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# THE WESLEY HERALD

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February 2022

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Dear Friends in Christ,

Time flies so fast. It's already mid-February. Soon, beginning on Ash Wednesday we will be on our annual Lenten journey. Lent is the holy season of meditation and discipline to renew our faith and life. Lent challenges us to develop our relationship with God. Lent invites us to join our daily living with our faith in Jesus Christ. Lenten journey should lead us more into being faithful discipleship.

How and what do we have to prepare before we go on this crucial pilgrimage? If we are allowed to equip with only one thing, what do we have to take with us? PRAYER!!! I strongly believe that in our life journey prayer is the only part of life that we never ever regret even for a second.

Prayer life brings us to the heart of Christ. Since prayer is a lifeline, I often use an analogy between prayer and breath. Breath has both inhale and exhale. If we only continue one part, we cannot breathe, and then all will eventually die. We need to reflect on our prayer life. Most of our prayers, usually full of words and thoughts, can be compared to exhale. So, we definitely need the other side of prayer, inhale. **"Be still!" "Waiting in silence!" "Listening to God!"** And we need to remember that **we have to inhale first before exhaling.** We have to let the Word of God speak and enlighten us. When we listen to God, then we begin to understand and discern the love of God who gives us and invites us to share life with God.

I encourage all of you to take advantage of this year's Lenten journey. Let us humbly and faithfully prepare Lent with prayers. Let us pray for each other, as we journey together on this Lenten pilgrimage.

In Prayers,  
Your fellow traveler, Moo



## One Minute Thought

As church attendance numbers fade across the nation and online services become very convenient, it is important to remember why church attendance for us and our families matters so much.

We cannot serve from our sofa. We cannot have community of faith on our computer desk. We cannot experience the power of believers worshipping together on our screen.

Christians are not consumers. We are contributors. We do not watch. We engage. We give. We sacrifice. We encourage. We pray by laying hands on the hurting. We do life together.

The church needs you. And you need the church.

- From Anonymous -

## A MESSAGE FROM BISHOP DEVADHAR

Beloved in Christ:

Greetings in the precious and matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ.

I write today to thank you with praise to our Creator God in and through the precious and matchless name of our Lord and Savior Jesus Christ using the words of the Psalmist, “Not to us, Lord, not to us but to your name be the glory, because of your love and faithfulness.” (Psalm 115:1). God’s amazing love and faithfulness are overflowing through each and every one of you!

So, I say to all clergy, laity, and leaders: Thank you! Gracias! Danke! Salamat! Merci! Wliwni! Obrigado! Gam-sa-hab-nee-da! Xiexie! Spasibo! Grazie! Shukran! Dhanyavaad!

Your generosity, your love for all God’s people; your embrace of John Wesley’s phrase, “the world is my parish;” your passion for peace and justice ministries; have been exemplified once again through your support of the ministries and missions of the New England Annual Conference. Your giving brought excitement to the leaders of our Conference, staff, and me personally as we reviewed the preliminary income and expense statement of our Annual Conference at a recent Conference Committee on Finance and Administration (CCFA) meeting.

Once again, we have been able to pay 100% of our obligation for the worldwide, local, and conference ministries and missions as well as some unexpected needs and challenges that emerged in 2021. We can truly celebrate this accomplishment after having reduced our Conference mission share budget for 2021.

All districts significantly improved in their participation, which resulted in a 3.99% increase in giving in 2021.

In my Thanksgiving letter to the Conference last November, I appealed to you, saying:

*May I request that you reflect on Wesley’s words prayerfully — “Earn all you can, save all you can, give all you can.” — and consider donating the cost of one cup of coffee/tea/soda or meal a day from Thanksgiving to Christmas to your local church in addition to what you have pledged? Your church will keep 50% of your donation to benefit local ministries and the other 50% will be used for the Conference and World Missions portions of your church’s Mission Shares. If some churches collect more than they need, praise God! It will be put to good use.*

Many of you took this challenge to heart and greatly blessed our Conference. Your generosity, along with the support of all our churches and faith communities, enabled the CCFA to pay the unexpected loss of income and budget deficit due to Covid for our camps and retreat center in 2021. As I said in my appeal, special giving will be used for “conference and world missions.” CCFA chose to use this special giving for our camp and retreat ministries which are doing marvelous work for the kin-dom of God! We were also able to meet our commitment to national and world missions.

