

THE WESLEY HERALD

July-August 2022

“How’s your soul?” It may sound to you strange and uncomfortable. But it is one of the classical Methodist questions to check the state of each other’s soul that most of us have forgotten to ask.

I would like to share with you a story from Michael Yaconelli’s *Dangerous Wonder*:

“Karla and I spent a week at Daybreak Retreat Center. We were soul weary. We had come to the point where our busy lives were ‘putting our souls in danger.’ Desperate for our souls to be mended, we gathered in the bitter December cold for our first meeting. We had come with a group of our friends and were anxious to meet Henri Nouwen and Sue Mosteller, the leaders of our retreat.

The first meeting brought together our group of eight, three workers at L’Arche, and three mentally and/or physically challenged residents of the community. I had read many of Henri Nouwen’s books and fully expected his remarks at our first meeting to be life changing. During the obligatory introductions, I had admitted to the group that my busyness was draining my soul of life – leaving it lifeless and weak. Although Henri’s opening remarks were interesting, I was disappointed. I expected profound insights. What I received was the logistical instruction for the week.

After the meeting, somewhat dismayed, I was confronted by a handsome resident of L’Arche. I’ll call him Robert. Robert was in his forties, and although his appearance was normal, his vocabulary wasn’t – it was limited to maybe a few hundred words. He stood uncomfortably close, his face within inches of mine. With his eyes focused directly on mine he said, **‘Busy?’**

Startled with his concise summary of what I had admitted earlier, I said patronizingly, ‘Yes, Robert, I’m very busy.’

‘Too busy?’ he continued.

‘Yes, Robert,’ I admitted rather sheepishly, ‘I am too busy.’

I will never forget what happened next. He moved even closer (his eyes revealing his sadness for me) and asked with a sincerity I have seldom experienced, **‘Why?’**

My eyes filled with tears. Robert, a man with a very limited vocabulary, had asked the one question I had been afraid to ask. Somehow he knew that the solution to my weariness was hidden somewhere in the answer to his question – a question I was afraid to ask and no one else had. Why was I so busy? Because I still was hanging on to the belief that God’s affection for me was measured by my activity for [God]. The more things I did for God, the more [God] would love me, or so my insecurities kept telling me. Robert, in his childlike way, could see my insecurity, could feel my need to prove to God I was worth loving. By asking me a simple question, Robert started me on a journey toward intimacy with my [God]. Amazingly, Robert’s risky curiosity peered deep into my soul, enabling me to begin hearing what God had been spending my lifetime trying to say to me: ‘I love you, Michael, question and all with an unconditional, no-strings-attached love.’”

Summer is here. This time of year always seems to offer a much needed opportunity to slow down and listen to what our life is trying to tell us.

“How’s my soul?” “Busy?” “Too busy?” “Why?” I wish you can take these questions wherever you go this summer.

Peace,
Moo

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

- Emily Smith
- Pamela and Margie, Linda Keister sisters
- Barbara Vietze
- Barbara Fletcher
- Alice & Joseph Boateng
- Donald Tremblay
- Marilyn, Gary Robinson's mother, in rehab following a fall and breaking her collar bone.
- Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.
- Anne Burrows
- Charles and Samira Kiefer
- Bill Kilmer
- Bill Wong
- Dorothy Norcross
- David Samanen

Tower & Rose Window Lightings & Altar Flowers

The Tower lighting for July is given in loving memory of Bill Woodring by Blair, Karl, John, and Mary Jett Woodring.

The Rose Window lighting for July is given in loving memory of Mable & Luther Marsh, and Evelyn & Martin Samanen by Carol, Dave, Steve, and Jeff Samanen.



The Tower lighting for August is given by Nancy Cook.

The Rose Window lighting for August is given in loving memory of Mary Bolles by her children, Gary Bolls, Billy Boles, and Jade Cherry, and their families.

The 2022 altar flower book in the Welcome Office. If you'd like to place flowers on the altar on a particular Sunday, please fill your name in on the day, then take an order form and submit it to Debi in the office with a check.

Announcements

Herald Notice... The next Herald will be on September 1st. Please plan your articles accordingly and have them to me by Friday, August 26th. *Thank you, Debi*

Gift Cards Prevent Homelessness -- Yes, Really!

Your purchase of gift cards for local grocery stores, coffee shops and department stores can make a difference in the lives of families on the verge of homelessness. A percentage of the value of each card goes into a fund for grants to families facing eviction. Back rent, electric bills, even storage facility bill payments can keep a family in their homes instead of entering the shelter system.

