

Sunday Announcements for February 16, 2025



February 4, 2025

A couple of weeks ago I was truly blessed to be a part of the 55th Annual Martin Luther King Jr. Memorial Breakfast in downtown Boston. This event is the longest running of its kind. The music was breathtaking, the speakers put me on the edge of my seat, and the keynote address from noted author, activist, and feminist Angela Davis revealed how the long journey toward racial equality continues to rely on endurance, strength, and conviction.

The journey is long, and it so easily tempts those of us on the journey to get discouraged and worn down. Yet the speakers bore witness that in times of discouragement, we can find endurance and inspiration in each other.

It was mentioned several times that on the very same day, in the very same moment, the inauguration of a new president and a new administration was taking place.

What I found intriguing as an ultimate act of discipline, one speaker after another said, *"We are not here to talk about what a new administration stands for. We are here to talk about Martin Luther King, Jr. stood for and how we keep those principles alive in our quest for truth, justice and racial equality."*

Those words gave me a needed reminder of what our role is and how we live it out in our leadership, and with one with another. We can spend a lot of time bemoaning what is or instead we can invest our time in working toward what can be.

This is a constant temptation facing us. It doesn't matter what the subject is, everything, and I mean everything, has a problem associated with it. If you look hard enough, far enough, deep enough, you'll find it. It's there. There's an underbelly, a consequence, a risk. There's a mistake made, or an alternative path taken that leads us to say, *"if given the chance I would have followed that direction instead."*

Conversely, if you look for a blessing, a possibility, a promise, a hope, you'll find that too. It's all in how you look at it.

Personally, I believe that's what the Apostle Paul was alluding to when he said in Romans 8:28, *"All things work together for good for those who love the Lord and are called according to his purpose."* Even amid the ugly, the unfortunate, the negative, there is a way through the morass, a chance to rise above and make a meaningful impact. It's more than making lemonade out of lemons. It's believing in the transformation of the world.



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The struggles to maintain positive and keep a hopeful spirit is getting more and more challenging these days. Black History Month began just four short days ago, and already, there are attempts to cast a pall over those who want simply to honor those who came before them with joy and celebration. It has been reported that the federal government, specifically the Department of Defense, will not officially mark any “special observances,” including Black History Month. No Women’s History Month observance. No Pride Month, no Holocaust remembrance. The list is long.

As I write, immigrants are being deported and those who have not are afraid. The poor and hungry will no longer receive global aid. Diversity, equity, and inclusion are being deemphasized or eliminated completely. The fallout is great. And the temptation to resign ourselves to this new reality is greater. How do you fight city hall?

A few days ago, a prominent leader said these words,

“I feel as though if Christ himself walked through these doors and said what he said thousands of years ago that we should love our neighbor and our enemy, that we should welcome the stranger, fight for the least of us, that it's easier for a camel to go through the eye of a needle than for a rich man to get into the Kingdom of heaven he would be maligned as a radical and rejected from these doors. And I know, and it is part of my faith, that all people are holy, and all people are sacred unconditionally and that is what makes faith. Sometimes that's what prompts us to transform because it is unconditional. It's not up to us to love parts of people. We love all people ... It is not up to us it is to deny medical care. It is up to us to feed the hungry, to clothe the poor, to protect children and to love all people as ourselves.”

That person was Democratic Representative Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, (NY). She is a Congressperson. She writes laws. She speaks out. She said what we should be saying. She said what we need to say.

Friends, these days, it doesn't take long to find a problem and even less time to focus on talking about it. But these days, are days to follow the lead of Rep. Ocasio-Cortez and speak up, act out. It's time to love all people. Time to feed the hungry. Time to clothe the poor. Time to protect the children. It is time to welcome Jesus into the room and into our hearts with open arms and celebrate him as the way, the truth, and the life.

Now is the time.

The Journey Continues, . . .

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Thomas J. Bickerton". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Thomas J. Bickerton
Resident Bishop

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

Jane Borthwick, Troy (David Potts brother, wife of Cathy), David Patrick (Evette Walters husband), Kathleen Herbert (Evette Walters mom), Giendora Lewis (Evette Walters aunt), Carolyn Bellil, Debbie Plant, Sandra O'Driscoll, Melissa Houlihan (friend of Bill Robbins), Alice Douglas, Barbara McLaren, Cathy (sister-in-law of David Potts), Rich Reynolds, Grace Woode, Beverly Grimshaw, Rosamond Hammond, Linda Keister, Pinamang Boateng, Joseph Boateng, Stephen Boyns, Anne Burrows, Dot Ellis, Barbara Fletcher, Jim & Judy Hoffman, Don Johnson, Charles Kiefer, Dorothy Norcross, 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.

Andreas Abbey has lost his Mum. Madam Gifty Naa Karley Odai-Nash passed away in Ghana on Thursday, February 6, 2025. Please remember Andreas and family in your prayers. Cards can be sent to Andreas at 80 Seymour Street, Worcester, MA 01610.