All this was possible because you are the angels of God! You gave witness to a true understanding of “the world is my parish” for which I am always grateful and appreciative. I consider it as a privilege and blessing to be your Episcopal leader and give thanks for my predecessors who served this conference and laid the foundations on whose shoulders I stand.

Likewise, I am thankful for the great leadership we have at all levels of the Conference and at our partner ministries, Preachers’ Aid Society and United Methodist Foundation of New England. I especially want to share my gratitude for the CCFA’s faithful stewardship and our finance department staff’s hard work throughout the year, but particularly during the busy year-end season.

Lastly, I greatly appreciate your participation in the "[Brave Space Conversations](#)" which are underway with our Vision Forward Team. These conversations will assist the Vision Forward Team to bring recommendations to the 2022 Annual Conference Session, which will help make our conference truly committed to our mission and above all, to what God is calling us to do to extend God’s reign on this earth.

As we listen to what the Holy Spirit is saying to us, filled with the radical love of Christ, may I encourage all of you to participate in either the Feb 7 or Feb 28. conversation (please register at [neacvision.org](http://neacvision.org))?

With gratitude, hope, and expectation, let us keep one another in our prayers.

In Christ’s love,

Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar



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

- Tom Friend, whose Aunt Katie died last week.
- Ray Campbell, Debi Reynolds’ uncle, in VA rehab in RI with a severe illness and diabetic issues. Pray for comfort and peace for him and her aunt Dianne.
- Clark Jones, a teacher of Beth Duxbury’s, battling a severe blood infection and fighting cancer.
- Barbara Vietze, mom of Beth Vietze, recovering from surgery for a broken hip.
- Pamela, Linda Keister’s sister, home with 24 hour care. She will need surgery in the future.
- Lorna Regentz, Judy Simoneau's daughter, recovering at home.
- Barbara Fletcher, who continues to heal. Please continue to pray for comfort and healing.
- Charles and Samira Kiefer at the Oasis at Dodge Park.
- Paul Keister. Pray for peace for him.
- Bill Kilmer in St. Mary’s Health Care Center.
- Bill Wong for strength and comfort.
- Anne Burrows at Sterling Village Rehab.
- David Samanen
- Peter Woodcock
- Ken Hedenburg
- Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

## Tower Window Lighting

The February Tower and Rose Window lightings are available. If you would like to light either of these in memory or honor of a loved one, please contact Debi in the office via email at [office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org) or call 508-799-4191, ext 102. The cost of lighting is \$40 each.

### ***HURRAY!***

The reentry team, the worship team and the Education Committee have determined that it is safe (with masks and social distancing) to resume the children's time with the Pastor.

Starting on February 6<sup>th</sup> Pastor Moo will be inviting the children to come forward to the altar rail for a brief time together.

We are still working to reopen Sunday School for our elementary school children, we have curriculum and a temporary plan in place for this program but we still need volunteers who are willing to teach.

In the meantime, we will have children's activity bags that will be updated weekly to help children stay busy during worship.

Please consider volunteering, whether it's one Sunday a month or one a quarter, whatever frequency you feel most comfortable with, we need you!

\*All Curriculum and materials will be provided well in advance.

Please speak with Pastor Moo for more information or if you are interested in helping with this ministry. During the time Moo is on vacation, please reach out to Judy Hoffman/Chris Flagg.

**March Herald** will be sent out March 1. Please have all articles to me by Friday, February 25th.

*Thank you, Debi*

**Easter Flower** orders are due by February 27<sup>th</sup> due to the needs of the greenhouse. A form is included in this Herald, will be available in the Narthex, and on the website. Please submit your orders as soon as possible.

