from the church about how to move forward. I invite you to please come and attend the meeting on January 20th and participate in our communal act of discernment. May God bless you and keep you.

In faith and trust, Pastor Shandi

FROM THE STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS COMMITTEE (SPRC) ANNOUNCING A NEW STAFF POSITION

At the December 9th All Church Meeting, the Church approved a recommendation by the SPRC to open a search for a new Director of Children, Youth, and Family Ministries. The position will provide a more permanent solution to the interim arrangements the SPRC had made with Nan Gibbons, the Children's Choir Director and Lisa Fagerstrom, who was the Director of Christian Formation. Below is the position announcement. We invite you to please share this with anyone interested.

Positon Announcement: Wesley United Methodist Church is seeking a full time (30hours) **Director of Children, Youth and Family Ministries** to lead in providing opportunities for children and youth to participate in the life of the congregation where they are *informed, formed* and *transformed* as disciples of Jesus Christ in light of its five areas of passion: *Spiritual Growth, Welcome, Hospitality and Inclusion, Diversity and Multiculturalism, Mission and Outreach, and Lay Leadership Development and Empowerment.*

Responsibilities for this position include providing leadership and oversight in spiritual formation across the ages, program development and implementation of our Sunday School, Vacation Bible School and other seasonal activities, equipping lay leadership and administrative oversight.

The ideal candidate will have demonstrated a commitment to the Christian faith, incorporating Christian practices in his or her life. The candidate must have experience with and demonstrated ability to work with children, youth and families, including having an understanding of the developmental and spiritual life-stages of growth. The candidate will have a degree or certificate in Children's Ministry, Youth Ministry, Christian Education, religious studies, or related field.

For a complete position description visit www.wesleyworc.org/contact/job-opportunities

Contact: The position is available beginning March 1st. To apply, please submit a cover letter, resume, and a one page personal statement about your understanding of Christian formation across the ages to the address listed below by **February 1st**.

Wesley United Methodist Church,
Attn: Pastor Shandi Mawokomatanda
114 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608
searchcommittee@wesleyworc.org

MESSAGES FROM THE CHURCH BUSINESS ADMINISTRATOR

Preliminary 2018 Budget Results

	<u>Actual</u>	<u>Budget</u>	<u>Difference</u>
Total Income	\$691,973	\$ 655,630	\$ 36,353 positive
Total Expense	\$676,695	\$ 651,681	\$-25,014 negative
Net Surplus	\$ 15,278	\$ 3,949	\$ 11,329 positive

Income Highlights:

Pledges	\$339,671	\$ 340,000	\$ -329 negative
Christmas	\$ 8,049	\$ 6,200	\$ 1,849 positive
Harvest	\$ 50,456	\$ 40,000	\$ 10,456 positive
Tenant Rentals	\$ 13,471	\$ 10,070	\$ 3,401 positive
1-Time Rentals	\$ 21,422	\$ 5,600	\$ 15,821 positive

Expense Highlights:

SPRC	\$353,438	\$362,907	\$ -9,471 positive
Parsonage	\$ 7,139	\$ 6,714	\$ 425 negative
Building	\$149,251	\$135,341	\$ 13,910 negative
Office	\$ 47,193	\$ 41,743	\$ 5,450 negative
Programs	\$ 36,433	\$ 32,260	\$ 4,173 negative
Mission Shares	\$ 65,000	\$ 65,000	\$ 0

Final numbers will be presented in the next Herald after all reconciliations are completed.

*Regards,
Lorna*

NOTES FROM THE CHANCEL

Soli Deo Gloria is a phrase Johann Sebastian Bach (1685-1750) would use at the end of his music. It is a Latin phrase that means: only to God be the glory. It is an interesting concept that Bach presents to us. In this music-making, it is not about us, rather it is about something greater than we are.

Within Bach's lifetime, he was familiar with a philosophy of music that is strange to us here in the 21st century. Music had three types of harmony—the harmony of the planets, the harmony of relationships, and the harmony of sound. Sound is the only music we are familiar with today, but in Bach's time, it was the smallest form. Since God created the planets and the harmony of them, it was seen to be the greatest form. Relationships are a sincere harmony that is created by human and God (if we invite God in). So I want to introduce myself by beginning to make harmony with all the members of Wesley United Methodist Church—harmony of relationship, and harmony of sound and I pray that as I begin God's work here at Wesley, it starts with harmony of relationship, then follows with a harmony of sound.

