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# THE WESLEY HERALD

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March 2023

Beginning with Ash Wednesday, we have entered into the Season of Lent. Many of us are faithfully practicing the traditional triad of Lenten observances: prayer, almsgiving, and fasting. These are important religious principles that lead us to deep spiritual experiences. And these are also all great deeds in themselves that require huge efforts.

We may feel like we are achieving certain degree of spiritual goals, such as, fight against temptation and trial, and win. While this would be a meaningful and necessary progress in our journey through Lent, we need to remember the fundamental meaning and purpose of the Lenten observant. **Trust in God.** It may sound too simple and easy. But quite often this truth has been overlooked or neglected because it is the basic foundation of our life and faith. It is one of the common mistakes in human life: focusing on applications and secondary issues, everybody misses the necessity of constant re-commitment of ourselves to the basic truth.

This is not to say that Lenten observances are not important. But I want to remind you that prayer, almsgiving, and fasting are not the ends but the means of guiding us somewhere. Lent is often called the Season of Repentance. We also need to be reminded that repentance is not an end but a means.

The ashes we put on our forehead remind us that we are mortal, limited, and temporal beings. *“Dust you are and to dust you shall return!”* What comes next? *“Repent! Believe in the Good News, and remember the Grace of Christ!”*

So, repentance we take on should lead us to **re-commit ourselves to God.** Every practice we do, especially during Lent, should enable us to fully return to the Mercy and Love of God. I am praying that none of us get lost our ways return to God. **“Remember the Grace of Christ!”**

Prayers in the wilderness,

Moo

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

Rick, Jan England's brother, Joseph Boateng, Polly Boyns, Annie Brima and family, Anne Burrows, Dot Ellis, Barbara Fletcher, Charles & Samira Kiefer, Bill Kilmer, 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 Marilyn Boudreau who passed away on Monday, February 27<sup>th</sup>.

Annie Brima and family of the death of Anthony Brima. His funeral will be here at Wesley on Saturday, March 18<sup>th</sup> at 11 am, with a reception to follow the funeral.

## Tower & Rose Window Lightings & Altar Flowers

**The Tower lighting** for March is given in loving memory of Dr. C. James Brenneman by his daughter Betsey.

**The Rose Window** lighting for March is given in loving memory of Heik P. and Irene B. Garabedian, Robert Demers, and my grandson Jason Sullivan by Shirley and family.

### **The following lightings are available for dedication in 2023:**

The August Tower, October Tower, November Tower and December Rose window lightings are available. If you are interested in lighting any of these, 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 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

**Lenten Devotionals** are available to pick up on Sundays or during the week in the church office. If you are unable to come pick one up and wish to have one mailed to you, please contact the church office.

**Herald – Change in Date:** The next Herald will be sent out on April 4<sup>th</sup>. Please send your article(s) to me no later than Wednesday, March 29<sup>th</sup>. Thank you.

**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.

We will meet via Zoom on Friday mornings at 10 am. If you'd like to join us, please reach out to Debbie or contact her (debodrscoll@aol.com) for more details. Alternatively, you may contact the church office to express your interest in participating in the study.

### **New Bible Study Series on 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> 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.

**William Ness is playing on the American Guild of Organists** recital at Blessed Sacrament Church, 551 Pleasant St. on Sunday, March 12, 3:00 pm. Their Skinner organ is similar to our Skinner organ built a few years later. My pieces were written by Alexander Russell who composed these works for the Skinner organ at Princeton University which relates directly to other Skinner organs of the same period. Free.

### **SAVE THE DATES!**

***March Madness is coming to Wesley!!!***

**Sunday, March 12, 2023 - 12:00 noon**

UWF is inviting all Wesley youth to join us at our next all circle meeting.

Basketball coach Ryan Brown will be joining us to share his story of how he turned his disabilities into a success story that is sure to inspire all, and then we will move onto the court to learn some of the moves that led to his success.

*\*be sure you bring your sneakers for this one!*



### **Wesley's Centennial Celebration**

**Sunday, April 23, 2022 – Worship and Lunch**

Join us on Sunday, April 23, 2023 starting with Worship at 10 am to celebrate the 100<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of Wesley Church! Rev. Vicki Woods will join our worship service, then after we will continue to celebrate with a sit-down lunch in Brewer Hall. Come see photos and a slide show of the church when it was built, and the people from the early years and onwards to 2023!

**Photos needed...** We are looking for any photos you have taken at Wesley from around 1970 until now that would be okay to display in Brewer Hall. If you have older photos, we'd love to see them too!

***Pictures of interest:*** Sanctuary service or event, Sunday school or Adult Bible group, Choir group, Carty Cupboard workers, bowling, etc. from the more recent past!!!

Please email any photos to [sandramcmanus1@gmail.com](mailto:sandramcmanus1@gmail.com) or bring your photos to the church office in an envelope with your name and contact information so we can return them to you.

*Thank you, Sandra McManus*

## Wesley Centennial T-Shirts

Students of Wesley Church will be designing a Centennial T-Shirt! Stop by and grab an order form and order your Centennial t-shirts today to wear on April 23<sup>rd</sup> during our celebration. The cost of each t-shirt is \$10. Checks are to be made payable to: Connor Sign & Graphics.

