

December 2022



**Our Vision statement:**

*Learn God's word, Teach  
God's word and  
Share God's love*

**Our Mission Statement:**

*Wesley United Methodist  
Church is a community of*

*Christ's disciples who strive to know, love and serve God  
more faithfully through Christ-centered worship, education,  
fellowship and true compassion that show God's love for all people  
in the name of Jesus Christ.*

**Notes from Pastor  
Emery**

During Advent we pause to remember the essential person, the holy vessel that makes Christmas possible -- Miriam or Mary as we know her today/ The Church has had a difficult time knowing how to regard Mary. The problem is that we've buried her under so many layers of theology, piety, and politics, she's nearly impossible to excavate. Some of us pray to her. Others ignore her on principle. Some call her a victim of divine coercion -- the Eastern Church, "Theotokos," God-bearer. For some, she represents a troubling model of pious femininity — ever sinless, ever virgin, ever mother. For still others, she is child prophet extraordinaire — a Jean D'Arc who fearlessly announced the arrival of God's kingdom to earth in *The Magnificat*.

So, we bring Mary out of the box and dust her off for our creches each year around this time, and young girls are chosen to portray her in our annual Christmas pageants.

Who was Mary anyhow? Would the real Mary please stand up? I wish she would, because I have so many questions to ask her: When did you tell your parents you were pregnant? Did you tell Joseph yourself, or did the gossip-mongers

of Nazareth take care of that for you? Did anyone in the village believe your story? After Gabriel departed, did you doubt his visitation? Question your sanity? Fear for your life?

The Bible answers none of these questions. In Mark, her most memorable appearance may be the account in which she and her other sons come to take Jesus home, thinking the boy addled. She doesn't fare too much better in Matthew. John never refers to her by name and Paul makes no mention of her at all. The evangelist Luke does not exalt Mary as a goddess, or as a mother, or even as a woman. He identifies Mary as the "favored one", and "blessed among women." For Luke, Mary is the ideal Christian, "blessed" and "favored" because she believed God.

And *this* is the special honor God bestowed on his "favored one"? This part of the Annunciation story warns me that God's "favor" is not the painless thing I'd like to believe it is. It's not the God of the New Testament who equates divine favor with wealth, health, comfort, or ease — that's just me, getting it wrong. Mary's favored status led her straight from scandal to danger to the trauma of her son's crucifixion. God's call required her to be profoundly

*Continued on next page*

**Dates to Remember**

December 9th, Friday  
8 a.m.

**Bread Baking**

December 10, Saturday  
8 a.m.

**Church Charge Conference**

December 11, Sunday  
**Kids Sing/Cookie Walk**

December 14, Wednesday  
1:30 p.m.  
**Worship Committee**

December 13, Tuesday  
6:30 p.m.  
**Church Council**

December 24, Saturday  
3:00 p.m.  
**Christmas Eve/Kids Sing**

December 25, Christmas Sunday  
**Christmas Celebration**

Online Services still available to view on Facebook and YouTube. See page 3 for instructions on how to subscribe to the Wesley YouTube channel.

(Continued from page 1)

countercultural, to trust an inner vision that flew in the face of everything her community expected of her. As the years passed, and her son's enemies multiplied, Mary's "yes" demanded a degree of courage that makes me tremble as a parent. Let's not deceive ourselves: it is no benign thing to be "favored" of God.

Denise Levertov in her poem, "Annunciation" says.

"Aren't there annunciations  
of one sort or another  
in most lives?"

Some unwillingly  
undertake great destinies,  
enact them in sullen pride,  
uncomprehending.

More often  
those moments  
when roads of light and storm  
open from darkness in a man or woman,  
are turned away from."

The danger in idealizing Mary's consent is that it distorts her humanity, and keeps her story at arm's length from ours. For better or for worse, I can't relate to a person who impetuously leaps headlong into obedience. I can relate, however, to the one who struggles, to the one whose "yes" is cautious and ambivalent. I hope an eternity did pass between Mary's calling and her consent. I hope the angel indeed waited compassionately for her answer, honoring all that was at stake in her freedom to accept or refuse him.

We, like Mary, are called to wrestle with the impossible possibility of God. We all have moments in our life which may not seem as earthshaking as Mary's, but nonetheless are opportunities to affirm the impossible possibility of God.