Soli Deo Gloria

Michael Steven Lianos

Director of Music Ministries



THANKS FOR YOUR PART IN PREVENTING HOMELESSNESS... Wesley's congregation did a great service in 2018 – together, we bought \$18,725 in gift cards from grocery stores, CVS, Panera and Dunkin' Donuts, which translated into support that kept dozens of families in their homes. Collectively we helped to prevent homelessness! A huge thank you to all our volunteers who kept the card sales going all year: Donna and Amelia Hirtle, Cordelia and Danielle Ferdinand, Mark Muncey, Jim Hoffman, Judith Barton, Cora Arsenault, Bill Wong, Earl Flagg, Nancy Cook and Chris Grant. Thanks too to our loyal customers, whose ongoing support made all the difference.
~ Allison Hansen

NEW MEMBER CLASS... Pastor Shandi is planning to hold a New Member class. Membership classes will run for six weeks, depending on people's availability. If you are interested in becoming a member at Wesley United Methodist Church, please contact Pastor Shandi at pastorshandim@wesleyworc.org.

FROM THE WORSHIP TEAM

WORSHIP PLAN FOR THE SEASON AFTER EPIPHANY

In a previous Herald, Pastor Shandi shared with us about how the Worcester Area United Methodist (WAUM) Clergy are seeking ways to intentionally live into connectional ministry together. Pastor Shandi also shared that, starting on **January 13, 2019**, five of the clergy in WAUM will engage in a rotating pulpit supply during the season after Epiphany.

The worship theme for the season will be: **Connected!** The theme is designed to explore and expound upon the membership vows of the United Methodist Church, which state that “we will faithfully participate in the church’s ministries by our prayers, presence, gifts, service and witness.” As part of the series, the WAUM clergy will cast a vision of what it means to be a people called Methodists in Worcester and what a connectional ministry between our churches might look like in light of our membership vows.

Below is the preaching schedule for this worship series.

January 13—On Service by Pastor Ken Mantler from Epworth UMC

January 20—Observance of Martin Luther King Jr. Sunday, Pastor Shandi

January 27—On Witness by Pastor LyAnna Johnson from Simple Church Worcester

February 3—On Presence by Pastor Barry Judd from Quinsigamond UMC

February 10—On Gifts by Pastor Shandi

February 17—District Superintendent Rene Perez preaching

February 24—On Prayer by Pastor Thiago Viera from Jesus Life Center UMC

Bishop Peter Weaver, former bishop for the New England Annual Conference, used to say that, although local congregations may pay for a pastor’s salary, United Methodist pastors are appointed to a community and not a church. This is a concept that comes from John Wesley who said, “the world is my parish” and started a Methodist movement of itinerant preachers. Connectional ministry is undergirded by the same belief and understanding that our call is to serve the community in which our congregations are located. So the vision is to live-out this connectional witness whereby Worcester Methodists share in the one ministry of making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world in our city. Please come and join us in the special worship series celebrating our connection.

GOD PLACED A CALL ON MY HEART AND I RESPONDED... WE ALL RESPONDED!

After months of asking for donations and sorting canned goods, after 6 teams of volunteers made 6 separate trips to the Worcester County food Bank and Market Basket locations to pick up canned goods, baking supplies, fresh produce and turkeys, after those same volunteers lugged more than TWELVE THOUSAND pounds of food into the church, after all the hours volunteers spent filling all the boxes, after every single volunteer who committed to helping on distribution day showed up! After 3 teens and 2 others home for college break carried filled boxes out to cars, after hundreds of boxes were broken up and recycled, after everyone went home and we cleaned up the aftermath, After all of this... Donna and I are honored to say that 252 families (more than one thousand people) enjoyed Thanksgiving dinner this year, all because of Wesley UMC and their commitment to serving God's people.

From the bottom of our hearts we want to thank each and every one of you for sharing in this mission with us, whether you donated supplies, money, muscle, time or prayer, we want you to know that it could not have happened without you!