Bob, Melissa, and Brian Bak, Kim and Ed Harmon, Tom Kane, and families on the death of Pamela Bak on February 12. Cards can be sent to Melissa Bak, 31 Plimpton Ave, Sturbridge, MA 01566. Calling hours are at Beers and Story Funeral Home, 646 Newton Street, South Hadley, MA, on Friday, February 21st from 4 to 7 pm. The funeral will be here at Wesley Church on Saturday, February 22nd at 11 am.

Tower & Rose Window Lightings

The Rose Window and the Tower lighting for February are available for dedication. If you'd like to light either the Rose Window or the Tower in honor or in memory of a loved one, please contact Debi in the office. The cost of the lighting is \$40.

The 2025 altar flower calendar is now available.

If you'd like to order altar flowers in honor, celebration or memory of a loved one, come to the Welcome Office and sign up in the book. Please take a form to complete and return it to the office with your payment. It's \$80 for both arrangements on the altar (\$40 per arrangement), or a single arrangement for \$50. The single arrangement will be placed on a brass flower stand in the center of the altar. If by chance two people would like flowers on the same day, we will list them both and they will be placed in the same area as usual, on each side of the altar.

If you would like to donate the altar flowers on a given Sunday, you may sign up in the book in the Welcome Office or call me during the week. There is a form in the book as well that will need to be completed and returned to me with the payment.

If you have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me.

Thank you, Debi Reynolds

Announcements

AN ALL-CHURCH MEETING
today following worship.

Save the Dates:

Ash Wednesday, March 5, 2025

Soup & Bread Dinner at 6:00 pm; Ash Wednesday Service at 6:30 pm

Saturday, March 8, 2025, from 10 am to 2 pm

Spiritual Uplifting Retreat sponsored by United Women in Faith

Sunday, March 9, 2025

Daylight-Saving Time Begins

Confirmation Class will begin on Sunday, March 2nd at 11:40 am in John Wesley. All Parents and Mentors are expected to attend with the student(s) please.

From Carty Cupboard Food Pantry... During the month of February, we need strawberry or grape jelly, and oatmeal in the variety packages please. Thank you to everyone who continues to purchase food for Carty Cupboard, we appreciate your kindness.
Nancy

Gift Cards Can Prevent Homelessness!

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.

February 23 ❤️ March 16 - stock up now for Easter baskets!

March 2025 Herald: *There are extra copies of the Herald in the Narthex by the Welcome Office.*

The March Herald will be part of the March 2nd bulletin. The deadline for articles is Monday, February 24th at 11 am. Thank you for your cooperation.
Debi

A Spiritual Uplifting Retreat

Saturday, March 8, 2025

10 am - 2:30 pm

at

Wesley United Methodist Church

Come and join us in a spiritual journey with other women at Wesley UMC!

The stations we will have are:

1. Pool of Bethesda with Susan. A group circle of prayer is a gift with the privilege of praying for one another as we “Wade in the Water.”
2. “Zen Tangles” with Janice. Start with a squiggle or a line and fill it in with different patterns.
3. Labyrinth prayer in the Chapel. A self-guided journey seeking a closer walk with God through prayer, meditation, and reflection.
4. Knitting and Crocheting with Veronica and Beth. Try something new! Learn to knit or crochet. Or check in with our master knitters on a project you’re thinking about.
5. Love Feast—“Amazing Grace” Closing Worship

Guest Speaker is Megan McDonough, “Finding Peace in the Midst of Challenge.”

We will be taking time for selfcare through crafts, contemplation and fellowship.

Lunch will be included. We only ask for a donation of a non-perishable item(s) for our food pantry, like peanut butter, hearty canned soup, canned fruit, etc.

Please RSVP by March 3, 2025 to:

Cordelia at 774-437-9453 or email at: puttsghs@msn.com

Sandy at 508-847-9225 or email at: sandramcmanus1@gmail.com

Hope to see many of you here to enjoy this well needed time together!

Thank You, THANK YOU, THANK YOU!!!

I want to say Thank You to Nana Aryee, Danielle & Cordelia Ferdinand, Betsy Pennino, Ron Ramsey and Chris Kerns for volunteering their time to sit with the four families that are struggling during this time of homelessness.

IHN, "In Hour of Need", is a Homeless Shelter at 91 June Street, Worcester that ask for volunteers from all different church denominations to sit with families. We all take on different weeks during the year.

This past week, one of the mothers shared with me her gratitude for all of us coming in and spending time playing games with their children and reading books to them. She wanted to thank you all as well.

Thank you all for making a difference to these families.

Blessings, Gerard Piscitelli

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)

God Moment by Michael Terzian, a regular participant in Wesley's community suppers--

My wife Janet was shopping for a New Testament which she could easily carry with her. All of the copies she saw in bookstores were not right. Either the print was too small, or the book was too big to carry.

One day in her doctor's office, we saw a shelf with free publications on it. One was a New Testament wrapped in plastic. It had easy-to-read print. Janet had the Bible she was looking for and it was free! I told Janet that it must be a gift from God to her.