

MARCH 2024

# WESLEYAN

THE OFFICIAL NEWSLETTER OF  
WESLEY UMC

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# PASTOR'S COLUMN

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Greetings Members and Friends of Wesley United Methodist Church,

We had some unseasonably warm weather in the month of February that included some severe storms in our area. As Hannah, Haylee, and I sheltered in our basement waiting out the storm, I received text messages from friends across the area checking in to see if we were ok. It's a pretty amazing feeling to have a community of people who checks in on you and makes sure you are ok! Who do you call to check in on when storms roll through the area? Who calls to check on you? Who are the people in our community who might not have anyone checking on them? These are the questions that were running through my head as I laid safely in my bed after the storms had passed through our area.

As followers of Jesus, we have a rich tradition and history of being people who care for those in the community who others would ignore. However, as was discussed in the Gospel of Mark group, the sentiment in the wider community is not as favorable as it once was for the people called Christians. Part of that has to do with the ways that particular groups of Christians have excluded people and caused harm, but I think another part has to do with the fact that we are not fully living into being followers of Christ. Followers of Christ must remember and follow the "Greatest Commandment" as taught by Jesus in Matthew 22:36-40.

*"Teacher, what is the greatest commandment in the Law?"*

*Jesus replied, "You must love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your being, and with all your mind. This is the first and greatest commandment. And the second is like it: You must love your neighbor as you love yourself. All the Law and the Prophets depend on these two commands."*

As we continue our Lenten journey, I hope that we will all do some self-reflection and think about how we are living as Followers of Christ and what changes we might make in our lives to better reflect the life and lessons of Jesus.

The journey of self-reflection and correcting our actions to live more in line with Christ does not stop at Easter. The Easter Season is a time of celebrating all the ways in which resurrection is possible in our lives. We can be in need of rising out of the depth of imprisonment, addiction, poverty, illness, and oppression — not just physically and literally, but also spiritually. What keeps us locked up inside? What holds us back from the joy of life? What binds us, keeping us from the fullness of who God created us to be? Join us in worship starting April 7th for powerful testimonies of courage, kindness, strength, and overcoming — Resurrection Stories — from those who have found "resurrection" in their lives. It might just inspire you to unlock your own rising up!

Blessings,  
Pastor Tammy Scott

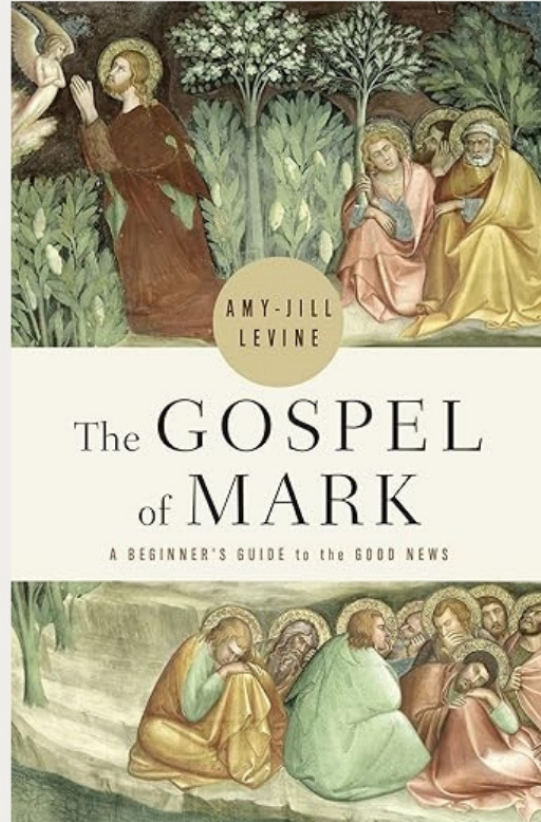
# Gospel of Mark Book Discussion

**Tuesdays at 9:30am  
in person**

February 20 & 27  
March 5, 12, and 26  
April 2

**Thursdays at 7pm  
on Zoom**

February 15, 22, & 29  
March 7, 14, & 21



AURORA FOOD PANTRY

COMMUNITY  
baby  
shower



We Are Collecting the Following Items:



Diapers (all sizes)\*  
Baby Wipes  
Infant Formula  
Feminine Pads  
Adult Diapers\*

\*Open packages accepted

GIVE DIAPERS  
VIRTUALLY;  
SCAN TO  
DONATE  
\$16 ONLINE



1110 Jericho Road, Aurora, IL 60506  
[www.AuroraFoodPantry.org](http://www.AuroraFoodPantry.org)



Wesley United  
Methodist Church will  
be a collection site

Dates Items Will Be Collected:  
March 17-April 7

Drop Off Location:  
Wesley UMC Narthex

Help us care for the children in  
our community!