God's Blessings to You,

Chris Flagg & Donna Hirtle

New Small Group Reflecting on the Practice of *Lectio Divina*. The ancient Christian spiritual practice of *Lectio Divina* or "sacred reading" is one way to create the time, space, and opportunities for knowing God. On one level, *Lectio Divina* is simply a manner of reading, meditating, praying and contemplating God through the Scriptures, but unsurprisingly, in light of the God's mysterious desire to commune with us, when we practice this rhythm God meets with and interacts with us. You are invited to join a new small group forming around the practice of *Lectio Divina*. The group will meet for four Sundays, beginning Sunday, January 13th, during the 9:30 coffee hour, to share with each other how you encountered God throughout the previous week as you engaged in a daily time of practicing *Lectio Divina* through the Psalms of Ascent (Psalms 120-134). If you take the journey with us you will be spending approximately 25 minutes a day, Monday through Friday, to read, meditate, pray, and reflect on the day's reading and then sharing with and learning from each other for an hour on Sunday morning. In addition to meeting with God each day, our weekly communal gathering will assist each of us in continuing to move forward on our faith journeys. I'm confident that by the end of our gathering you will be glad that you made the time to interact with God and one another. If you have any questions please email me at, jason.tockey@gmail.com.

MISSION MATTERS

Leaders needed for the February 23rd Community Supper... The D'Acris, UMW and the Youth Group have signed up to run the January, March, April and May Community Suppers, but February has not been spoken for. Please tell Pastor Shandi or Betsy if you or your group can volunteer.

UMW in charge of January 26th Community Supper.... The United Methodist Women (UMW) are once again in charge of the first supper of the new year. The menu will be New England Baked Beans, baked ham, coleslaw, crusty bread, beverages and dessert. A vegetarian alternative will be available. *Wesley Bakers, desserts would be much appreciated!* UMW members, if you're able to help prepare, set up, serve... the meal, please email Allison (achis4788@aol.com). Any Wesley woman who would like to learn more about UMW can ask one of the servers.

Wesley's IHN Week is Sunday, February 3-9... Please sign up with Mercy Peacock if you are able to do the evening shift (5:30 to 8:30 pm) or the overnight (8:30 pm to 6:30 am). You could also add your name to the sign-up chart on the Mission Spotlight bulletin board in Brewer Hall. If you wish to pair up with someone, just let us know that. If you would like an explanation of how to do either shift, please speak with Mercy or Betsy. A newly written role description is available.

Each evening volunteer can now choose whether to provide dinner or not. Residents would appreciate our cooking 2 or 3 dinners (or providing takeout), if you're up for that. The Mission Committee will give (Big Y) Hope for Housing cards to pay for the other meals and housing staples during our February 3—9 week. Your donating Big Y cards would save money to give to missions.

Donating Books on the Bible for Adults & Children... Church Council thought that we should make the Christian message available to our breakfast guests (now on 1st Sundays only). Books of Bible stories are best, including Bibles, and can be given to Betsy. Donations should be very gently used with any marks on them covered by stickers.

ALTAR FLOWERS... Beautiful floral arrangements on the altar during Sunday worship are a special gift we offer to God as part of our praise and worship. The arrangements are usually dedicated in celebration of or in memory of a loved one. By your choice, you may take the flowers home to enjoy or you may request the flowers be delivered to a shut-in or member/friend in the hospital. If you are unable to join us in church, arrangements can be made for the flowers to be delivered to you at home after the service.

A calendar of available dates and order forms for 2019 are available in the Welcome Office. The cost for altar flowers is \$60/2 arrangements. If you are not able to come to church but would like to dedicate flowers, please call me in the office (508-799-4191).

Thank you, Debi Reynolds

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), 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.

Did You Know?

Our worship on Epiphany included hearing the story from the Gospel of Matthew of the Magi's following a star to the birthplace of Jesus in Bethlehem, where they worshiped him and offered gifts to him. Throughout Advent and into Christmas and Epiphany the image of stars has been prominent in our sanctuary. There have been paper stars hanging overhead, and several different types of stars are found on the Chrismon tree.

Although the star that led the wise men to Jesus is the star of the Bible with which we are most familiar, there are many more references to stars throughout the Old and New Testaments. Some of these references are to the stars as heavenly bodies and as part of creation that includes images of transcendence and glory. Stars also are used as symbols of people, culminating in the image of the ascended Christ as the "bright morning star" of the book of Revelation.

