

## From the Pastor's Desk

### MISSION TRIP REFLECTION FROM A YOUNG ADULT

Naa Dromo Aryee

Worship @ Wesley UMC Worcester, MA

July 19, 2026

Good morning, everyone.

My name is Naa Dromo Aryee. I have been worshipping at Wesley for about 11 years. My parents are Solomon and Henritta Aryee, and my siblings are Jormo and Suomo Aryee.

First, I would like to thank the Wesley UMC United Women in Faith and everyone in this congregation who supported me and made this trip possible. Thank you for your prayers, your generosity, and for believing in me. Because of your support, I had the opportunity to travel to Jamaica through Boston College's Magis program, and today I would like to share about what God taught me during those two weeks.

I currently attend Boston College, which is a Jesuit Catholic university. One of the things that makes Boston College unique is that it emphasizes not only academic excellence but also the formation of the whole person. One phrase we hear often in Latin is *cura personalis*, which means "care for the whole person." Along with that, there is a strong emphasis on service, reflection, and working for the common good.

Because of that culture, there are countless opportunities to serve both on and off campus. When I first saw the Magis Jamaica trip, something about it immediately caught my attention. I knew I wanted to challenge myself and experience service in a way I never had before, so I applied without really knowing what to expect. But I was going to Jamaica, so that was a plus.

Interestingly, before the trip, we were told very little about what our experience in Jamaica would be like. Students who had gone before us intentionally kept many details to themselves because they wanted each person to experience the journey with an open mind rather than through someone else's expectations. We met weekly to prepare ourselves spiritually, emotionally, and culturally, but even then, I still didn't fully understand what the trip was going to teach me.

During those meetings, we learned about the Jesuit value of Magis. Magis is a Latin word that means "the more," but not in the sense of simply doing more or accomplishing more. Instead, it means striving to love more deeply, serve more generously, and intentionally seek God in everything we do.

To be completely honest, before leaving for Jamaica, I understood that definition, but I didn't really understand what it looked like in practice.

One of the first things that surprised me when we arrived in Jamaica was that we were almost completely disconnected from technology. We had no phones, no watches, and very little connection to the outside world. For the first day or two, I think I reached for my phone about a

hundred times before remembering I didn't have it. Let's just say I learned very quickly how often I check my phone without even realizing it.

At first, I thought this would be one of the hardest parts of the trip. Throughout our first week, our leaders kept encouraging us to "be present," and honestly, that phrase started to drive me a little crazy. I remember thinking, "I am present... I'm literally standing right here." It wasn't until later that I realized they weren't talking about where my body was. They were talking about where my heart and my attention were.

As the trip continued, I slowly realized why the program was designed that way.

Most of our mornings were spent at Holy Family Primary School in Kingston. It is a public elementary school located in a lower-income community, and many of the children came from very difficult home situations. Some students lacked stable parental figures, while others faced challenges that many of us could never imagine.

At first, I found myself struggling. I remember sitting in classrooms helping teachers, working with students, reading with them, and simply being another adult in the room. After a few days, I started asking myself, "Is this really making a difference?"

Before the trip, I think I had this idea that service means fixing problems. I thought I would come to Jamaica and somehow make a noticeable change in people's lives. Instead, I found myself sitting in classrooms, helping with lessons, playing with children, and offering encouragement. Part of me felt like I wasn't doing enough. Looking back, I realize that was probably the biggest lesson God wanted to teach me.

Every evening, our group participated in something called the *Examen*, a Jesuit prayer of reflection where we looked back over the day and searched for where God had been present. Through those nightly reflections, I slowly realized that service isn't always about fixing someone's situation.

Sometimes service is simply choosing to be fully present with another person.

God wasn't asking me to solve every problem I saw. God was asking me to love the person standing in front of me. That completely changed the way I viewed the rest of the trip.



I started paying more attention to the small moments. I realized that my presence in a classroom meant more than I thought. Maybe a student simply needed someone to listen to them, encourage them, or remind them that they mattered. A smile, a conversation, or even something as simple as a hug could communicate God's love in ways I couldn't measure.