*Thank you, Debi*

### **Bible Study: He Chose the Nails**

The new Bible study began on February 1<sup>st</sup>. It is held via Zoom from 6:30 to 8 pm. This is a 5-session video Bible study written by Max Lucado entitled HE CHOSE THE NAILS. It explores the many gifts Christ provided us at his crucifixion.

The class meets on the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of the month. This invitation to join the study is open to all. You will be provided with zoom access. If you are interested, please call Susan Williams at 508-795-7331 or email J. Hoffman at [jhoffman24661@yahoo.com](mailto:jhoffman24661@yahoo.com).

Please join and enrich your Lenten experience.

# WESLEY'S EASTER GARDEN

Help decorate Wesley's Sanctuary for Easter and then your home or a loved one's home, a shut-in or someone's hospital room for Easter.

Order your Easter plant(s) by completing the order form below, then return it with your payment by dropping it off in the Welcome Office on Sunday or mail it back to Debi. Please be sure to enclose the payment with the order form (checks can be made out to "Wesley United Methodist Church" and put "Easter Flowers" in the memo field).

This year with Easter being in early April, the flowers will be Lilies and Dahlias. The flowers cost \$13 for each plant.

## ALL ORDERS MUST BE RECEIVED BY FEBRUARY 27<sup>TH</sup>.

I am ordering:      \_\_\_ Lily(s)      \_\_\_ Dahlia(s)

I will take \_\_\_ plant(s) home.

I will leave for a shut-in(s): *(please choose the plant)*

     \_\_\_ Lily      \_\_\_ Dahlia



***Please note:*** Any plant(s) not indicated for pick up will be delivered to shut-in(s) and members/friends in the hospital.

1. Given by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of / In Honor of *(please circle one)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

2. Given by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of / In Honor of *(please circle one)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

3. Given by \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

In Memory of / In Honor of *(please circle one)* \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

***Please Note:*** This year we are accepting payment in the form of cash or check.

***YOU WILL NOT BE ABLE TO PAY FOR THIS ON-LINE.***

Also, payment **must** be submitted with a completed form. Thank you.

## **Prevent Homelessness through Grocery Shopping**

The next order date for Hope for Housing cards is by end of day Tuesday, March 8. I will have the cards available on Sunday, March 13 after church, or at another arranged time if you worship remotely. Please email me to submit an order or make pickup arrangements ([ACHis4788@aol.com](mailto:ACHis4788@aol.com)).

I want to thank everyone who supported this ministry last year. Together, Wesley Church members bought \$20,205 in cards, which helped dozens of families on the verge of homelessness.

Buying groceries or prescriptions, eating a donut or having a meal at Panera, they're all ways to help our neighbors stay in their homes despite a tough economy.

We have cards for Panera (\$10, \$25), Shaw's and Stop & Shop (\$10, \$25, \$50, \$100), Big Y (\$25, \$50, \$100), CVS (\$10, \$20, \$50), and Dunkin' Donuts (\$10, \$25).

*Thank you! Allison*

## **Advent Gifts**

Thanks to everyone who made a shoebox gift of personal care items and healthy snacks. Forty-five gift boxes were created. Beth Duxbury's volunteers made 20 of the gifts. Beth also purchased small backpacks which were especially appreciated by our homeless guests and are now spreading Wesley's name around the city. The plan had been to distribute the gift boxes/bags at the Jan. 2<sup>nd</sup> breakfast but Wesley was closed that Sunday because of Covid. Then Linda D'Acri and her family got approval to hold a Community Breakfast on Saturday, Feb. 12.

We were disappointed by the number of guests. About 18 of them chose gifts and we had also handed out some near Sally's Place where a free lunch is offered to anyone. All expressed delight at receiving theirs and thanked us more than once. Then an Outreach Worker from StandUp for Kids (SUFK) arrived at the breakfast and told us that the items we had collected are exactly what he needs to give out to people on the street or in overnight shelters such as Grace Hotel. StandUp for Kids works with homeless youth, ages 14 to 24. He was very happy to accept the remaining gifts.