"Then the angel departed from her." It's the moment when the prayer ends, the vision recedes, the certainty wavers. It's the moment after the "yes," the moment when the mountaintop experience fades into memory, and life in the valley begins.

How different Mary's experience might have been if Gabriel had stuck around to erase her doubts and silence her critics. But no, he departed, leaving the ongoing work of discernment and discipleship to Mary alone. Her "yes" didn't signal the end of mystery. Mystery had only begun.

A popular Christmas song addressed to Mary asks what she knew when she consented to Gabriel's



# December

## BIRTHDAYS

2	Maggie Peterson	15	Tim Krueger
	Andrew Pribek	19	Wayne Michur
6	Ethan Villars	21	Morgan Thomas
9	Cecily Flores	25	Jamie Tesch
12	Cynthia Monroe	28	Emma Otradovec
13	Daniel Thomas	30	Brian Fournier
	Dominic Flores	31	Jenna Tesch
	Billy Marx		

## ANNIVERSARIES

28	Jon & Barbara Uecker
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request: "Mary, did you know that your baby boy would one day walk on water? Mary, did you know that your baby boy would save our sons and daughters?"

We have no way of knowing what Mary knew. My guess is that like us, she knew just enough to get started. My guess is that the work of bearing God into the world involved ceaseless discovery and ongoing consent, just as it does for us today, for each of us is called to be a God-bearer --- Theotokos . My guess is that each trembling "yes" Mary whispered into God's heart, changed the world --- as does ours.

## Christmas Day Celebration

Sunday, December 25, 9:30 a.m.

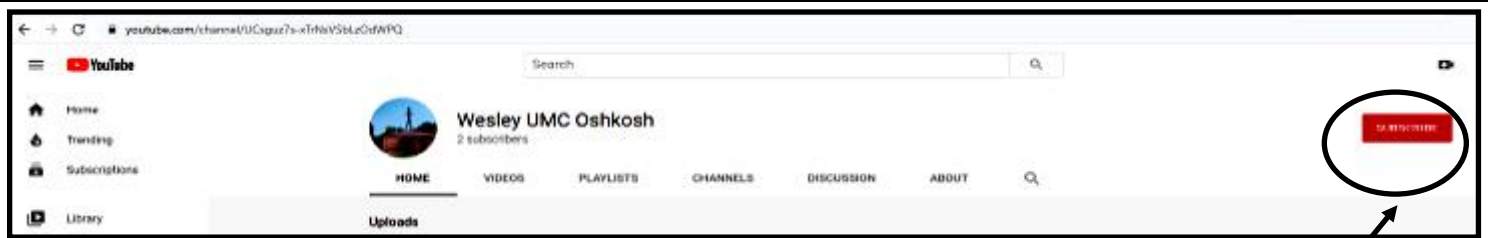
Join us on Christmas morning for a casual service & carol sing.

Koeller Hall

\*Refreshments & Fellowship

\*Bring your family, all welcome





1. Open **YouTube.com**
2. Click the **Search** button
3. Key **Wesley UMC Oshkosh**



wesley umc oshkosh|

4. Press **Enter**
5. Click the **SUBSCRIBE** button when you first view this YouTube site.

### **A Message from the Trustees**

What a difference a year makes! Last year we were concerned about roof leaks in our sanctuary and raising monies to replace the over 30-year-old roof. Wesley can be proud of itself again as we were able to raise the money to have the job done without having to take out a loan. The roof was replaced in May, and it was a job well done. Many thanks to all who contributed to the roof fund! Just to let you know we have done some other projects this year. Did you know we had all new windows installed at the parsonage early this spring? No more plastic on the inside of the windows. There were some other repairs done throughout the year. We had to replace a couple of leaky toilets, repair a leaky sink in the kitchen, and there are always burnt-out light bulbs to replace. We also had to repair our boilers recently. The parsonage needed a new gas valve, and the church needed a reset control replaced. It took three parts to replace one original part. The old part was obsolete, and it took the other pieces to make it work.