One of my favorite memories from Holy Family Primary School was our final day together. Boston College hosted a field day filled with games and activities for the students. At the end of the day, many of the children became emotional because we were leaving. Some of them hugged us tightly, and others cried. That moment reminded me that although I had only been there for two weeks, relationships matter. Being present matters. Sometimes the greatest act of service is allowing someone to be seen, valued, and loved.

Throughout the rest of our trip, we served in several communities run by the Missionaries of the Poor and Mustard Seed Communities; they are faith-based organizations dedicated to caring for society's most vulnerable. Many of the homes were intentionally given biblical names that reflected

their mission. We visited places like Bethlehem Home, Jerusalem, My Father's House, and Mount Tabor; they provide lifelong care for children and adults with physical and cognitive disabilities.

We also served at Mary's Child, a home for young girls who became pregnant unexpectedly and were abandoned by their families, and at the Missionaries of Charity, a living community for elderly individuals who had been abandoned and were living with disabilities. Finally, we visited Matthew 25:40, a home for teenage boys living with HIV/AIDS and disabilities.



Of all the places we visited, Matthew 25:40 stayed with me the most, not only because of the people I met there, but because its name comes from the verse that became the heart of this trip for me.

Before visiting these places, I expected to encounter mostly sadness. Instead, I encountered joy. I encountered laughter. I encountered faith.

A moment that will forever stick with me happened at the Missionaries of Charity. There was one elderly woman named Dorothy who could not speak. Dorothy could write and recognize names and faces, and she always carried a notebook with her. The first time I met her, she signaled for me to write down my name, and at the time, I didn't fully understand why. Later, one of our trip leaders asked if Dorothy asked me to write my name. Surprised that she already knew, I said yes and asked why. Our trip leader explained that Dorothy had been on the Jamaica Magis trip the year before, and when she walked into the home today, Dorothy immediately recognized her, walked over, flipped through her notebook, and pointed to our trip leader's name that she had written the year before. That moment made me realize how even the smallest interactions can leave a lasting impact on someone's life.

While at the Missionaries of Charity, our services ranged from simply conversing with the elderly to helping care for them by grooming their hair, clipping their nails, cooking in the kitchen, and feeding them. At the same time, the Sisters who lived at the Missionaries of Charity hosted a food giveaway for individuals experiencing homelessness. It was there that I noticed something that deeply impacted me. After everyone had received their meal, many of the homeless individuals gathered and began leading their own worship service. They started singing gospel songs, praying together, and thanking God for the meal they had just received. That moment completely humbled me. Here I was thinking that we had come to minister to them, but instead they ministered to me. Despite everything they had experienced, despite living on the streets, despite not knowing where tomorrow's meal might come from, they chose to praise God. Their faith wasn't dependent on comfort or convenience. Their gratitude wasn't dependent on having everything they wanted. Watching them worship reminded me that faith is not built on what we have. It is built on who God is.



That moment also changed the way I understood Matthew 25:40. Jesus tells us, "Whatever you did for one of the least of these brothers and sisters of mine, you did for me." Before this trip, I think I understood this verse as simply helping people in need. Now I understand it differently. The "least of these" are not simply people who lack money or resources. They are people made in God's image. They have dignity, wisdom, faith, and gifts of their own. I realized that "least of these" could also mean the action and service itself. I wasn't making drastic changes in Jamaica, but I still served. In many ways, they were serving me just as much as I was serving them.

This trip also challenged the way I think about poverty. I realized that poverty isn't only financial. Although some of the people I met had very little in terms of material possessions, they were abundantly rich in faith, community, generosity, and hope. It reminded me that all of us experience different kinds of poverty. Some people lack food or housing. Others lack love, community, purpose, or hope.

As I returned to Worcester, I know this mission didn't end when I boarded the plane home. Matthew 25:40 isn't only about serving people in Jamaica. Matthew 25:40 is about serving people wherever God has placed us. That means looking for Christ in our own communities, in Worcester, in our schools, in our workplaces, and even in the people we pass every day.

