

From the Pastors Desk

*But seek first the kingdom of God and
His righteousness, and all these things
will be given to you as well.*

Matthew 6:33 NRSVUE

Dear Friends,

Greetings in the name of our Savior and Best Friend Forever (BFF) Jesus Christ!

I am honored and humbled to serve as your new pastor. My name is Rev. Nizzi Santos Digan, and I come to you from Manila, Philippines.

The Methodist spirit runs deep in my veins, as I am a proud fourth-generation United Methodist. My journey of faith has been shaped by a strong legacy of ministry in my family. My grandfather and father were both United Methodist pastors, who faithfully served the church and community. My grandmother was a devoted deaconess, and my youngest sister, Beulah, continues that sacred calling today.

I am what you might call a *Methopentholic* Christian — a beautiful blend of Methodist, Pentecostal, and Catholic influences that have shaped my faith and my walk with God. Each tradition has contributed something unique to the tapestry of my spiritual life.

I vividly remember our family life growing up. We were seven siblings — the children of Lingkod and Evangelina Digan — and by Saturday night, we were all getting ready for Sunday worship. On Sunday mornings, we were faithfully at **Angono United Methodist Church** for Sunday School and worship. My mother, whenever she could, would take me again in the afternoon to **Manila Bethel Temple** for another time of worship. Those moments instilled in me a deep love for the church and the presence of God.

In college, my parents sent me to the **University of Santo Tomas (UST)** in Manila — one of the oldest universities in the world, and a Catholic institution rich in heritage and



academic excellence. My time there helped me appreciate the depth of liturgy, tradition, and intellectual pursuit of faith, even as I remained deeply rooted in my Methodist upbringing.

All these experiences — Methodist discipline, Pentecostal fire, and Catholic tradition — have shaped my theology, my leadership, and my heart for God’s people. I bring all of this with me as I begin this new chapter with you, ready to serve, to listen, and to journey alongside you.

Growing up, one phrase stood as a pillar in our family life: **“God first.”** This was not just a saying — it was a legacy my siblings and I inherited from our parents and grandparents. It shaped how we lived, gave, served, and worshipped.

My mother, Evangelina Digan, was a high school teacher — and a woman of deep faith and unwavering discipline. I remember once noticing a folded page tucked inside her Class Record with a peso bill carefully inserted between the folds. Curious, I asked her, *“Mom, what is that money for?”*

She looked at me with her usual gentle firmness and replied, *“This is my tithe; this is my offering to God. This is what we will give during offertory in church.”*

On Sunday mornings, after we were all dressed and ready — the seven of us lined up like a little choir — my mother would give each of us our offering. There was even a time I said to her, quite innocently, *“Mom, I want to buy candies instead of giving my offering to church.”*

She looked at me intently and said, *“Nechita”* — she always called me that when she needed to get my full attention — *“your offering is for God alone.”*

That moment stayed with me.

In the 1970s, to help support our large family, my mother became part of the first batch of Filipino teachers sent to Nigeria. She served as a Science teacher at the Federal Government Girls College in Benue, during the time when Nigeria was transitioning to independence from British rule.

Back then, communication wasn’t easy. There were no cell phones, no email, no FaceTime or WhatsApp. Long-distance calls from Manila to Benue were expensive — charged by the minute — so my mother rarely called. Instead, she wrote us **aerogramme letters**: light sheets of paper that folded into their own envelope and were sent by airmail. Each letter would arrive three or four weeks after being sent.

But every time I opened one of those letters, I knew what I’d find — her words of encouragement, updates from her work, and always, on the side in vertical handwriting, the same verse:

"Seek ye first the kingdom of God and His righteousness, and all these things shall be added unto you."

— Matthew 6:33

That verse wasn't just a message; it was a mirror of how she lived.

My mother taught us to love God first, to honor God with what we had — whether it was a coin, a tithe, or a sacrifice across oceans. Her faith was practical, personal, and deeply rooted in trust.

Today, as your pastor, I carry that same legacy in my heart. I hope to pass it on — not just through words, but through the way I serve, love, and lead. May we, too, seek first the kingdom of God, trusting that everything we need will be provided in God's perfect time.

