
THE WESLEY HERALD

February 2023

“For freedom Christ has set us free. Stand firm, therefore, and do not submit again to a yoke of slavery.” (Galatians 5:1) *An Inclusive Version*

Living through pandemic times, wearing a mask is not a strange symbolic image to us. It is not unusual to wear a mask of sorts when we relate to others. Our masks help us to feel better and protect our inner selves. In some ways masks are a tool of survival as protective shields. On the flip side, our masks prevent us from growing to become the person we were meant to become. This has emotional and spiritual consequences.

Our God is God of life who gives to us the gift of new life. In person of Jesus Christ, his promises and examples, resurrection’s victory over the powers of death is ours. Hope for a new day always calls us forward.

On February 22nd, we will begin our yearly Lenten journey. In this season of Lent, we may unmask our faces before God, and in sincere and humble clarity offer to God the person whom we really are. Our protective shields are unnecessary with our God who knows us and loves us unconditionally. This is for our benefit. In that it deepens our relationship of love and trust in God. What we receive is the freedom to love the person God intends us to be.

“For you were called to freedom, brothers and sisters; only do not use your freedom as an opportunity for self-indulgence, but through love serve one another. For the whole law is summed up in a single commandment, “You shall love your neighbor as yourself.” If, however, you bite and devour one another, take care that you are not consumed by one another.” (Galatians 5:13-15)

When we lower our masks and realize that we are loved by God as we are, the effect is that chains which have held us captive are broken, and we are able to live a new life.

Paul continues, “The fruit of the Spirit is love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, generosity, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. There is no law against such things. And those who belong to Christ Jesus have crucified the flesh with its passions and desires. If we live by the Spirit, let us also be guided by the Spirit. Let us not become conceited, competing against one another, envying one another.” (Galatians 5:22-26)

As we prepare our Lenten Journey, the most holy season of the year, may we unmask before God and break free of that which binds us, to live new lives in Christ, so that on Easter we can celebrate the true joy of resurrection.

Peace and Grace,

Moo

Special Prayers for these Wesley Family, Friends, and Others...

Polly Boyns for continued prayers for healing and for upcoming radiation treatment, Anthony Brima in ICU in St. Vincent's hospital and for his wife Annie during this time, Janice Mitchell (Susan Williams sister) and family on the death of her husband, Chester last week, Judy Hoffman for healing after a fall, Alice & Joseph Boateng, Anne Burrows, Barbara Fletcher, Charles & Samira Kiefer, Bill Kilmer, Kris Kronberg, Dorothy Norcross, David O'Driscoll, David Samanen, Alicia Simoneau, Donald Tremblay; Barbara, Frank and the Vietze Family; Bill Wong, Laura Zoldak, Kelly, a friend of David Potts, Margie (Linda Keister's sister), Malika Gujarati (family of Jim & Judy Hoffman), Emily (Donroy Ferdinand's cousin); Page, Allison Hansen's sister, Ralph (friend of Dorothy Adams).
Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

Family and friends of Rev. Louis Bond of Covenant St Andrews Church, who passed away Friday, January 24th. Calling hours are at Covent St Andrews Church, Friday, February 3rd from 4-7 pm. A Service of Remembrance will be on Saturday, February 4th at 11 am here at Wesley Church. A repast will follow immediately after the service at Wesley.

Family and friends of Shirley Ferris (98 yo) who passed away on January 11th in Newcastle, ME. Cards can be sent to Judi Ekholm, 44 Marigold Farm Lane, Whitefield, ME 04353; or to Lisa Maliska, 3 Heritage Lane, Apt 2D, Wiscasset, ME 04578. Shirley's obituary can be seen on the board in Brewer Hall by the office.

Tower & Rose Window Lightings & Altar Flowers

The following lightings are available for dedication in 2023:

The February Rose Window and Tower lighting, August Tower lighting, October Tower lighting, December Rose window lighting.

If you are interested in lighting either in memory or honor of a loved one(s), please let Debi in the office know. The cost of each lighting is \$40 for the month.

Altar flowers... The 2023 calendar is now available. If you'd like to place flowers on the altar on a particular Sunday, please stop at the Welcome office and sign up in the book. Please be sure to fill your name in on the day, then take an order form and submit it to Debi in the office with a check.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

Vacation Schedule:

Moo is on vacation from Thursday, February 2 – Wednesday, February 15, returning to the office on Thursday, February 16th. If you have a pastoral need or emergency, please contact Rev. James Hoffman at jhoffman24661@yahoo.com or at 860-965-2575.

