
THE WESLEY HERALD

Give Thanks

November 2024



October 31, 2024

“You have heard that it was said, ‘You shall love your neighbor and hate your enemy. But I say to you: Love your enemies and pray for those who persecute you, so that you may be children of God in heaven, . . .”

— Matthew 5:43-35



Bishop's Office

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In the fall of 1991, I was teaching my regular Wednesday night Bible Study in the local church I was serving at that time. Word came to us during the service that the United States was leading an attack on Iraq that would become the Gulf War. We immediately gathered at the altar for prayer then dismissed for the night. At home, our televisions began to detail the attack with graphic coverage of the events of that night. It was a time of uncertainty and concern as the coalition forces from 35 countries responded to Iraq’s invasion of Kuwait.

The next day I sent out word to my congregation that there would be a prayer vigil at the church that evening. When I walked into the sanctuary that night, the pews were filled. It was evident that there was a real need for spiritual centering, so much so that I announced that the church would remain open 24 hours a day for those who wanted to come and pray. I lit a Christ Candle every morning and made sure the church doors were unlocked.

People came — and they kept on coming. Some evenings I would walk over to the church and pray with a soldier’s parents. On other occasions I would walk into the church well after midnight only to discover the single candle burning and someone kneeling at the altar. The need was there, and the need was met.

Just a couple of years later, Hurricane Andrew swept through southern Florida with a wide swath of devastation. That same congregation was challenged to respond with relief supplies. They filled not only the fellowship hall but the sanctuary with bag after bag to be delivered to Homestead, Florida. The need was there, and the need was met.

Today we are, again, in a season of need. As you read these words, our country finds itself on the edge. We are more divided than we are united. Signs fill neighborhoods with political preference. Television ads are filled with accusations. The rhetoric is filled with finger-pointing. There is no unity and, as a result, our communities are filled with chaos. No matter who wins this election, the day after will be filled with accusations, disunity, chaos, and uncertainty.

Where will we find peace?

Today I write in a climate that is filled with extreme need. Hurricanes and floods have ravished communities and changed the landscape for years to come, if not permanently. As a result, businesses are destroyed, families are displaced, and homelessness is rising. It's only a matter of time before depression and loneliness give way to mental illness and drug addiction.

Where will we find hope?

In most communities, there is a building that has historically been at the center of the community. In that building are people who have found inspiration, hope, and faith. In that building there has been found a peace that has passed understanding, a fellowship that has provided support, and a feeling of unity that extended way beyond our individual preferences. In that building the mysterious power of a Holy Spirit has provided the courage to face injustice and a drive to meet the needs that revealed themselves. That building is our church.

I believe that this is the moment for the people in those churches, our churches, to mobilize to meet the need at hand. We know there is disunity. We know there is anger. We know there is fear. We know that chaos is present and will continue no matter who wins.

I want to call upon every one of our churches to mobilize immediately to do what we do best when a need exists. It is time to open our churches for prayer. Time to offer a safe space for conversation. Time to call the community to unity and a common sense of purpose.

I also want to call upon every one of our churches to mobilize and gather resources and offerings for flood and hurricane ravaged regions. It is time to extend our passion into our communities and our world. Time to demonstrate to the community that we can do extraordinary things when the need presents itself. And, friends, the need is presenting itself.

We dare not sit by idly and let the world's priorities dominate the landscape. Hatred will prevail unless love exerts itself. Apathy will lull us to sleep unless passion stirs the hearts of good people. Division will alienate us from one another unless we call people, in the name of Jesus, to a higher plane of unity.

This is our time. Our moment. Our opportunity. The need is present. Will we meet it?

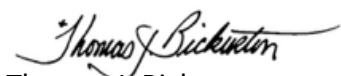
In my last local church, every Sunday, after the benediction was pronounced, the congregation I was privileged to serve would sing this song:

*Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.
Let there be peace on earth, the peace that was meant to be.
With God, our creator, children all are we.
Let us walk with each other in perfect harmony.

Let peace begin with me, let this be the moment now.
With every step I take, let this be my solemn vow.
To take each moment and live each moment in peace eternally.
Let there be peace on earth, and let it begin with me.*

May it be so.

The Journey Continues, . . .



Thomas J. Bickerton
Resident Bishop

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

Sandra O'Driscoll, Melissa Houlihan (friend of Bill Robbins), Chloe Sundberg, Alice Douglas, Deborah Plant, Barbara McLaren, Cathy (sister-in-law of David Potts), Rich Reynolds (Debi Reynolds' brother), Grace Woode, Beverly Grimshaw, Rosamond Hammond, Linda Keister, Pinamang Boateng, Joseph Boateng, Stephen Boyns, Anne Burrows, Dot Ellis, Barbara Fletcher, Tom Friend, Jim & Judy Hoffman, Don Johnson, Charles Kiefer, Dorothy Norcross, Sandra O'Driscoll, David Samanen, Janet Terzian, Donald Tremblay, Barbara and the Vietze Family; Peter Woodcock, Laura Zoldak, Susan (friend of David Potts), Margie (Linda Keister's sister), Page (Allison Hansen's sister), Libby T. (friend of Phyllis Yngve), Neil Ashton (past member), Paula and Calvin Kelly (sister and brother-in-law of Linda Dylewicz), Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

Tower & Rose Window Lightings & Altar Flowers

The Tower lighting for November is given with thanks and blessings for Carolyn & Pierre's 63rd Wedding Anniversary.