As I continue my journey toward becoming a nurse, I know this experience will stay with me. It reminded me that caring for people isn't only about medicine or treatment. Sometimes the greatest thing we can offer another person is our presence, our compassion, and the reminder that they are seen and loved.

If there is one thing I hope you take away from my experience, it is this: You don't have to travel to another country to live out Matthew 25:40. Every day, God gives us opportunities to love the people around us. Sometimes that love looks like serving a meal. Sometimes it looks like listening to someone who feels forgotten. Sometimes it looks like sitting beside a child in a classroom. And sometimes it simply means choosing to be fully present. I went to Jamaica thinking I was going there to help others. Instead, God used the people of Jamaica to change me.

Thank you again for your support, your prayers, and for allowing me to share a small part of what God taught me through this incredible experience. God bless you all. ☺



**Me with my classroom**



**Serving food at Holy Family Primary School**

## Special Prayers for Our Wesley Family and Friends

Gail Royal (friend of Linda Dylewicz), Charles Simpson, Dorothy Drajesk (Brent's mother), Kendra, the Entire church, Earl Flagg, Melanie Rohr (Bill Robbins), Ermine (Yvette Walters), Yvonne Cotton (loss of her sister), Brett, Sarah, Jess & Josh (Jackie Wetton), Cousin Al, who is in a coma, Alice Douglas, Jackie Wetton's brother, Donnie and sister, Pam, Raye Bragg, Dr. Angel Lake (in St. Croix), Richard (Allison Hansen's brother), Steven Zoldak, Rosmond Caine (Cordelia's sister in St. Vincent), Allison Whisner, Stacey Nichols-Byll and her daughter Mali, Shawanna, Justin Bacon, Xuan Diep, Bishop Tom Bickerton, DS Megan Stowe, Pastor Nizzi, Linda Keister, Shea Pugh, Page, David Patrick, Francis Mosso, Troy & Cathy Potts, Melissa Houlihan, Robert Craft, Susan, Libby T., Peter Woodcock, World Peace, Those who struggle with depression, anxiety, and alcoholism.

## Remember Our Homebound

Elaine Peterson, at Jewish Health Care Center, Room 513  
Joseph Boateng, Pinamang Boateng, Stephen Boyns, Anne Burrows, Janice Capen, Janet DeNapoli, Dot Ellis, Barbara Fletcher, Karen Garrett, Beverly Grimshaw, Rosamond Hammond, Charles Kiefer, Sandra O'Driscoll, Betty Paulwan, Deborah and George Plant, Janet Terzian, Donald Tremblay, Barbara Vietze, Marion and Jerry Warren, Grace Woode

## Family Who has Passed on Before Us

Prayers for Ron Ramsey, and Keith Hirst and his family on the death of Joan Hirst on July 9, 2026. Calling hours are Monday, August 3 from 5–7 pm at Miles-Sterling Funeral Home and Tribute Center in Sterling. A memorial service for Joan will be held on Tuesday, August 4 at 11 am at Epworth United Methodist Church, Worcester. Cards can be sent to Ron Ramsay at 32 Ford Road, Sterling, MA 01564.

Prayers for Mark Muncey's cousin's Karen and Cyndi on the death of their mother Jane on July 15<sup>th</sup>.



If you have a prayer request, please complete a card in the pew and place it in the collection plate, or you can email the church office ([office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org)).

**For pastoral emergency, contact Pastor Nizzi directly at 617 480 2955 (cell),  
so she can respond in a timely manner.**

## Worship Attendance

June 28 – 103    July 5 – 100    July 12 – 110    July 19 – 111    July 26 - 106

## Lightings & Altar Flowers

**The Rose window and Tower lighting** is given in celebration of Akosua Ababio's birthday on August 9.

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

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.

## Keeping You Connected!

**Mark Your Calendars:**

August 16 - Ronna's Retirement Party  
August 30 - Children's Mini-Harvest  
September 27 - Harvest

**Upcoming Vacation:** Debi will be on vacation the week of August 9<sup>th</sup>, returning to the office on Tuesday, August 18<sup>th</sup>. If you have any upcoming meetings that you need space for, please email her as soon as possible ([office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org)). Thank you.