Going forward, we have decided to repair the parking lot this spring by filling cracks, resurfacing the east entrance, and resealing and restriping. The approximate cost of this repair is \$15,000. We are not asking that you stop giving to our general fund which pays the day-to-day bills. We are asking that if you could designate a few dollars for maintenance or capital improvement, be that \$1.00 or \$2.00 or \$5.00, that would help a lot.

We were asked what could the Trustees do in the future. We would like to start by upgrading the remaining windows facing Florida Avenue in the education wing. We are going to do one window at a time starting when the weather gets warmer. We would like to clean the bricks on the building facing the parking lot sometime this spring. We would like to keep in mind any other capital improvement going forward. As in any home there are always expenses, and you try to spread these costs out so they don't hit all at once. I know we just did some repairs on both boilers; however, they are the originals and were installed in the sixties.

Thank you, Wesley, for all you have done. We could not have done it without your support!

Respectfully Submitted

Michael LaPoint, Trustees Chair

## Newsletter Sponsorship

There sponsor for the December newsletter is Jacquie Reeves, Secretary, of Wesley. She would like to thank Pastor, Debbie, Linda, Donna, Kathy, & the congregation for their continued understanding & support during her illness. Your contribution helps defray part of the cost of the publication and is an extra gift of support to our expenses. Please contact the church office (235-3070) to 'reserve' your chosen months for 2023.



## UMC CORNER

### Advent is the beginning of the church year for Christians.

During Advent, we prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. Advent began in France in the fourth century. In various times and locations of the church, it has been observed for varying lengths of time. Modern innovation includes the use of an Advent wreath usually with four candles and themes around hope-peace-love-joy plus the white Christ candle.

Advent comes from the Latin word, *adventus*, meaning "coming." It is a season to prepare for the coming of Christ in various meanings: 1) the promised coming of the Messiah to the Jews, 2) the coming of Jesus being born in Bethlehem, 3) the promised return of the risen Christ in final victory, and 4) the continual coming of Christ into the lives and hearts of believers. Advent is to be a time of penitence and fasting, austerity, seriousness, reading of Scripture, hearing and proclaiming the Word in sermon and song; waiting and longing for the Messiah's coming.

The color for Advent has traditionally been purple. The United Methodist Book of Worship upholds the traditional color of purple for Advent, signifying penitence and royalty, but also allows blue, the color of hope.

Advent, which marks the beginning of the liturgical year, is part of the cycle of seasons that includes Advent, Christmas, and Epiphany, all related in some fashion to the coming of Jesus. That cycle is followed by Lent, Holy Week, Easter, and the long Pentecost season.

When celebrating Advent we need to choose songs that highlight Advent and don't get it mixed up with Christmas. Some suggested hymns found in our UM Hymnal or in our *The Faith We Sing* book you might want to read or sing daily are:

1. *Of the Fathers Love Begotten*
2. *Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silence*
3. *Soon and Very Soon*
4. *My Lord, What a Morning*
5. *Wake, Awake, for Night Is Flying*
6. *I Want to Be Ready*
7. *He Came Down*
8. *Light the Advent Candle*
9. *The King of Glory Comes*
10. *Like a Child*
11. *Joy in the Morning*
12. *Come Now, O Prince of Peace"*

Look up these songs. Find the difference. Reading or singing these songs may help you not let Christmas intrude in your Advent season. If we are not careful we will lose the richness and the benefit of experiencing the promise, longing, hope, and expectation of Advent.

Happy Advent!

## MERRY CHRISTMAS FROM YOUR EDUCATION COMMITTEE!

Our Sunday School children will be singing on Sunday December 11 during children's time in the worship service. If you missed them singing in November, you'll want to mark your calendars for this date. They will be giving us a rendition of "Feliz Navidad". On Christmas Eve, they will be singing "Away In The Manger".



Thank you to all who donated items of peanut butter, jams & jellies, boxes of single serve oatmeal packets and hand & feet warmers for the Day by Day Warming Shelter. They were delivered to the shelter on Sunday 11/27 when the spaghetti meal that Wesley prepared was taken over there.

There will be NO CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL CLASS on Sunday 12/25/22 (Christmas Day) and Sunday 1/1/23 (New Year's Day).

A new book study for our Sunday morning adult study group will be starting in January. "Walking In Grace 2023, formerly Daily Guideposts. New name. Books can still be ordered. Contact the church office or Debbie Zimmerman if you are interested.