The Rose Window for November is given in loving memory of Clifford s. Duxbury, Jr. by Beth, Craig, Tina, Matthew Duxbury and Brian Pitts.

Announcements

TODAY!!! All-Church Meeting – Let's Talk about the Future

Today after church, finish your breakfast and come discuss the future of Wesley Church. The Vision Task Force will be presenting some potential future directions for our church, and we want to hear your thoughts about them. Bring your ideas and your prayers for our future together.

Advance Pie Orders for Bake Sale: Pie orders are still being taken. Please look in Brewer Hall for the order forms. Payment is appreciated at the time of ordering. Order deadline to order is Sunday, November 17th.
Thank you, Linda D'Acri

United Women in Faith... On Saturday, November 2nd at 8:30 am, we will meet in John Wesley room for a Budget Planning meeting.

Annual Bake, Craft, and Plant Sale Fundraiser... United Women in Faith will be having their annual Bake, Craft and Plant Sale the Sunday before Thanksgiving (November 24th). Please help us make this a huge success as it does help with missions here and abroad as well as camperships! Please bake if you can and bring your checkbooks for the delicious homemade goodies!! Also, if you can lend a hand during the sale, before or after church, please let Linda D'Acri know.

December Herald: *There are always extra copies of the Herald in the Narthex by the Welcome Office.* The December Herald will be part of the December 1st bulletin. Please send all articles to me no later than Wednesday, November 20th. With Thanksgiving the following week, I will need to work on the newsletter earlier.
Thank you, Debi

Advent Study

November 22 – December 20

Friday mornings – 10:00 to 11:30 a.m.

John Wesley room

AN UNLIKELY ADVENT

Extraordinary people of the Christmas story

By Rachel Billups

This Advent season join Rachel Billups and read through the themes of hope, love, joy, and peace by sharing the stories of Elizabeth and Zechariah, Herod, the Magi, and the shepherds. Each set of unexpected characters has something to teach about living faithfully on the journey to Christmas.

Plan to join us for this video study, discussion and fellowship each Friday morning during Advent. For more information and to pick up your book please reach out to Chris Flagg at 508-414-1696



From Carty Cupboard Food Pantry...

It's November, the month we all try to take some time to let those in our lives know just how thankful we truly are for them. I would like to let some special people know how much they mean to me. To Harry, Louie and Bobby D'Acri, Phil Johnson and his Grandson Jake, Bill Robbins, Edith Isaac, Susan Williams, Mark Muncey, Donna Nelson, Alana and Autumn Caless, I am so very thankful that you all are volunteers for Carty Cupboard Food Pantry. I am very Blessed to have you all in my life. ~Nancy

To the people who continue to donate food and or money to Carty Cupboard, I thank you.

This year we will have record-breaking numbers of people served from our food pantry. In October we served over 700 families in need.

This month we are looking for reusable shopping bags, no paper or plastic please. We are also in need of cereal, hot or cold, hearty canned soups, and meals in a can like stew, or Chef Boyardee products.

Thank you so much!

Nancy

Gift Cards Can Prevent Homelessness! *Hope for Housing Fall Dates*

Do you buy groceries? Stop by CVS? Grab a coffee at Dunkin, Starbucks or a meal at Panera? If you do, pay with a gift card instead of cash or credit. Buy your card at Wesley and your purchase will help a family threatened with homelessness actually remain in their home.

Allison Hansen will be selling cards in Brewer Hall after church on the following dates and will accept orders by email at ACHis4788@aol.com. Please give her advance notice if you want to place a larger order.

November 3, November 17 – Shop for stocking stuffers and plan ahead!

December 8 – Secret Santa? Team gifts? Last chance for larger orders this year.

GOD MOMENT

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 from Chris Flagg

God is Good!

On September 21st I had plans to attend the District UWF meeting with other members of my circle. First, I would need to pick up a friend so that we could then head to Wesley to meet others and finally head to the meeting together.

When I arrived at my first stop, it was pouring rain, and I misjudged the depth of a pothole. I ended up with a flat tire, and of course that was the moment when I realized that I had forgotten to renew my AAA membership several months ago. My brain immediately went into overdrive, over-thinking about everything ...

We are stuck on the side of the road,
people are waiting for us to arrive at the church,
we are going to be late for the meeting,
this is gonna cost a fortune.

