

From the Pastor's Desk

"Jesus wept."
— *John 11:35*



As we journey through Lent, this shortest verse in the Bible reminds us that God is not distant from our grief but present within it.

Dear Wesley Church Family,

Before Jesus called Lazarus out of the tomb, He stood before it and wept. Jesus did not rush past the sorrow. He did not silence the mourning. He entered it. In those quiet tears, we see the heart of our Savior — compassionate, patient, and full of mercy.

Lent invites us into that same honesty. It is a season to pause and acknowledge the places in our lives that feel heavy, sealed, or uncertain. It is a time to bring our griefs, our struggles, and even our spiritual weariness into the presence of Christ — trusting that Jesus meets us there with love.

Sometimes we carry quiet tombs: grief we have not fully faced, habits that slowly become chains, prayers that feel unanswered, faith that feels tired.

The story in John 11 reminds us that mercy comes before the miracle. Jesus wept — and then He called Lazarus out. Compassion came first. Presence came first. Love came first.

Our Methodist founder, John Wesley, spoke of repentance not as shame but as awakening. Lent is that awakening. It is God gently rolling away the stones that have covered our hearts. It is mercy inviting us to step into deeper trust and renewed faith. As a church family, may this Lenten season renew us —in prayer, in compassion, in courage, and in love for one another.

And as we continue walking toward the cross, may we remember that the Savior who weeps with us is also the Savior who calls us into new life.

With grace and peace,

Pastor Nizzi

Looking Ahead to Holy Week

Maundy Thursday Service - *Quinsigamond UMC*

6:30PM -7:30PM

Good Friday Service (7 Last Words) - *Oakdale UMC*

12:00PM -3:00PM

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

Nancy Ellis, Steven Zoldak, Allison Whisner, Wabbey, Barbara Ingrassia, Earl Flagg, Susan Williams, Udeme Ukpong (Enoh's husband), Bishop Tom Bickerton, DS Megan Stowe, Pastor Nizzi, Pastor Nory Leachon and Mayela, Stacey Nichols-Byll and her daughter Mali Shawanna, Justin Bacon, Pinamang Boateng, Joseph Boateng, Stephen Boyns, Anne Burrows, Janice Capen, Janet DeNapoli, Xuan Diep, Alice Douglas, Dot Ellis, Barbara Fletcher, Beverly Grimshaw, Rosamond Hammond, Linda Keister, Charles Kiefer, Sandra O'Driscoll, Debbie Plant, Troy Potts, Shea Pugh, David Samanen, Janet Terzian, Donald Tremblay, Barbara Vietze, Grace Woode, Peter Woodcock, David Patrick, Francis Mosso, Troy & Cathy Potts, Melissa Houlihan, Robert Craft, Susan, Page, Libby T.,

Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

Worship Attendance

February 1 –103

February 8 – 63

February 15 - 96

February 22 - 81

Lightings & Altar Flowers

The Rose window lighting for March is given in honor and celebration of Rose Ventura (93 years of age) and Thomas (64 years of age) by Gary, James, and Deborah.

The Tower lighting for March is given in loving memory of Dr. C. James Brenneman by his daughter Betsey.

The Altar Arrangements for today are given in honor of Pastor Nizzi in celebration of her birthday by our Wesley UMC church family.

The 2026 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. The cost is \$80 for both arrangements on the altar (\$40 per arrangement), or a single arrangement for \$50. You may still enhance your arrangement(s).

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. Please DO NOT leave your request in the binder in the Welcome Office. We will not get the order that way.

Rose Window & Tower Lightings Available... The following lightings are available for dedication:

April: Tower

August: Rose Window and the Tower

October: Tower

If you'd like to dedicate any of these lightings, please contact Veronica in the office (office@wesleyworc.org) or call (508-799-4191). The cost of the lighting is \$40.

Keeping You Connected!

ONECALL TELLALL... Don't sit and wonder on a Sunday morning if a storm is going to cancel church. Instead, receive a phone call and find out immediately! Whether it be cancellation because of a snowstorm, a meeting that has been cancelled or even to remind you of a special event taking place at Wesley, we will reach out to you by phone. This is a pre-recorded call, so please make sure your voicemail has space and it should save the call in case you miss it.

If you would like to sign up for this, please put your name, home phone number and ***one phone number per household*** on the sign-up sheet just outside the Welcome Office.

This is just another way for us to help keep you informed of what is going on at your church.

Easter Lilies.... Order form can be found as an insert in the bulletin or at the office window. Please return completed form and money to the office. Thank you.

Pet Photo Contest... sponsored by UWF is going on now. Bring a printed photo (size 4"x 6") and \$5.00 per pet to Linda D'Acri to be included on the bulletin board. Sunday, March 1st is the deadline for photos. Voting will be held on Sunday, March 8th for \$1.00 per vote.