The Education Committee will not meet in December. Our next meeting will be Tuesday 1/10 at 6:30 p.m.

Merry Christmas & Happy New Year from Donna LaPoint, Education Committee Chair



### Greeting Card Update

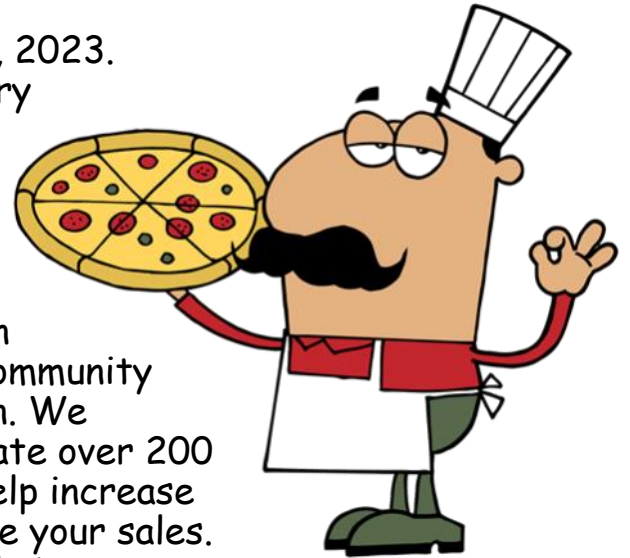
Be sure to check out the greeting card table in the narthex! Besides the usual selection of regular cards, there are individual Christmas cards and packs of six, as well as gift card/small gift holders, hot chocolate pouches, desk calendar easels, things that make good teacher, thank you, or just "thinking of you gifts." If you have a special need or request, please let me know. I might be able to make something up for you. **Remember, all proceeds go to the mission of the month!** Thank you for supporting this project!! Doris Thomas

## PIZZA 2023

Wesley is back to selling and making pizzas. Last year, changes were made to make the event safe and streamlined for quicker assembly. There are 3 production lines instead of 5 lines, each devoted to one particular kind of pizza. There will not be 80 people in the assembly line, a smaller amount of people will be utilized. There are only three choices of pizzas, cheese, sausage and pepperoni. Pizzas sold and made will be 12-inch crust only and there will be no combination pizzas. Prices were increased just a little from last year to reflect the higher cost of ingredients. Please remember, this is a fundraiser, our largest fundraiser of the year. There will be no change in the taste or quality of the pizza.

Orders must be in by Thursday, January 5<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The date of making the pizzas is Saturday, January 21st. Pick up may be earlier. Some people may be notified that their pick up would be earlier than the designated 11:30 to 12:30 pick up. There is a sign-up sheet for workers for that day in the narthex along with the order forms. We encourage you to bring friends. Like 2022, you can donate money to supply pizzas for the Oshkosh Community Food Pantry. The order form gives you that option. We donated 150 pizzas in 2022 and our goal is to donate over 200 in 2023. You could also make a cash donation to help increase the profit in this fundraiser. So go forth and make your sales. Sell to your friends. Sell to your enemies. Buy and give to your friends, neighbors, enemies and relatives. Let's make this an all-church event. Don't be left out! See you on the 21st of January.

Randy Lovell - Pizza Ministry



## Cookie Walk



## Women Of Wesley

We are planning to bring the Cookie Walk back this year. The date will be Sunday, December 11, 2022 It will take place after the church service.

REMINDER – We ask for donations of some of your delicious cookies that you bake for the season. We will also have a craft table available.

We did not forget about our bread making. Please plan to help with bread making on Friday, December 9<sup>th</sup>. **We will start at 8:00 a.m.** Please plan to help us out if you are able.

We will be making pumpkin and cranberry breads that will be available for purchase at the cookie walk as well.

If you have any questions, call Betty Croninger at 920-410-5796.

## History of the Salvation Army Red Kettles Program

MONTHLY MISSION FOCUS

Salvation Army

In 1865 General William Booth founded the Salvation Army in London's notorious east End slums with call to action for the more fortunate members of society as they celebrated the holiday season.

William Booth was a Methodist lay preacher in the east end of London which had a lot of poverty, recent immigrants, drunkards, prostitutes and orphans so William Booth had to go out and preach. He was kind of "your typical soapbox preacher". He realized that it's hard to say that there is a loving God out there when people are hungry and cold. Consequently, they began a program called soup, souls and salvation.