I was completely stressing myself out and needed to just stop for a minute. I put my head in my hands and closed my eyes. Then I sensed someone standing beside me, I opened my eyes, and a very nice man was standing in the pouring rain beside my window offering to change my tire. What a blessing!

But the story doesn't end there. While I was waiting, I called my husband. He came right out to meet me so that I could take his car while he got my car's tire replaced. It was a good plan except I really don't like driving his car. He convinced me it was best to not be driving on a spare in the heavy rain, so I agreed.

I got to the church to pick up the person we were meeting. Not thinking, I went to plug in my GPS so that I could use WAZE for directions, but my husband's car is older than mine and doesn't have that capability. Of course I went right back into stress mode, and then for the first time EVER my phone started automatically playing music. I have no idea how this happened but the first words we heard were "everything's gonna be all right," yes, a familiar song that has saved me before. I was so surprised that I almost started to cry, and I'm quite sure the rest of my passengers felt something similar.

I still have no idea where that sweet man came from, nor do I have any idea how that song started playing, and I'm not sure I'd even believe any of it myself if it weren't for the witnesses riding with me, but I do know one thing for sure, God is watching out for me and he makes a way... and God is good! All the time!!!


DID YOU KNOW?

In the United Methodist tradition All Saints Sunday is most frequently celebrated on the first Sunday in November. (We are observing it this year on November 3 as the date closest to All Saints Day on November 1 and All Souls Day on November 2.) In our reading of the names of those in our congregation who have died in the past year, this observance has become a time for us to remember the saints who have lived among us, to reflect on and give thanks for deceased persons who have been influential in our life as a congregation. At the same time the visual environment of our sanctuary reminds us of our connections to the universal church throughout history. In the Te Deum window (the large stained-glass window above the altar) not only are familiar Biblical figures such as prophets and the apostles portrayed, but also included are some of the traditional saints of the historic church. Since in the Protestant tradition we don't place much emphasis on the canonized saints of the historic church, it might surprise you to discover that All Saints Day was one of John Wesley's favorite festivals of the church year, even though he did not include it in his version of the church calendar for Methodists in North America. Our present observance of All Saints Sunday recovers the New Testament concept of using the word *saint* to refer to all Christians in general as those called to participate in a life of divine holiness.


Originally celebrated as a feast of All Martyrs during the Easter/Pentecost season, it was transferred to November 1 in 835 as All Saints, and in recognition of the fact that most Christians are not martyrs, a second day was set apart for the general commemoration of the dead—All Souls Day, November 2. The original tradition of celebrating this festival during the Easter/Pentecost season (still observed in Orthodox traditions) clearly preserves the link between Jesus' resurrection and our sanctification. Nevertheless, our celebration of All Saints Day towards the end of the liturgical year is in fact a good synthesis of much of what the liturgical year encompasses. As summarized by Laurence Hull Stookey in *Calendar: Christ's Time for the Church*:

"All Saints Day in a rather impressive way pulls together themes from the entire liturgical calendar: the work of resurrection grace in all of God's people; the devotion and discipline needed in the life obedient to God; the divinization of our humanity by the incarnation of divinity, accomplished by the power of the Spirit; the connectedness of all believers; the hope of life beyond death. It is all implicitly there; for the heart of the gospel, after all, is about God grasping us in such a way as to transform sinners into saints."

*Submitted by,
Deborah A. O'Driscoll*



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WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pastor	Rev. Byungmoo Lee	Education Committee Co-Chairs	Joseph Fletcher
Organist	Ronna Davis	Youth Bible Study	Ivy Hammond
Chancel Choir Director	David Potts	Finance & Stewardship Co-Chairs	Joseph Fletcher
Ghanaian Choir Director	Desmond Cheetham	Financial Secretary	William Wong
Director of Children's Ministries	Rhianna Burke	Church Auditor	Peter Hansen
Church Business Administrator	Matt Crane	Ghanaian Association	Earl Flagg
Church Secretary	Debi Reynolds	Hospitality Chair	Cynthia Fletcher
Building Superintendent	Phil Johnson	Medical Ministry	Paul Hayfron
Custodians	April Dylewicz	Mission Coordinators	Linda D'Acri
Head Usher	Gerard Piscitelli	Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs	Ron Ramsay
Communion Steward	David Dagle	United Women in Faith Co-Chairs	Maria Gorsuch-Kennedy
Wesley Tech Team	Earl Flagg	Music Committee	Donna Hirtle
Church Council Chair	Mark Muncey	Worship Committee Chair	Chris Flagg
Co-Lay Leaders	Brent Drajesk		Judy Hoffman
Board of Trustees Chair	Gifty Bentum-Asante		Barbara Ingrassia,
Carty Cupboard Food Pantry	Joseph Fletcher		Sandra McManus, Cordelia Ferdinand
	Gary Robinson		Debbie O'Driscoll
	Nancy Spencer		Debbie O'Driscoll