UWF Spiritual Retreat, "LOOK UP" ... "Look Up", a spiritual retreat at Wesley UMC will be held on Saturday, March 14th from 10 am to 3 pm. This is a change from the March 7th previously planned. We will meet at the church and walk to the Old Courthouse to visit the Major Taylor Museum arriving at 10:15 and staying until 11:30 am. Then back to the church, where we'll start with "Songs of Praise." Lunch will occur together, then breakout sessions in smaller groups will include the Labyrinth in our Chapel, an Intercessory Prayer session in the Formal Parlor called "Wade in the Water" and a closing time of Holy Communion with Pastor Nizzi. The cost of our program is a donation of a box of cereal for our "Carty Cupboard" Food Pantry.-Sandy McManus, Cordelia Ferdinand and Barbara Ingrassia, Co-Presidents of UWF

Offering Envelopes... Offering envelopes are available in the Narthex. You may pick up your box at any time. If you would like to receive a box, please contact Veronica in the office (office@wesleyworc.org) or call (508-799-4191).

Wesley UMC Prayer Circle, Wednesdays from 12-1 pm in Mary Ellis Lounge. A church family that prays together stays together. Come as you are! Led by Pastor Nizzi.

The March Community Dinner will be held on March 28th at 4 pm. Please join us for corned beef, cabbage, potato, carrots, rolls, bread and butter, beverages, and dessert.

Carty Cupboard Food Pantry will be held on Saturday, March 7 and Saturday, March 21 at 10 am.

March 2026 Herald: The next newsletter will be in the April 5th bulletin. The deadline for articles is March 31 at 9:00 am.

Thank you, Debi

God Moment

God Moments Submitted by: Betsy Pennino

Five days before Christmas, we had a chimney fire above our wood stove. We were unaware of it, though sitting in the next room. A neighbor rang our bell and said that her house, downwind of ours, was full of smoke. She had called the fire department. Then there was pounding on our front door, and we saw two fire trucks and seven firemen! We explained that we had a wood stove and that the damper had been left open too long, but that we had the chimney cleaned every January, and we never burned pine or trash.

The Chief told us to all leave the house. I looked in our bunny's favorite spaces but could not see him. We had to leave, but the front door was left open to let air in, so our much-loved bunny could have run outside. I walked around the house a few times and called him. I really didn't think that the house would burn or that he would have run toward noisy fire trucks. My husband snuck into the house when the firemen were all looking toward the chimney. He couldn't find our dear little pet hiding under anything.

Our chimney sweep hadn't been adequately cleaning our chimney. Hot fires had melted the creosote inside the flue liner. There were cracks in the liner filled with globs of melted creosote so that the fire could have escaped and burned the house down!

This experience made me aware of several God Moments:

- * One was the timing of 7 pm which meant that we (and our neighbors) were at home and awake.
- * Our bunny was safe under the sink in the bathroom! Since bunnies chew everything, (including electrical wires!), we have gates in front of open doors and other barriers. He had never jumped over the barrier guarding the bathroom, so we hadn't looked there at first. Since he became ours in August, we've noticed that he's smarter than other bunnies we had adopted.
- * There was no damage inside the house or on the roof.
- * After the fire, we learned (from the camera inspection) about cracks in the flue where sparks could have flown out and ignited the house. We got to use our house insurance for the first time, after funding it for 36 years. There's justice in that.

Betsy

Note: there's no need to sign your name when sharing.

DID YOU KNOW?

Prayer is a component of our Sunday morning worship, and there are several points in the order of service in which we offer our prayers. Generally our basic pattern of worship includes an opening prayer after the processional hymn and praise songs. At the conclusion of the opening prayer there is a time for silent confession. An important element of both private and public prayer, confession expresses our attitudes of humility and repentance. A prayer of confession is included in most communion liturgies and is always a fitting attitude of prayer, but especially so during the season of Lent which is traditionally a season for reflection, self-examination, self-assessment, and repentance.

General confessions of sin are characteristic of worship even in Biblical times. There are many examples of such confessions in the Bible—for example Psalms 6, 32, 38, 51, 102, 130, and 143 in particular are known as penitential psalms, and are often used in Christian liturgies involving confession of sin.

Open confessions have been a practice of Christians since the early church, and there are many New Testament references to both public and private confession of sin. In open general confession the believing community acknowledges a corporate sense of its unrighteousness, and often also includes expression of sorrow for transgressions as well as petitions for forgiveness. In silent personal confession we are given the opportunity for introspection and self-examination. In some traditions such as Orthodox and Roman Catholic forms of Christianity, there is also a sacramental form of confession involving formal confession of individual sins before a priest.

A prayer of confession is usually followed by words of forgiveness and assurance which remind us that God's love and mercy surpass our sin. In our recent services this assurance has come in the form of the Taizé chant, *God Is Forgiveness*:

God is forgiveness.

Dare to forgive and God will be with you.

God is forgiveness.

Love and do not fear.

True confession always includes the acceptance of God's forgiveness, offered by the grace of God through Jesus. Our Lenten journey calls us to walk the path of confession, repentance, and forgiveness, restoring our relationship with God and with one another.

Submitted by
Deborah A. O'Driscoll

Upper Room Daily Devotional and
Lenten Booklets are available
in the Narthex or Brewer Hall.

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