**Office Volunteers** are needed for August 11 – 14 from 10 am to 1 pm. If you can help, please reach out to Debi in the office. Thank you.

**September Herald** will be in the September 6<sup>th</sup> bulletin. Please email your article to Debi no later than no later than Monday, August 31. Thank you. (email: [office@wesleyworc.org](mailto:office@wesleyworc.org))

**Adult Sunday School** on Sunday mornings at 9:00 am in John Wesley Room. Everyone is invited to attend this study led by Pastor Joseph Wilson.

**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! Co-led by Pastor Nizzi and Cordelia.

**The Association of Ghana United Methodist Church Choirs presents**

**National 2026 Choir Conference**

September 3 – 6, 2026

at

Best Western Royal Plaza Hotel, Marlborough, MA

The theme this year is: The Lord is My Strength and My Song (Exodus 15:2)

## Women's Mini-Harvest & Kofi & Ama Results

|                      |             |            |                       |
|----------------------|-------------|------------|-----------------------|
| Women's Mini-Harvest | \$ 2,141.00 | Kofi & Ama | \$ 1,471.00           |
|                      |             | Sunday     | \$ 530.00 ** WINNER** |
|                      |             | Monday     | \$ 120.00             |
|                      |             | Tuesday    | \$ 230.00             |
|                      |             | Wednesday  | \$ 95.00              |
|                      |             | Thursday   | \$ 237.00             |
|                      |             | Friday     | \$ 126.00             |
|                      |             | Saturday   | \$ 133.00             |

### WESLEY'S TWENTY-SECOND ANNUAL HARVEST SUNDAY, SEPTEMBER 27, 2026

#### OUR CONGREGATION IS OF MANY NATIONS BUT WE WILL PRAISE HIS BOUNTIFUL HARVEST AS ONE

- SILENT AUCTION BEGINNING AT 9:30 am
- SANCTUARY SERVICE AT **10:00 am**
  - ★ KOFI AND AMA EVENT - Celebrate the day of your birth
  - ★ PRAISE AND CELEBRATION MUSIC
  - ★ HARVEST AUCTION
  - ★ APPEAL FOR FUNDS

## Host Families Needed

Learn about another Culture without even leaving your home. Families are needed to host International Foreign Exchange Students from a wide variety of countries. Students are 15 - 18, all speak English, are fully insured medically, bring their own spending money, and would attend your local High School. Perfect matches are made with common interests between the exchange student and the family. Host families can be a single parent, a family with teenagers, a family with young children or a family where children are grown and no longer live at home. Host families provide meals and a bed which can be shared with another sibling, snacks, and guidance. The benefits of hosting a student are many, including making a friendship for a lifetime. Maybe even going to visit your new son or daughter in their country. We have two students that have specifically requested Massachusetts -

Carlota - Spain - grade 10 - Requests to come to the Northeast  
Vojtech - Czech Republic - Grade 12

Pat Darby - Area Coordinator for Northwest Services PEACE Program.

phone: 978-632-8270 email: [patdarby6@yahoo.com](mailto:patdarby6@yahoo.com) visit our website: [www.nw-services.com](http://www.nw-services.com)

## 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](mailto:betspenn35@hotmail.com))



### God Moments from Enoch Ukpog

I went to bed on Sunday, March 22, 2026 feeling perfectly well. When I woke up Monday morning, I couldn't bear any weight on my right leg. I couldn't understand what had happened. It was so bad that I had to use a cane while walking around the house. I told my husband that I didn't understand it at all. I struggled to drive him to his appointment, since he's unable to drive after his surgeries. When we came back, I went to bed and woke up at 6:45 PM, thinking it was Tuesday morning. I went back to bed, waking up Tuesday morning, perfectly all right. Dear Lord, is this real or am I losing my mind? I decided to go for my usual 5 pm walks at QCC. One mind told me not to go because that's pushing my luck, the other mind said to go for the walks to confirm that I was OK. I prayed about it, then walked up and down the QCC hills twice with no pain. I have no explanation for what happened to me, all I know is I have been miraculously healed by my Lord. To God be all the glory forever. AMEN.

