
THE WESLEY HERALD

December 2024

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

Ruth Wentzell (friend of Elaine Peterson), Sandra O'Driscoll, Melissa Houlihan (friend of Bill Robbins), Alice Douglas, Deborah Plant, 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, Tom Friend, 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.

Tower & Rose Window Lightings & Altar Flowers

The Rose Window lighting for December is given in loving memory of my parents, Henry and Katherine Williams by Susan J. Williams, their daughter.

The Tower lighting for December is given in loving memory of Jean and Calvin Williams by Debbie, Gail, and families.

The altar flowers today are given in loving memory of Kenneth & Janette Hedenburg, Diane L. Kane, and Harry & Gertrude Hedenburg by The Bak, Celko, Harmen, and Kane Families.

The altar flowers on Sunday, December 8th are given in loving memory of my mother, Marcia Zwiep, for her 100th birthday on December 7th, by Donna Zwiep Williams.

Announcements

AN ALL-CHURCH MEETING

will be held on Sunday, December 8, 2024, following worship.

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT SERVICE

Tuesday, December 24th at 6 PM

Continue the Conversation on Wesley's Future December 8th

Stay after church on Sunday, December 8 to continue the conversation about Wesley's future with the Vision Task Force. Our topic will be low-risk Scenario 1, "Stay and Grow Ministries." We want to hear your thoughts on how best we can secure Wesley's future. Save the date!

Advent Devotionals for adults, youth, and children are now available in the Narthex. Please stop by and take one. There are also Advent Coloring calendars available.

Christmas Wreath Dedications...

There are 6 wreaths available for dedication this holiday season. The cost of each wreath is \$14 each. If you'd like to dedicate a wreath in memory of a loved one or in celebration of someone, please reach out to me by email (office@wesleyworc.org) or call the office (508-799-4191 xt 102) and leave your name and number and I will return your call.



Thank you, Debi

The Hoffmans are on the move. AGAIN!!!

We will be moving in early December to Boxborough, MA to live closer to our daughter and her family.

We have truly enjoyed our years in Worcester and Wesley. You have allowed us to participate in Wesley's ministry and mission in ways that have truly enriched and blessed us.

Our Wesley family has been so supportive of us through our many health issues for which we are deeply grateful.

Please feel free to visit us and stay in contact. Our new address as of December 2nd is:

300 Paddock Lane
Apartment 3105
Boxborough, MA 01719

With much love.

Shalom!

Jim and Judy Hoffman

Advent Study

November 22 – December 20

Friday mornings – 10:00 to 11:30 a.m. in 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.

January Herald: *There are always extra copies of the Herald in the Narthex by the Welcome Office.*

The January Herald will be part of the January 5th bulletin. Please send all articles to me no later than Thursday, December 26th.
Thank you, Debi

From Carty Cupboard Food Pantry...

In the month of November, we gave out grocery gift cards to 131 families totaling over \$6,000 some came from the Worcester County Food Bank, some were purchased with a grant we received at the last minute, and some were donated. Everyone was very grateful.

In the month of December, we need hot cereal, and baking mixes for cookies please. To everyone who continues to support the mission of Carty Cupboard Food Pantry we appreciate your kindness. Thank You & Merry Christmas! ~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.

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

Music Notes for the Bulletin

Phillips Brooks (1835-1893) wrote this beloved Christmas hymn for the Sunday school children at his Philadelphia parish, Holy Trinity Church, following a pilgrimage to Bethlehem in 1865, according to British hymnologist J. R. Watson. The hymn was printed on an informal leaflet in December 1868 and then appeared in *The Sunday School Hymnal* in 1871.