Cards are available from grocery stores, CVS, Panera, Target, Amazon, TJ Maxx/Marshalls, Dunkin and Starbucks. Cards are available after church most Sundays (volunteers always welcome!) and through pre-orders to Allison Hansen at ACHis4788@aol.com. Next orders are due by end of day August 9 for delivery Sunday, August 14.

September's orders are due by Sept. 6 (right after Labor Day) for delivery Sunday, September 11. A second round of orders is available later in September, with orders due September 27 for delivery Sunday, October 2.

Thank you for your support!

Allison

UWF Making Dinner for VBS Kids August 9

Calling all United Women in Faith (UMF) members and friends! We are making dinner for the Vacation Bible School campers on Tuesday, August 9. Let Allison or Barb know you can make it -- cooking up hot dogs, mac and cheese and chopping up veggies starts at 3:30, with supper at 5.

Save the Date -- September 10 UWF Steering Committee Meeting

Mark your calendars -- United Women in Faith (formerly known as United Methodist Women) will have their steering committee meeting at the church at 9 a.m. on Saturday, September 10. Watch your email for more details.

From the Director of Music

Summer music continues with various soloists and groups. This Sunday an arranged Bell Quartet will play in worship. On the opening hymn the bell trio is playing with myself on piano. Our "solo" work is an arrangement of *Jesus, Keep Me Near the Cross* where each of us has a distinctive part just as singers do in choir. We will be playing through the range of the bells and sometimes be crossing to get "our" bell notes. One thing is for sure none of us gets much rest playing continuously since each part must be played. On July 31, Istan Slamet, as rising sophomore at WPI will play clarinet on all the voluntaries in worship. We will be ending with a favorite melody from Gabriel Faure (accent grave one). August 7 has the Ghanaian choir with soloists taking the service with Desmond at piano and keyboard. August 14 has a brass duo of French horn and trombone playing a duet and solos by two high school students. On August 21 on of Worcester's favorite singers, Scott Taylor will sing two solos in worship. I am away on vacation on August 28 when Dr. O'Driscoll will be playing the Skinner. With all this variety I hope we can lift your spirits in worship with these wonderful gifts so graciously given.

Have You Experienced a "God Moment"?

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

I was asked for a description of God Moments. Here's one from Squire Rushnell, author of the God Winks books which give many examples of God Moments:

"A godwink is a remarkable coincidence which gives us encouragement that God hears your wishes and give messages of reassurance."

Pennsylvania minister Jerry Schmoyer describes them this way:

"A God moment... is a special time when it is clear that God has intervened in an exceptional way. Thank God for a clear answer to prayer, a sudden revelation of God's will, a perfect circumstance which is no chance happening, a provision of a need, or a deep feeling of love."



A "God Moment"

Judy Hoffman writes:

I hope most of you don't know this fact about me but I confess I have a sharp tongue! I experience God moments all through the day when I have sarcastic, unkind, mean or angry thoughts and before I speak God curtails my tongue.

Thanks be to God!

2022 New England Annual Conference Report

I attended the New England Annual Conference of our denomination (virtually), as a layperson, several weeks ago, and wanted to give you an update of what's going on outside our little "bubble" of Methodism., here at Wesley.

Before I speak about Annual Conference, I wanted to make sure you are aware of a significant development for our church. It was recently announced that on May 1st a new denomination called the Global Methodist Church had been formed. This new church was formed by many of the leaders of the "Good News" and "Wesleyan Covenant" groups within our denomination, and is an orthodox iteration of our faith, which promotes a literal interpretation of biblical texts. This interpretation does not allow for full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in this new denomination, and is in conflict with the current doctrines and policies of the New England Conference of the United Methodist Church. The next General Conference in 2024 will have to address this schism in our denomination.

Now back to Annual Conference - for those of you who have never been to, or are unfamiliar with, Annual Conference, the event is a three-day combination of worship, bible study, plenary sessions (where votes are taken on the business operations and the doctrinal positions of our conference), and the conference usually culminates with a service of ordination of new clergy (during which this year, I am happy to report, eight new clergy were ordained) .

Our current Bishop Sudarshana Devadhar is retiring and there was a retirement dinner and celebration held for him on Friday evening. A new bishop will be appointed for our conference soon.