In Christ,

Pastor Nizzi

Seek first God's reign, and God's justice, and all these things will be given to you besides. -Matthew 6:33 The Inclusive Bible



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

Tim Murphy, Sandra O'Driscoll, Janice Capen, Xuan Diep (niece of Maria Gorsuch-Kennedy),
Pinamang Boateng, Joseph Boateng, Anne Burrows, Janet DeNapoli, Alice Douglas, Dot Ellis,
Barbara Fletcher, Beverly Grimshaw, Rosamond Hammond, Linda Keister, Charles Kiefer, Dorothy Norcross,
Debbie Plant, Troy Potts, Shea Pugh, Rich Reynolds, David Samanen, Janet Terzian, Donald Tremblay,
Barbara Vietze, Danny & Veronica Winder, Grace Woode, Peter Woodcock, Laura Zoldak,
David Patrick (Evette Walters husband), Kathleen Herbert (Evette's mom), Francis Mosso (BIL of Phil Johnson),
Troy and Cathy Potts (brother & SIL of David Potts), Melissa Houlihan (friend of Bill Robbins),
Robert Craft (friend of Michael Terzian), Susan (friend of David Potts), Page (Allison Hansen's sister),
Libby T. (friend of Phyllis Yngve), Paula and Calvin Kelly (sister and brother-in-law of Linda Dylewicz),
Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

Tim Murphy is now at Beaumont Rehab in Westborough, room 129. Please continue to keep Tim and his family in your prayers while he waits for a liver. Cards can be sent to Tim Murphy, 13 Grove Street, Upton, MA 01568.

A Message from Pastor Stuart Tucker

I wish to express my deepest sense of thanksgiving for the blessing it has been to have been appointed to serve here at Wesley UMC during the months of July and August. Our shared faith journey has been brief, but for me it has been a true gift. The second chapter of Acts describes how the church was originally formed from people from every nation under heaven. Similarly, Wesley UMC is truly multicultural. Your church office holders, outreach ministries and worship leadership show this.

My special thanks goes to the Ghanaian choir. I have seen the joy you inspire in the faces of the congregation, and that same joy touched my heart each time you sang. Thanks also to Debi Reynolds for her excellent work, to Ronna Davis for her glorious organ music, and to Debbie O'Driscoll for her many hours of help crafting the Sunday worship bulletin.

May you continue to go from strength to strength serving our Lord Jesus Christ.

Pastor Stuart Tucker

What's Happening at Wesley...

Community Breakfast, Sunday, September 7th

Next Sunday is Community Breakfast Sunday. Breakfast is served to the community from 8 – 9:30 am.

The congregation is invited to breakfast before worship or following worship from 11:15 am – 12:00 pm.

SAVE THE DATE

Wesley Ministry Fair - Sunday September 21, 2025

Invite your friends!

Come and learn about the mission and ministry of Wesley UMC

*Please reach out to Chris Flagg at 508-414-1696 to reserve table space for your Ministry group.

September 28, 2025 – Annual Harvest

The annual Harvest will be on Sunday, September 28th. If anyone has an item(s) they would like to donate for the main Harvest on September 28th, please speak with Gifty Bentum-Asante. Please

DO NOT bring your items to the church yet. Let us all pray about ways we plan to give to the Lord and know that is our little token of saying *Thank You* for all that He has done for us.

A Message from Your Music Team

This message is coming to you from your music team: Desmond Cheetham-Director/Ghanian Choir, David Potts-Director/Chancel Choir and The Wesley Ringers (hand bell choir) and Ronna Davis-Organist.

Our Ghanaian choir, under the direction of Desmond Cheetham, sings regularly in worship. Their music covers a wide variety of traditional and new songs from such composers as James Varrick Armaah, George Mensah Essilfie and Sitsofe Kwame Ayi. They hold rehearsals on Saturday mornings.

The Wesley Choir, under the direction of David Potts, sings in worship each Sunday from September to June, as well as special services such as Christmas Eve, Ash Wednesday and Maundy Thursday. The music spans six centuries of musical literature (Wesley has the largest music library in Worcester, and new music is added frequently). The Wesley Choir rehearses on Sundays after worship; there is no separate weeknight commitment. One need not be an experienced singer nor necessarily proficient in reading music; indeed, some of our members learn by listening to recordings, etc. All that is needed is a basic ability to match pitch AND have a love of singing in praise to God.

The Wesley Ringers is a small group of handbell enthusiasts who gather periodically to prepare and present music of the English Handbell tradition. No formal musical training is required. We can train you!

We are also looking for instrumentalists to enhance our worship from time to time. Brass, woodwinds, strings, even percussion! We'd love to know who in our congregation plays instruments.

As we are preparation mode for the fall, Thanksgiving, and Christmas seasons, we wanted to extend the invitation to you to:

1. Consider joining one of the choirs. Please talk with any of us and we will be happy to provide more information. Choir participation is rewarding and there is minimal time commitment with no evening rehearsals.
2. Ronna, the organist, welcomes your visit at the console (located to your left, in the back corner of the chancel (platform) after the conclusion of the postlude. She welcomes you and/or your child. Wesley has one of the best pipe organs in the city of Worcester, and nationwide, please come and become acquainted with this wonderful instrument. Your child (and maybe you) will LOVE to sit on the bench and experience the organ.
3. Let us know what your favorite hymns and/or choir pieces are. We want to bring to your worship experience music that is meaningful to you.