## **Ash Wednesday 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, rather than having a service of corporate worship, 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, March 2, from 11am-1pm and 4pm-6pm 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 will be open during the same hours. Inside there will be a printed Ash Wednesday labyrinth meditation available for you to engage as you spend time in our sacred worship space. This meditative resource offers a scripture-based reflection focused on a finger labyrinth and invites you to set your intentions for your Lenten journey. It is our hope and prayer that the observance of Ash Wednesday will open the way for your spiritual pilgrimage through Lent.

## Lenten Devotionals & Activity Kits are Available for All

What does it look like for you to observe a holy Lent? For many of us our Lenten spiritual practice includes use of topical devotional materials. To support you in deepening your spiritual journey this Lent we are making a variety of age-appropriate devotionals available to the congregation.

To facilitate our planning and enable you to receive materials that fit the needs of your particular family configuration, we would ask you to please fill out the form below and return it to the office at Wesley or email your request to [office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org). Be sure to include attention: "Lenten Study Materials" in the subject.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

\*Please include the names and ages of all family members

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_ Age \_\_\_\_\_

Check all that apply:

I would like \_\_\_ children's materials packets

I would like \_\_\_ youth materials packets

I would like \_\_\_ adult materials packets

\_\_\_ I will plan to pick up my Family's Lenten materials on Sunday, February 27 after worship.

\_\_\_ I would like my Family's Lenten materials to be mailed to my home.

Please be sure to include your current address if you will need supplies mailed to your home.

Please return to:

Wesley United Methodist Church  
114 Main Street  
Worcester, MA 01608

## Have you experienced a "God Moment"?

This is a suggestion from the Tuesday Bible Study/Book Group started by Jim Hoffman 3 years ago. Susan Williams, leader of the new study, asked, "Where have you experienced God working in your life?" Another way of saying that is, "Have you experienced a God Moment?" Often God Moments are remarkable coincidences which seem to be God's encouraging us.

I thought it would be inspiring to hear from the congregation stories of seeing God at work in our midst. These could be anonymous or signed in the Herald. If someone wanted to tell a story but not write it down, I could be the listener who tries to capture the God Moment in writing.

In a time when Covid is separating us, sharing God Moments could bring the congregation together. Sharing God Moments would perhaps allow others to perceive similar experiences in their lives. If you could share a story of seeing God's work in your life, please tell me or send it to me ([betspenn35@hotmail.com](mailto:betspenn35@hotmail.com)). All are invited to participate. Betsy Pennino



### A "God Moment"

Sometimes it's the little things... I was at the dollar store one day and two aisles over from me I could hear some children and a Mom arguing, fussing, touching, whining...all the typical things that would frustrate and embarrass any Mom. As I turned into the second aisle I could hear two older women talking loud enough for the Mom to hear saying things about "those horrible children" and that they

should stay home if she couldn't control them. Now, if I'm going to be honest I'd have to say my thoughts weren't far from theirs...at first! then something changed my heart, in an instant I could sense all of that Mom's worry and frustration and exhaustion and before I knew it I was turning into her aisle, as I passed them I paused for just a moment to say hi and tell the Mom how beautiful I thought her babies were, and I swear, the smile that replaced her tired frown could have lit up a room!

God does so much for me that I don't even notice, and I am truly grateful for all his gifts, but I am especially thankful when he uses me to be the gift for someone else.



### Thank You to the IHN Volunteers!

IHN thanked us for what Wesley did last week in caring for homeless families who live there until they can regain housing. Special thanks to the one overnigher, Peter Hansen. Thank you also to those who volunteered for evening shifts -- Allison Hansen, Carolyn Bellil, Judith Barton, Judy and Jim Hoffman and Betsy Pennino. Thanks also to Carolyn Bellil who contributed a Big Y food card.