Soups, souls and salvation program needed money. The idea of kettle collections started accidentally in San Francisco in 1891 when a local Salvation Army captain named Joseph McFee publicly promised to feed 1000 destitute people near Fisherman's Wharf.

To raise the money needed, McFee found an old lobster pot and came up with the slogan "Keep the pot boiling". He then set up on the waterfront and began to collect money to fund the feeding of 1000 people. Success came...he was able to meet his goal in San Francisco!

The first kettle collections did not include the ringing of the bell. That started in 1900 with a teenage volunteer in New York City named Amelia Kunkel. She was apparently frustrated by the many bankers on Wall Street who walked by and ignored her. So Amelia went to a nearby Woolworth's department store and bought a small bell for ten cents. The rest is history. A great model. The sixteen year old had an idea, tried it, and the ringing of the bell is now an integrated part of the red kettle program as we call it today with a strong tradition here in the United States.

The bells and kettles are now helping crowdfund the less fortunate in 131 different countries including 30 million Americans every year. Roughly 1.8 million Salvation Army members join in around the globe. A typical response from volunteers is found in the words of volunteer bell ringer, 78 year old Ephraim N'Degwa, who said, "I love ringing the bell because I am happy and the people who hear the bell ringing and with me hustling are happy as well!"

It is not just coins and folded up dollar bills being dropped into the famous red kettles these days. You can now use your smart phone with Google or Apple Pay to donate. It is good to remember that a lot of the money that is raised during the Christmas season goes to help units throughout the entire year provide those basic services to make sure that people don't fall through the safety net. The Salvation Army says, "We want to come along side people, as the American people enable us to do, in such an amazing way!"

### Three opportunities to ring bells in church:

1. Sign up for ringing inside our church on Sunday, December 4 from 9:00 - 9:30 before church
2. Sign up for ringing inside our church on Sunday, December 11 from 9:00-9:30 before church
3. Sign up for bell ringing on Sunday, December 11 during Cookie Walk 10:45 - 11:45 after church

OR

Sign up for a spot at Pick and Save South or North as an individual. We encourage you to sign up as an individual. If you do not want to do it yourself online, ask a Mission Team Member and we will help you sign up.

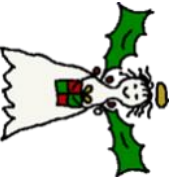
You can always put money, marked for Salvation Army, in the offering plate at any time. They are always in need of help.



# December 2022



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
MA—Martial Arts TOPS—Take Off Pounds Sensibly				<b>1</b> 10:30 a.m. "The Daily Walk" Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA	<b>2</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>4</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship <b>Cookie Walk following worship</b> 10:45-11:45 a.m. . The scripture reading discussion	<b>5</b> 5:30 p.m. MA	<b>6</b> 10 a.m. TOPS	<b>7</b> 5:30-6:30 p.m. MA	<b>8</b> 10:30 a.m.. "The Daily Walk" Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA	<b>9</b> 8 a.m. <b>Bake breads</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>11</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45 a.m.-11:45 a.m. The scripture reading discussion	<b>12</b> 5:30 p.m. MA	<b>13</b> 10 a.m. TOPS 6:30 p.m. Church Council	<b>14</b> 1:30 p.m. Worship 5:30-6:30 p.m. MA	<b>15</b> 10:30 a.m.. "The Daily Walk" Bible Study 5:30 p.m. MA 6:30 p.m. Education	<b>16</b>	<b>17</b>
<b>18</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45-11:45 a.m. The scripture reading discussion	<b>19</b> 5:30 p.m. MA	<b>20</b> 10 a.m. TOPS	<b>21</b> 5:30-6:30 p.m. MA	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>	<b>24</b> 3:00 p.m. Christmas Eve Service
<b>25</b> 9:30 a.m. Worship 10:45-11:45 a.m. The scripture reading discussion	<b>26</b> 5:30 p.m. MA	<b>27</b> 10 a.m. TOPS	<b>28</b> 5:30-6:30 p.m. MA	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>31</b>







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**Change Service Requested**



*The Wesleyan Connection is  
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