If you are interested in joining any of these ministries, please reach out to the perspective director.

Thank you.

Carty Cupboard

We would like to take this opportunity to thank Nancy Spencer for her faithful service as director of Carty Cupboard over these past 21 years. Nancy, you have truly been a blessing to all of us and to the countless families you've served and we are all extremely grateful for the gifts you've shared.

God Bless you,

The Congregation & Guests of Wesley Church

***** Important Update*****

Until further notice, Carty Cupboard food distribution will be offered one time per month on the third Saturday of each month from 10:00-11:30 a.m. beginning September 20, 2025.

WE NEED YOUR HELP!

We currently need people who can:

- carry cases of food into the church on Friday mornings 9:30-11:00 a.m.
- Help with set-up on Saturday morning 8:30-10:00 a.m.
- Help with distribution 10:00-11:30 a.m.
- Help w/clean-up 12:00 p.m.
- Help with offering hospitality
- At this time we are still searching for a director for the food panty.

Please reach out to Chris Flagg 508-414-1696 or Pastor Nizzi if you would like to volunteer

Kofi & Ama Results from Children's Mini-Harvest

Sunday	\$ 260.00	**Winner**
Monday	26.00	
Tuesday	105.00	
Wednesday	65.00	
Thursday	112.00	
Friday	60.00	
<u>Saturday</u>	<u>60.00</u>	
Total	\$ 688.00	

October & November 2025 Herald: The next newsletter will be in October. All articles are due in the office no later than Monday, September 29th. Thank you. *Debi*

Please note: The November newsletter will be prepared early as the first is a Saturday. Please mark your calendars for articles to be in no later than October 20th. The last week of October will be very busy for me as I will be preparing to be on vacation the first two weeks of November. Thank you.

Lightings & Altar Flowers

The Rose window lighting for September is loving memory of Ralph W. Ellis.

The Tower lighting for September is in loving memory of Rev. Blaine Taylor by Lois Taylor.

Altar Flowers... 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 have any questions, please do not hesitate to contact me. *Thank you, Debi Reynolds*

New England Annual Conference 2025

I'd like to thank you all for the opportunity to serve as your lay representative to annual conference again this year, I wasn't able to attend in person but thanks to technology I was able to participate through zoom.

The theme this year was Hope, Hope with Joy actually.

The committees that were charged with creating vision plans last year brought us those plans in the form of resolutions this year. Votes were taken, some resolutions passed, others were sent back to be refined, but all of it was done in a spirit of holiness, the kind of Holy Conferencing that I fell in love with at my first Annual conference close to 20 years ago.

But I can't lie to you, while the theme may have been Hope, it sounded a lot like Change, the thing we may fear the most or like the least. They even had one speaker whose lecture was about change. During that lecture, he asked us if we felt we were open to change? He made a suggestion that many people may not even remember, but it stuck with me.

I consider myself pretty open to change. I love living spontaneously. I enjoy changing up the house regularly. I look forward to learning the newest trends each year, so I thought I was safe with whatever he was about to suggest.

And yes, I actually tried it, and spoiler alert ... yes, I was left reflecting on where I need to change myself.

So anyway,

I now call it “the toothbrush test”.

It was suggested that we try brushing our teeth with the opposite hand, if it doesn’t bother you at all, then you’re probably pretty accepting of change. If you’re anything like me, then you are probably going to decide this test was stupid and switch back to your usual hand.

I think we all know what that means...I guess I can be resistant to change after all, especially when it’s regarding something I don’t want changed.

But CHANGE is definitely in our future, and we can kick and scream our way into tomorrow or we can look to the future with HOPE, Hope with Joy, the kind of hope that working together can bring forth.

The rest of the conference can be summed up with a list of words:

Future, Collaboration, Support, Inclusion, calling on our lives, Responding, Celebrating, Worship, Transforming, Transition, Cooperative Parish Ministry, Humility, Gentleness, Kindness...most of all, be kind.

If these words sound familiar, it’s because we have been trying to live most of them here at Wesley. It’s important that we keep looking to these words while we work to create the changes we need to secure a future for our church.

This was our first Annual Conference with our new Bishop leading the way. Bishop Thomas J. Bickerton, the man who agreed to running TWO conferences! Talk about accepting change!

Many would describe him as a work-a-holic, I’d say he is definitely a get-it-done kind of guy, I’m guessing he doesn’t spend a lot of time crying over yesterday and he doesn’t seem to have much time for fluff.

I have to admit I was missing the tender compassion that flowed so freely from Bishop Peggy Johnson, that is until one unexpected moment when his little grandson Face Timed him and he stopped the conference to take the call.