Herald:

The next Herald will be sent out on March 1st. Please send your article(s) to me no later than Friday, January 24th. Thank you.

New Bible Study Series on 1st and 3rd Tuesday Evenings

Everyone is invited to participate via Zoom in the ongoing Tuesday group from 6:30 to 8 pm. This small group meets on the first and third Tuesdays, starting on Feb. 7th. The new book is The Life of Jesus, Participant's Guide. The group just finished a book from this series which requires no "homework." The book is mostly topics to notice in the videos, questions to discuss, and optional daily reflections. The videos explore the main events of Jesus' life to understand what made him so extraordinary. What is learned will be applied to life today.

Betsy Pennino will be facilitating the discussion and technical expert Bill Wong will make sure the videos run smoothly. Please contact Judy Hoffman to sign up. You can get a book (\$7) from Judy or Betsy.

Ash Wednesday 2023 at Wesley

Ash Wednesday marks the beginning of Lent, a season of reflection in which we are invited to deeper Christian discipleship. This year on Ash Wednesday, Wesley will provide several different times and ways for you to enter into the season of Lent. It is hoped that having multiple options with a flexible schedule will enable as many people as possible to mark the beginning of the Lenten journey in a meaningful way.

On Ash Wednesday, February 22, from 11am-1pm and 3pm-5pm Pastor Moo will offer distribution of ashes and Holy Communion at the wooden footbridge in the rear parking lot. Should you wish to spend time in individual prayer and reflection either before or after receiving ashes and Communion outside, the sanctuary and chapel will be open during the same hours. The floor labyrinth along with materials for a guided walk to contemplate Lenten intentions will be available in the chapel.

Should you wish to participate in corporate worship there will be an evening service of imposition of ashes and communion in the sanctuary at 6:30pm. (This will be our first in-person Ash Wednesday service since 2020.) A light soup supper will be available in Brewer Hall at 6pm. You may also choose to walk the labyrinth in the chapel before or after the service.

It is our hope and prayer that the observance of Ash Wednesday will open the way for your spiritual pilgrimage through Lent.

Lenten Small Group Study

In the season of Lent many people take on an additional spiritual practice. One such practice is to participate in a seasonal small group study. During the six weeks of Lent Debbie O'Driscoll will facilitate a daytime online small group using the book *Lent in Plain Sight* by Jill J. Duffield. This devotional book considers ten everyday objects (dust, bread, a cross, coins, shoes, oil, coats, towels, thorns, and stones), looking at scriptural references to each object and using the object as a lens through which to consider aspects of the Lenten spiritual journey.

The intention is for the group to meet via Zoom on Wednesdays during Lent, either morning or afternoon, with the exact time to be determined based on what works best for those participating. Please speak to Debbie or contact her (debodrscll@aol.com) for more details. Alternatively, you may contact the church office to express your interest in participating in the study.

Lenten Devotionals

What does it look like for you to observe a holy Lent? For many of us our Lenten spiritual practice includes the use of topical devotional materials. To support you in deepening your spiritual journey this Lent we are making a variety of devotionals available to the congregation. Devotionals for individuals as well as for families will be available for pick up at the church beginning Sunday, February 19 and will remain available on Sundays throughout Lent as well as during the week in the church office. If you are unable to come to the building to obtain a devotional and wish to have one mailed to you, please contact the church office.

Prevent Homelessness with Gift Cards

It's a simple idea with community-wide impact -- buy gift cards for your groceries or other shopping and help Worcester-area families stay in their homes! Working with the Central Mass. Housing Alliance, Wesley offers gift cards for sale each Sunday. A portion (anywhere from 2 to 10 percent) of the face value goes into a fund that helps families who are facing eviction. One rent check or utility bill payment from this fund can keep a family together in their home, rather than the upheaval of living in a shelter or on the street.

Available in a variety of denominations, grocery gift cards are on sale from Shaw's, Stop & Shop and Big Y. Cards are also for sale from CVS, Target, Dunkin' Donuts, Starbucks, Panera, TJ Maxx/Marshalls/Home Goods and Amazon. Look for the display near the stage in Brewer Hall after church!

Volunteers are always welcome -- pick a Sunday that suits your schedule.

Advance orders may be made via email to Allison Hansen at ACHis4788@aol.com. February orders are due by the end of the day February 14 for distribution on Sunday, February 19.

ONECALL TELLALL

Don't sit and wonder on a Sunday morning of a storm if church is going to be cancelled. Instead, receive a phone call and find out immediately!