In the United States, the hymn is generally sung to its original tune, ST. LOUIS by Louis H. Redner (1931-1908), a wealthy real estate broker who served as a church organist for his avocation. *UM Hymnal* editor Carlton Young notes that Redner “increased Sunday school attendance at Holy Trinity Episcopal, where Phillips Brooks was rector, from thirty-six to over one thousand during his nineteen years as superintendent.” According to the story, Brooks traveled on horseback between Jerusalem and Bethlehem on Christmas Eve. “Before dark we rode out of town to the field where they say the shepherds saw the star. It is a fenced piece of ground with a cave in it, in which, strangely enough, they put the shepherds... Somewhere in those fields we rode through, the shepherds must have been. As we passed, the shepherds were still ‘keeping watch over their flocks,’ or leading them home to fold.”

Dr. Watson sums it up well: “Not only does the hymn beautifully describe the little town asleep in the December night; it also gracefully modulates from a description of Christmas into an examination of the meaning of Christmas: first in its encouragement of charity and faith, and then into the coming of Christ into the human heart.”

--Dr. Hawn is professor of sacred music at Perkins School of Theology, SMU

ADVENT GIFT BOXES OR BAGS

For Advent this year at Wesley UMC, you are again invited to create Advent Gifts of small, needed items. These will be given out with the December 28th Community Supper, as a gift to our neighbors in need.

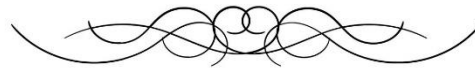
Please place items from the list below in a wrapped shoebox. The gift is complete when the shoebox is full (no need to include everything on the list). Please bring your wrapped gift box to Brewer Hall by December 22nd.

Recommended Items:

- * Toothbrush & toothpaste
- * Bar or small bottle of soap
- * Tissues or Antibacterial wipes
- * Wash cloth
- * Socks
- * Gloves
- * ChapStick or lip balm
- * Band-Aids
- * Pens or pencils
- * Tablet of paper/small notebook
- * Cereal bars
- * Juice boxes or small juice bottle
- * Single serve applesauce cups (pull-top)
- * Goldfish or cheese crackers
- * Dried fruit
- * Hot cocoa packets
- * Canned tuna with pull-top
- * Meal in a can (pull-top)
- * Dark chocolate

Questions? Please ask Sandra Toffay (stoffay@gmail.com) or Bertha Amoako (berthaamoako79@gmail.com).

“Christmas... a gladdening of hearts, a renewing of faith, a sharing of love.”



Just saying *Thank You* doesn't seem enough.

I cannot begin to express how **Thankful** my family and I are to be blessed with all your prayers, texts, emails, calls and constantly checking in to see how my brother, Rich, has been doing. Since his motorcycle accident back on July 30th we have had many scares... but through them all - the ups and downs; two steps forward, one step back - we knew the power of prayer was immense!

He has made amazing progress and continues to surprise the doctors and therapists and all who know him. So much so, that I am so happy to share with you that we expect him to be able to go home on Wednesday, the day before Thanksgiving. What a day to give thanks for!

As well, I want to thank you for the beautiful prayer quilt and all your love and prayers said for him. We were able to keep this on him as much as possible in the hospital, and he continues to cover up with it at the rehab facility. It also brought great comfort to my sister-in-law, my niece, my mom, and myself as we sat countless hours by his side covered with it.

I ask for your continued prayers as his journey to recover will continue for quite a while. We have faith that he will recover fully in time.

From the bottom of my heart... *Thank You!* ❤️

Debi Reynolds

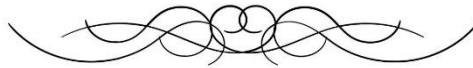
GOD MOMENT

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 Moments from Betsy Pennino

We both have been moved by seeing woods where just one tree has Christmas lights, so we've been decorating one evergreen in the woods behind our house. We always put two strings of lights around the very top to create a sense of starlight. Bruce put the lights on in 2023 and then I went out to look at them. I saw the usual jumble of lights & wires near the top. Yet when I looked out after dark, the jumble had become a perfect 5-point star! And it stayed there for weeks while other strings of lights were jostled about by strong windstorms.