So picture this if you can ... here he is in the middle of leading a conference with 500 or so people present, his pastoral staff is leaning against a table behind him, he finishes up his call then proceeds to apologize for the interruption and goes on to explain that he made a commitment a long time ago that whenever his grand-babies needed him he would always be no more than a phone call away and he’d promised that he would always answer. This tiny moment in time became a God moment for me, looking at the picture on my Zoom screen I could clearly see a shepherd, a man who answered the call to guide us into a future filled with HOPE. I truly believe that even in the midst of all of his busyness he would answer the phone for us too.

The Bishop went on to discuss the realities of our conference and the opportunities to see new hope and he reminded us that if we truly want to “live into a new vision” then we have to begin by doing something different.

He’s challenged every church to do something different this year... What will I tell him next year when he asks - what did we do?

How are we going to push past our discomfort with change?

What are we going to do differently?

Peace to all, Chris Flagg

God Moment

God Moments from Betsy Pennino--

We love library book sales and, arriving at one, I saw a title which is one of my favorite phrases, Random Acts of Kindness. As I started reading it, I realized that these kind acts are God Moments. Here are a few general examples of Random Acts of Kindness to make the descriptive name come into focus:

- * Donations other than money-- Donate used clothes and housewares. Plant flowers where others can enjoy them. Leave a kind note where a delivery person, child or family member will find it.
- * Call a family member or friend you haven't spoken with in a while.
- * Allow someone to go ahead of you in a check-out line or in heavy traffic.
- * Volunteer-- Call a nonprofit organization that does work you believe in and offer to help.

There are many inspiring quotes about kindness, and these are just a few:

"Kind words can be short and easy to speak but their echoes are truly endless." Mother Teresa

"How do we change the world? One random act of kindness at a time." Morgan Freeman

"The day the power of love overrules the love of power, the world will know peace." Mahatma Gandhi

You might look for random chances you are given to help other people. You could send/tell this column about acts of kindness you have done or ones which have been done for you. As with all God Moments, these could be signed or anonymous and sent to Betsy Pennino (betspenn35@hotmail.com). Similarly, the generous acts can be done anonymously or with the recipient aware.

RESTLESS? SEARCHING?

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If you desire to bring a deeper dimension to your faith...

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This study runs for 28 weeks beginning in the fall – day and time TBD.

Contact: Susan Williams at 508-795-7331 for more information.

DID YOU KNOW?

You may have noticed that the Sunday morning printed announcements often make mention of someone's having sponsored the lighting of the rose window. (For example, in the month of August the lighting was in celebration of all Carty Cupboard volunteers past and present with thanks from Nancy and Harry Spencer.)

Lighting the window at night makes this beautiful feature of our church visible to passersby even in the dark. One of the very distinctive features of the Wesley sanctuary overall is the marvelous stained glass, but did you know that at the time of the dedication of the church, the rose window in the rear balcony was the only window that actually had stained glass in it?


Rose windows are characteristic of Gothic architecture and have been built into churches since the 12th century, although the specific term *rose window* was not actually used until the 17th century, deriving from the old French word *roué*, meaning *wheel*. A rose window is a circular stained glass window with the glass arranged in a pattern that radiates from the center as do the spokes of a wheel. The name also perhaps relates to the resemblance of the window to a rose and its petals. The rose window as an architectural structure likely is based on the older Roman *oculus*, (Latin, *eye*) which originally referred to a circular opening in the center of a dome, but later also referred to round windows in general. In the great Gothic churches of Europe the rose windows were meant to embody the medieval concept of beauty, which was based on three characteristics: wholeness, harmony, and radiance. The symmetry of rose windows manifests various geometric patterns that encompass the symbolism of numbers.

The number twelve is prominent in the geometry of Wesley's rose window. The importance of this number in the Bible, and hence in religious symbolism, originates in the twelve tribes of Israel, but carries over into the New Testament as well with Jesus' appointment of twelve apostles as a symbol of the restoration of Israel. The central medallion of Wesley's window contains twelve white flames for the twelve apostles. There are also twelve six-pointed stars in the twelve petals that radiate from the central medallion serving to recall the twelve apostles, the twelve minor prophets, and the twelve tribes of Israel.


While the rose window is somewhat more abstract and less didactic than some of the other windows in the sanctuary, its effect on the transformation of light is meaningful in itself. From the booklet *The Windows of Wesley*: "Stained glass under sunlight becomes a thing alive. Its colors constantly change—every minute of every daylight hour. It is vibrant and sparkling. It glows with the richness of costly gems caught in brilliant light. And so it parallels the moods of life...And it carries the light of hope and faith so that all may see."

As we sit in our worship space and contemplate the interplay of light and color may we find our lives transfigured and transformed as well.

Submitted by,
Deborah A. O'Driscoll



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WESLEY STAFF & LEADERSHIP TEAM

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