During the plenary sessions, resolutions, which have been prepared by conference boards or a task force, are presented, and an equal number of persons are allowed to speak in favor of, or in opposition to, the adoption of those resolutions, before a vote is taken. The Methodist church has a long history of speaking out on social justice issues, and this year, resolutions were passed to affirm a woman's right to reproductive healthcare, to take specific steps to do our part to address global warming and become a "greener" conference, to oppose the "apartheid" treatment of Palestinians in the Holy Land, to address systemic racism in our communities, especially as it pertains to housing, and finally a resolution passed called "The New England Resolution" which reaffirms and strengthens the conference's commitment to full inclusion of LGBTQ persons in our denomination.

Each of these resolutions is worth a full reading and not only thoughtfully presents the issue, but also proposes recommended actions, which show a way forward. If anyone would like a copy showing the full text of any of those resolutions, or is interested in discussing any of what I've reported, I'd be happy to speak with you, or answer any questions I can.

Grace and peace to you.

Respectfully submitted,
Gary Robinson

DID YOU KNOW?

At the end of June when our service included the rite of Confirmation, part of the congregational response consisted of reciting the Apostles' Creed. We did not recite the creed as an uninterrupted whole, however. Instead, it was divided into three sections each of which was spoken in response to a question asked in the liturgy by the pastor. The Apostles' Creed, the full text of which dates back to AD 500, is believed to have its origins in the baptismal services of the early Christian church during which candidates for baptism were required to confess their personal belief in the presence of the congregation. Evidence suggests that in these early times it was in fact used in the way we recited it—as an interrogatory creed divided into sections, each of which was a response to a question about belief posed to the initiates.

The word creed comes from the Latin word *credo*, which means “I believe”. A creed is a summary of the faith that is proclaimed in common by Christians throughout the ages and affirms the universal faith of the church. Other ancient creeds, an example of which is the Nicene Creed, also found in our hymnal, begin with “We believe”. Such creeds, known as conciliar creeds, are based on the authority of a council of church leaders and usually came about in order to define the true faith as opposed to some form of heretical teaching, and again serve as a summary of the basics of the Christian faith that can be committed to memory (especially important feature in ancient and Medieval societies when many people could not read).

A third type of credal statement that is more ancient than the forms above is what is known as the “credal hymn”, the oldest examples of which are Biblical. The most basic is the Hebrew Shema, (Deuteronomy 6:4-9) which confesses that God is One. However, there also are several examples in the New Testament as well, with many scholars believing that Paul's letters often quote statements of belief that probably served a liturgical function in early Christian worship (e.g. Philippians 2:6-11, Ephesians 4:4-10).

What all credal statements illustrate is that we live a faith that is historical in character, and need to remind ourselves of God's saving acts in history. Whenever we recite or sing one of these ancient creeds that summarize basic beliefs, we are united not only across geographical and denominational boundaries with the church universal in our time, but also across boundaries of time itself to the church eternal of past, present, and future.

*Submitted by,
Deborah O'Driscoll*

*Top Producers
Worcester County*



Jeffrey Gibbs
Broker/REALTOR®



Christy Gibbs
REALTOR®

*Your Wesley Family REALTORS®
Proudly Servicing All of Worcester County*

GibbsRealtyInc.com • 508-886-6100



WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

Pastor
Organist & Choir Director
Ghanaian Choirmaster
Director of Children’s Ministries
Music Assistant
Church Business Administrator
& Financial Secretary
Church Secretary
Building Superintendent
Custodians

Sunday Security
Head Usher
Wesley Tech Team

Rev. Byungmoo Lee
William Ness
Desmond Cheetham
Cordelia Ferdinand
Deborah O’Driscoll
Tim Carty

Debi Reynolds
Tim Murphy
April Dylewicz
Tom Friend
Gerard Piscitelli
Phil Johnson
David Dagle
Mark Muncey

Church Council
Board of Trustees
Carty Cupboard Food Pantry
Communion Stewards
Finance & Stewardship Co-Chairs

Ghanaian Association
Hospitality Co-Chairs

Medical Ministry
Mission Coordinator
Staff-Parish Relations Co-Chairs

Youth Bible Study
United Methodist Women Co-Chairs

Brent Drajesk
Gary Robinson
Nancy Spencer
Linda D’Acri
William Wong
Peter Hansen
Paul Hayfron
Vivian Assie
Judy Hoffman
Ron Ramsay
Betsy Pennino
Chris Flagg
Judy Hoffman
Joseph Fletcher
Barbara Ingrassia
Allison Hansen