Whether it be a cancellation because of a snowstorm, a meeting that has been cancelled or even to remind you of a special event taking place at Wesley, we will reach out to you by phone. This is a pre-recorded call, so please make sure your voicemail has space and it should save the call in case you miss it.

If you would like to sign up for this, please put your name, home phone number and **one phone number per household** on the sign-up sheet just outside the Welcome Office.

This is just another way for us to help keep you informed of what is going on at your church.

Free Console piano available on ground level at Wesley. This is a working piano that anyone may have upon removing it from the church. No steps from ground level since the piano would leave from the ground level door facing Main Street. Contact the office to say that you are interested in the piano and when you'd like to move it.



God Moments

If you could share a story of seeing God's work in your life, please tell me or email it to me. The story can be anonymous or signed, and all are invited to participate. Betsy (betspenn35@hotmail.com)



A God Moment by Nancy Cook

Right Place at the Right Time

When IHN used rooms in the church I connected with the leaders and families there. One day as I drove in the parking lot, their director Joanne was leaving. We both stopped and she told me their van had run out of gas, with families on board. She was on her way to help them, but she had no gas can. I knew where one was, so got it and took her and gas to the van way out on Grafton Street. It happens sometimes that I am at church just when I am needed... to unlock a door, give out some food, or find a requested item. And once to deliver gas.

DID YOU KNOW?

During the season of Lent we are called to repentance, and thus it is no surprise that the lectionary readings for Ash Wednesday each year include Psalm 51, which in the Christian tradition is one of seven psalms known as the *penitential psalms*. In the ancient church, the designation *penitential psalm* was first given to Psalm 51 alone. By the early 5th century St. Augustine of Hippo had given this designation to 4 psalms, and Cassiodorus in the 6th century finally had grouped all 7 of them together. In the Middle Ages these psalms were used as meditations before the service of penance. In the worship of the church the 7 penitential psalms were said at the end of the service of morning prayer and were also used on fast days. Their liturgical use during Lent was first ordered by Innocent III in the 13th century. They were frequently included in the famous illustrated books of hours and other devotional books of the medieval period from the 13th to 16th centuries.

Of the penitential psalms the two most well-known are probably Psalm 51, David's prayer for forgiveness and cleansing after being confronted by the prophet Nathan about his adultery with Bathsheba, and Psalm 130 from the collection of the "songs of ascent" (Ps 120-134) recited by pilgrims on their journey to Jerusalem. This psalm is a testimony of trust in the Lord even as the psalmist calls "out of the depths".

The remaining 5 penitential psalms include:

- Psalm 6 a prayer in time of severe illness
- Psalm 32 which expresses gratefulness for God's gift of forgiveness
- Psalm 38 a petition of David for relief from a painful serious illness, which he perceives as a "rebuke" from God. (Neither the specific occasion nor the illness are identified.)
- Psalm 102 a prayer of an individual in a time of great distress
- Psalm 143 a prayer for deliverance from the wicked and their evil ways

The psalmist in each of the penitential psalms not only reveals distress over sins but in the midst of physical and/or emotional suffering also expresses contrition as well as the hope of being restored to abundant life in God's grace.

*Submitted by,
Deborah O'Driscoll*

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WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pastor	Rev. Byungmoo Lee	Wesley Tech Team	Mark Muncey
Organist & Choir Director	William Ness	Church Council	Brent Drajesk
Chancel Choir Director	David Potts	Board of Trustees	Gary Robinson
Ghanaian Choirmaster	Desmond Cheetham	Carty Cupboard Food Pantry	Nancy Spencer
Director of Children’s Ministries	Cordelia Ferdinand	Communion Stewards	Linda D’Acri
Music Assistant	Deborah O’Driscoll	Finance & Stewardship Co-Chairs	William Wong
Church Business Administrator	Matt Crane	Financial Secretary	Peter Hansen
Church Secretary	Debi Reynolds	Ghanaian Association	Earl Flagg
Building Superintendent	Tim Murphy	Hospitality Chair	Paul Hayfron
Assistant Building Superintendent	Phil Johnson	Medical Ministry	Linda D’Acri
& Sunday Security		Mission Coordinator	Ron Ramsay
Custodians	April Dylewicz	Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs	Betsy Pennino
	Tom Friend	Youth Bible Study	Chris Flagg
	Gerard Piscitelli	United Methodist Women Co-Chairs	Judy Hoffman
Head Usher	David Dagle		Joseph Fletcher
			Barbara Ingrassia
			Allison Hansen