You can leave your order in the Welcome Office (in the box provided) or mail it to: ATTN: Centennial T-Shirts, Wesley UMC, 114 Main Street, Worcester, MA 01608.

All Orders ***MUST*** be in by April 4<sup>th</sup> the latest. You can also drop your order off during the week when the office is open.

## Here's a Chance to Prevent Homelessness

It's a simple idea -- buy your groceries (or your coffee or toiletries) and help a local family stay in their home. You'll be joining area stores in contributing to a fund that gives grants to families facing eviction. One back rent payment, utility bill or storage unit fee can keep families out of the shelter system and all the disruption to their children's schooling.

Here's how it works: When you purchase gift cards from Big Y, Shaw's, Stop & Shop, CVS, Dunkin Donuts, Panera, Starbucks, Amazon, Target or TJ Maxx/Marshalls/Home Goods, a percentage of that card's value is donated by those stores to Central Mass. Housing Alliance. Families come to CMHA seeking assistance, and since this program began, hundreds of families have received aid.

Look for the birdhouse in Brewer Hall -- at a table near the stage -- after church services. Cards are for sale every Sunday and by email to [AChis4788@aol.com](mailto:AChis4788@aol.com). Please send your orders by the end of day Monday, March 6 for delivery March 12 or Monday, March 27 for delivery April 2 to be sure your Easter basket gift cards are ready!

Come choose a Sunday to help with card sales -- it takes a team to tackle a challenge as big (and fast-growing) as homelessness.

## Mission Matters

### School Supplies for Those needing Help with Housing

Central Mass. Housing Alliance (CMHA) has asked if Wesley could collect school supplies. Sarah Circle has been giving CMHA children's books and will ask the congregation for school supplies. This collecting will replace the circle's 12 - year Lenten Mission called Small Gifts for Shelters. We're hoping to receive a list of the most needed items and will share that in this space. *Betsy Pennino*

## 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](mailto:betspenn35@hotmail.com))



### A God Moment by Judy Hoffman

As some of you may know I was sick recently and missed a week of worship. Many of you extended your concerns through my spouse, with cards, texts, and calls. All were appreciated. A very warm and sincere call was from a member who asked to pray with me. A very special God moment indeed.

## DID YOU KNOW?

The seasons of Lent and Easter are times during the liturgical year when we are especially likely to reflect on the meaning of the cross for our lives as Christians. Probably the most universally recognized symbol of the Christian faith even outside of the church, the cross is also the one symbol that is used in almost every tradition of Christian worship. It thus is a symbol that has become central to the identity of the church, but did you know that the cross did not play a prominent role in Christian worship until the 5<sup>th</sup> or 6<sup>th</sup> Century? Prior to that time, it was not used because of what was felt to be a shameful association with crucifixion, which of course was the death penalty for the worst criminals. Although there is complete absence of representation of the crucifixion and overt representation of the cross in early Christian art such as the paintings of the catacombs in Rome, other earlier Christian symbols, such as the Chi-Rho and anchor of hope, incorporated crosses in a subtle and unobtrusive way.

Initially when used in worship the cross was not a stationary furnishing or symbol in worship spaces but was carried in processions and then placed behind or to the side of the altar or communion table during the worship service. Such processional crosses are still used in many denominations today. At Wesley we have a small processional cross which has on certain occasions been used to lead the procession for various festive worship services as a symbol that all Christians are followers of the cross.

The altar cross, which serves as the central furnishing of the altar (as in our sanctuary), is a later development (13<sup>th</sup> Century). It is believed to have evolved from the processional cross, as the shaft was removable from many processional crosses; after the procession the upper portion was removed and placed in a stand on the altar, where it then served as an altar cross during the worship service.

Other types of crosses in worship spaces include the pendant cross, which is suspended in the sanctuary of a church and the rood cross which is mounted on a beam high above the entrance to the chancel in some churches. The latter use is a symbol of the belief that the entrance to heaven must be by the way of the cross.

In the Protestant tradition, the cross is generally empty to symbolize the resurrection of Christ. Most of us are also familiar with the crucifix, with the figure of Christ on a cross, which is used especially in the Roman Catholic tradition. Early processional crosses did not have a figure of Christ on them, and the crucifix did not appear until the 5<sup>th</sup> Century. Initially crucifixes depicted Christ as alive with eyes open standing victoriously. The crucifix evolved throughout the Middle Ages and by the 10<sup>th</sup> and 11<sup>th</sup> Centuries, the figure of a suffering Christ was depicted more realistically. The crucifix remained a general symbol of Christianity until the time of the Reformation, when Protestants rejected the use of representational imagery, and again adopted the empty cross as a primary symbol.

There actually are more than 400 different variations on the basic shape of the cross! The most common, also one of the earliest of these shapes is the Latin cross such as we see in our sanctuary. It is an upright cross with the lower portion of the vertical twice as long as the upper part above the cross arm. The addition of a circle around the center of the cross is a symbol of eternity as well as of the worldwide kingdom of Jesus' final sovereignty.

As prominent and powerful a symbol as the cross is in Christian worship spaces, it is good for us to remind ourselves that in the setting of the worship space, it is considered a "secondary" liturgical furnishing which enhances the primary symbolism of the altar/communion table in terms of celebration of the Eucharist, one of the central acts of Christian worship.

*Submitted by Deborah O'Driscoll*

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