The imagery of stars is also found in hymnody. A more contemporary hymn which uses the symbolism of a star for Jesus is "Star-Child" (TFWS 2095), which we sang as our hymn of preparation on Epiphany. Dean McIntyre of the General Board of Discipleship explains the somewhat challenging text of this hymn in the following way¹:

Each verse begins with paired images followed by a short description:

- "Star-Child, earth-Child": The capitalized Child refers specifically to Jesus, son of God the creator of the universe, yet born on earth fully human; juxtaposes images of the Jesus of heaven and the Jesus of earth, both divine and human. Jesus is the "go-between" or intercessor between God and mankind.
- "Street child, beat child": There are people -- children and adults -- without homes and families, living on the streets, in the cold, beaten down by life's circumstances, "no place left to go."
- "Grown child, old child": Even older people with a lifetime of memories, are children of God.
- "Spared child, spoiled child": There are people of privilege and comfort, spared the struggle of the streets, spoiled by all that they have, yet "wanting more."

Dean McIntyre, "Hymn Study: *Star Child*," <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/star-child>, accessed December 31, 2018.

- “Hope-for-peace Child”: Jesus born on earth is a “stupendous sign” from God that we can hope for peace.

Each verse continues with a second pair of images and a second short description:

- “love Child, Christ Child”: Again capitalized, referring to Jesus. As “heaven’s lightning rod,” Jesus is God’s means of entering into our human, earthly existence, quickly, dramatically, powerfully, as lightning in a storm.
- “hurt child, used child”: As with its paired “street” and “beat child,” there are those among us on the edges of society, people we may not even want to know or acknowledge.
- “sad child, lost child”: There are those who suffer and hurt, have no direction, no goal, no joy, whose life stories are “told in tears.”
- “wise child, faith child”: And there are people whose lives have led them to maturity and wisdom in the faith.
- “down-to-earth Child”: Amid all these images of humans, good images and unfortunate images, Jesus, as the divine star-Child, has come to earth to live among us and in us. He is the bright “Star of stars that shine.”

As images of mystery that demonstrate God’s awe-inspiring creativity, stars help to proclaim the ways God comes to us. The refrain of the hymn reminds us that there are some people who have never experienced the joy of Christmas. As McIntyre observes, “The prayer that this year Christmas will come to all is a prayer that everyone will know, recognize, and experience the coming of the Christ child in the many and varied circumstances of their lives.” As we move from Christmas and Epiphany, may the way we live our lives shine the light of Christ, the true Star of Christmas, into the world.

*Submitted by,
Deborah A. O’Driscoll*

2019 HERALD SCHEDULE

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

<u>Article Deadline Date</u>	<u>Herald Mailing Date</u>
Wed., Feb. 13	Wed., Feb. 20
Wed., March 20	Wed., March 27

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.

YOU ARE INVITED TO JOIN!

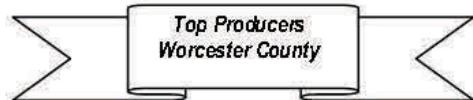


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Happy New Year!!!

WESLEY HERALD
JANUARY 16, 2019

WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pastor	Rev. Shandirai Mawokomatanda
Director of Music Ministries	Michael Lianos
Director of Children's Music	Nan Gibbons
Music Assistant & Layleader	Deborah O'Driscoll
Building Superintendent	Tim Murphy
Business Administrator	Lorna Mattus-Merrill
Church Secretary	Debi Reynolds
Custodians	April Dylewicz Tom Friend Gerard Piscitelli
Security	Steve Boyns
Head Usher	David Dagle
Church Council	Tom Ingrassia
Board of Trustees	Yaw Enyim
Co-Chairs	Gary Robinson
Carty Cupboard Food Pantry	Nancy Spencer
Communion Steward	Linda D'Acri
Finance & Stewardship	Michael Edmunds
Co-Chairs	William Wong
Ghanaian Association	Paul Hayfron
Hospitality Co-Chairs	Vivian Assie Judy Hoffman
Medical Ministry	Ron Ramsay
Mission Coordinator	Betsy Pennino
Staff-Parish Relations	Giftly Bentum-Asante
Youth Directors	Anthony & Adrienne Phillips
United Methodist Women	Barbara Ingrassia
Co-Chairs	Allison Hansen

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