## Commonwealth West District



### Mission Shares Paid for 2021

Well done and thank you to churches of the Commonwealth West District! Thanks to all who were intentional about increasing their giving, and to those who made valiant last-minute efforts. **Thanks to your combined giving, Commonwealth West Mission Share payments were up 4.9% compared to our 2020 giving.**

- **33 churches paid 100% or MORE of their MS**
- **27 churches increased their percentage in giving compared to 2020**
- **16 churches paid 56-96% on their MS**
- **68 churches paid something on their MS**
- **2 churches went from 0% in their 2020 giving to 100% in their 2021 giving!**

As a New Year of shared vision, mission and ministry begins, let's put plans in place now for a 2022 MS giving.

When we participate in the Conference Budget as determined by the Annual Conference, we enable ministry and fulfill our Vision and Mission. Our participation is our Mission Share of our ministries as expressed in a budget. Apportionments in reality enable the mission and ministry of our Local Churches, our Conference and our Denomination, locally, regionally and through out the world.

Commonwealth District Superintendent,  
Rev. Megan Stowe



### Stop & Shop's "Bloomin 4 Good"

Once again Wesley Church has been selected for Stop and Shop's "Bloomin 4 Good" program!

For the month of February every "Bloomin 4 Good" bouquet sold at the Lincoln Street Stop and Shop store during the month of February, the Community Supper program will receive \$1.00!

Look for the flowers with the sticker on them! What a great way to enjoy some flowers and brighten your home and be able to support the Community Supper program!



## DID YOU KNOW?

This year Lent begins with Ash Wednesday on March 2. Most people are aware that the name *Ash Wednesday* relates to the ceremonial imposition of ashes on the foreheads of worshipers that occurs in the liturgy for the day in many denominations. Such liturgical use of ashes dates back at least to the 10<sup>th</sup> Century. However, the concept of ashes as a symbol of penitence is even older than that. In the early church, when public penitence was observed, penitents sprinkled ashes on their heads or received from the bishop a garment sprinkled with ashes. Ultimately this symbolism derives from the Bible in which the imagery of ashes centers primarily on the fragility of life. The association of ashes with death arises from the ancient military custom of burning enemy cities and appears in the Old Testament stories of warfare as well as in prophetic and apocalyptic passages. Since the word *ashes* is an image of total destruction, ashes are used in the Bible in expressions of intense grief and loss.

Imposition of ashes was not part of the official liturgy in the United Methodist tradition until relatively late in the 20<sup>th</sup> C. Daniel Benedict, retired elder and former Worship Resources Director of the United Methodist General Board of Discipleship (now known as Discipleship Ministries), explains:

“While many think of actions such as the imposition of ashes, signing with the cross, footwashing, and the use of incense as something that only Roman Catholics or high church Episcopalians do, there has been a move among Protestant churches, including United Methodists, to recover these more multisensory ways of worship. This is in keeping with a growing recognition that people have multiple ways of learning and praying. Worship that is oriented to the intellect or to the emotions, both interior, leaves out those who engage in prayer through vision, smell, touch, movement, and so forth. We are increasingly aware that people are formed in faith when practices become embedded in memory, nerves, muscles, and bone through sensory engagement.”<sup>1</sup>

Ashes, a symbol of death and mortality, are placed on the forehead not in some random pattern, but in the shape of a cross. Since ashes are a meaningful symbol of our mortality, there is no more powerful way to remind us of our need for repentance and renewal. Receiving the imposition of ashes on Ash Wednesday links us with our biblical and historic predecessors in faith, but more importantly, on Ash Wednesday we begin our pilgrimage through Lent, a liturgical season which offers us opportunity not only for repentance but for recommitment to our faith and a life of Christian discipleship.

*Submitted by,  
Deborah O'Driscoll*

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.umcdiscipleship.org/resources/when-did-united-methodists-start-the-imposition-of-ashes-on-ash-wednesday>

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