My husband had been very sick since October, 2025. It got to a point that I needed to be there for him 24/7. I couldn't go back to teaching for the spring semester. To God's glory, my husband is feeling better now. I stumbled into Kingdom Builders Academy on Facebook, enrolled as a student to start Jan. 2026, online. This has kept me quite busy, but accessible to my husband at any time. For the Lord to lead me to this program, at such perfect timing, is a miracle. By God's Grace, I will soon be able to work at my own pace from home. I'm eternally thankful to my Lord, who has provided for all my needs.

On October, 16, 2025, I went walking up and down the QCC Hills in Worcester, as usual, with my daughter. We were having a fun time when suddenly, I fell flat on my face, on the walkway, shattering my upper left front tooth and cutting my upper lip. I was conscious, so I got up. My daughter was very upset and wanted to call 911, but I said no. Then she wanted to drive me to an ER. No, I said again to her. I used tissue paper to dab my bleeding lip and told my daughter that we had to complete our walking for the evening. So we completed our 45 minute walk and I drove myself home. I'm thankful and grateful to God for shielding my forehead. If I had hit my forehead on that concrete, I would have sustained a serious head injury and I don't know where I could have been today. This is my awesome GOD!!!

## DID YOU KNOW?

On most Sundays there are flowers on the altar during worship. The presence of flowers in our worship space serves as a general reminder of both the beauty of God and the life offered to us in the resurrection of Jesus. Beyond this general symbolism, many cultures have imbued specific types of flowers with symbolic meaning since ancient times, and the use of specific flowers in Christian religious symbolism goes well beyond the presence in our sanctuary of the poinsettias at Christmas and the lilies at Easter.

In the Bible, the two most frequently mentioned flowers are the rose and the lily. Although it is believed that these terms may be used more generically to refer to flowers of many different species or to flowers in general, these two types of flowers have assumed a prominent role in Christian art over the centuries.

The rose has a variety of symbolic meanings in Christian art, including Messianic hope (Is. 35:1) and the Nativity. (One of the symbols on the Chrismon tree at Wesley is a Christmas rose.) The rose also has strong associations with Mary the mother of Jesus, but it also is used as a general symbol of beauty. The red rose can symbolize blood and martyrdom.

As one of the most important flower symbols used in Western art, the rose also has found its way into church architecture, most obviously in the form of the rose window (such as the window in the rear balcony of our sanctuary), the name of which derives from the old French word *roué*, meaning *wheel* but which also probably relates to the resemblance of the window to a rose and its petals. The rose also is often used in carvings on pew ends and moldings.

Aside from the Easter lily as a symbol of resurrection, the lily in general as a symbol of innocence also has a strong association with Mary, especially in depictions of the annunciation. In our sanctuary, one of the main side windows (wall on pulpit side closest to the front) is devoted to the annunciation, and below some of the figures in that window, you will see vases of both roses and lilies. If you look very closely at the lower left corner of the *Te Deum* window in the front of the sanctuary, you will see in the panel that depicts the annunciation to Mary a lily which seems to take on the stereotypical appearance of a fleur-de-lis. This symbol is a stylized representation of a lily. (Some say it also derives from the iris, which is used in religious art as yet another symbol associated with Mary. The iris is sometimes referred to as the *sword lily*, which refers to the sorrow and suffering of Mary at Jesus' Crucifixion.) The fleur-de-lis became the symbol of French royalty and thus also became symbolic of Mary as Queen of Heaven. Because of its three-part structure, it also sometimes is considered to be a symbol of the Trinity.

Other flowers that have been used symbolically in Christian art include daisies (innocence of the Christ child), lily of the valley (humility, innocence, or even a reference to Jesus himself, as in the song *He's the Lily of the Valley*) and sunflower (the soul's turning to God).

Submitted by,  
Deborah A. O'Driscoll

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