I often notice the hazy colors that are created by sunlight streaming through Wesley's stained glass. They appear on the balcony wall to the left of the chancel. On November 3rd, I noticed more blue than usual as we started the readings for communion. I went forward to receive communion and returned to my seat. Immediately I looked up and saw that the blues had organized into two stripes. They extended almost the width of the wall. Above the left side of the stripes was a red field with a burst of gold in it. An American flag with blue instead of red & white stripes, red where the blue field with stars usually is, and a flash of gold instead of the 50 stars. It was two days before the 2024 election, and I had hopes for what the meaning might be. Later, I decided it was a sign that God would still bless the United States of America. Did anyone else observe this?



Thank You, Thank You, THANK YOU!!!

I would like to take this opportunity to say Thank You! to the many people who have helped me in the office this last year... answering phones, general office work, helping with mailings, bulletins, and whatever else was asked of. Without you my days would have been much longer. So from the bottom of my heart... Thank You Susan Williams, Mercy Agyemang, Elizabeth Osei-Boateng, Edith Isaac, Isabella Piscitelli, and Carol Samanen. Also Thank You to Phil Johnson and Jacob for helping me when I can't do things alone.

Debi Reynolds

DID YOU KNOW?


The visual environment of our sanctuary during the Advent/Christmas season includes a nativity scene or crèche. Many of us also display crèche scenes in our homes during this season. The word *crèche* is from French, meaning manger or crib, and refers to a representation of the scene in the stable at Bethlehem, and traditionally includes the Holy Family—the infant Jesus with Mary and Joseph—surrounded by animals, shepherds, and the Magi.

The earliest representations of the birth of Christ date from the 4th century in the form of paintings—one in the catacombs of Rome and another on a sarcophagus. However, representations of the crib or manger itself have been used in churches since antiquity, an important part of the early Christmas ritual having been the celebration of the Mass over a manger in which the consecrated host (bread for Communion) was laid. The widespread use of the Christmas crib is attributed to St. Francis of Assisi, who was said to have celebrated Midnight Mass in 1223 in a stable where people and live animals re-enacted the entire Nativity scene. By the 16th century it became common for there to be crèche scenes in homes as well as in churches.


In terms of the iconography (symbolism) of the Nativity scene, it is interesting to note that in the Western tradition, Mary usually is depicted seated, holding the Baby Jesus, or kneeling at the manger in a posture of adoration. In the Eastern tradition, on the other hand, Mary is usually depicted lying down as having just given birth, thus stressing the reality of Jesus' human birth. Although depictions of animals such as the ox and the donkey have appeared in pictures of the Nativity as early as the 4th century, they are not mentioned in the New Testament. Their inclusion in the scene is related to Old Testament passages that foretell the birth of Christ, including Isaiah 1:3. Other elements of the scene, such as the shepherds and wise men, are mentioned in the New Testament gospel narratives of the birth of Jesus.

While creches are often displayed throughout the Advent season leading up to Christmas, in many traditions the figure of the Baby Jesus is not placed in the manger until Christmas Day. It is also often a custom for the figures of the Magi to be displayed at some distance and then begin their approach after the appearance of the star on Christmas, and to arrive at the stable on Epiphany. The secular world moves on quickly once Christmas Day has come, but in the church, Christmas Day is just the beginning of the Twelve Days of Christmas, and our Christmas season does not end until the Magi arrives at the manger as we celebrate Epiphany.

*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
Sunday Security	Mark Muncey	Worship Committee Chair	Chris Flagg
Church Council Chair	Adam Flagg		Judy Hoffman
Co-Lay Leaders	Brent Drajesk		Barbara Ingrassia,
	Gifty Bentum-Asante		Sandra McManus, Cordelia Ferdinand
	Joseph Fletcher		Debbie O’Driscoll
Board of Trustees Chair	Gary Robinson		Debbie O’Driscoll
Carty Cupboard Food Pantry	Nancy Spencer		