# WESLEY FINANCIAL UPDATE 2024

Recently, several of us from Wesley attended a leadership workshop in Barrington, where Bishop Schwerin talked about the changes going on in the greater United Methodist Church. **It is definitely a time of great change in the life of our denomination structurally and financially and possibly doctrinally.** For more details see the other article about the Workshop in this newsletter. A brief summary is that the United Methodist Church is facing a 40 to 45% budget reduction and the number of Bishops will drop to 32, 27, or 22 this year (54 before Covid). Our Bishop will now be overseeing Northern Illinois and the Wisconsin Conferences, serving as 1 Bishop for those 2 large areas. The Conferences and local churches are also affected by the ongoing adaptations to a post-Covid life with loss of membership and income.

**Our church, Wesley UMC in Aurora, Illinois and many churches in the Northern IL Conference** are not immune to these changes either. Our building (25,000 sq. ft) is aging and the maintenance expenses are increasing. We have also lost people and income due to Covid and the death of several big givers.

## **\$474,907 TOTAL 2023 EXPENSES**

\$47,461 maintenance and repairs (Total 2020-2022 expenses were \$100,000) *We also want to thank our trustees, Wally Loague and Jim Merk, who donate a tremendous amount of maintenance work every week to help keep our building running.*

\$37,781 utilities

\$27,324 insurance premiums

\$36,503 administrative costs which are postage, internet, supplies, IT, computer software, kitchen supplies, office equipment, etc.

\$15,844 Ministry, Outreach and programming.

\$10,800 Apportionments

\$299,104 Salary/taxes (Our biggest expense is our dedicated staff, a full-time Pastor, 3 part-time ministry and office personnel plus a custodian and an on-call mechanical engineer. We don't want to forget our dedicated unpaid support staff, Meredith Lindgren, Carol Stoffel, Jim Merk.)

## **\$493,209 TOTAL 2023 INCOME** *(Including withdrawals from our endowment fund most months to cover expenses)*

\$277,920 Pledged and Non-Pledged giving

\$12,875 Cost Sharing Income

\$8,805 Apportionment and Misc. Offerings

\$193,609 Endowment & Fundraising Monies

**As the chairperson of the Governing Board, I would like to report we have been working for a long time now to find a way to bridge the gap that is developing in our budget.** We have a wonderful, dedicated staff and we don't want to have to cut staff, but that is a possibility.

**We sought out cost sharing partners to use our building.** During Covid we lost our major partners, People for Childcare and the Fox Valley Special Rec. Our income from these sources has dropped from \$20,000 to \$12,000. We are always seeking and reaching out for new partners and we hope to bring that income back up to \$20,000 or more this year.

At one point in 2023 **we had hoped to renovate and convert our big kitchen into a Ghost Kitchen** for food trucks. The City of Aurora's ordinances specify their food must be prepared in a licensed facility before being sold out of their trucks. There is a large need for these kitchens, but to meet the necessary renovations, health, and safety requirements of the city, the renovation estimate cost came back as \$270,000. That is still a future possibility, but we will have to seek out and apply for grant money and donations. Are you someone who could help with this?

*(Continued on the next page)*

## WESLEY FINANCIAL UPDATE 2024 (continued)

**This January we convened a Fundraising Task Force**, consisting of Kathy Breazeale, Pastor Tammy, Kelly McCleary, Genevieve Akyea, Lore Baker and James Clarke, to brainstorm other avenues of revenue. You will be hearing more about this, but so far we have scheduled 2 crafts shows—April 6th & September 21st (sponsored by the Girl Scouts) and a 5 B's BBQ on Tuesday, April 16th. (*see next page*)

I am asking all friends and family of Wesley to keep their **eyes and ears open for new possibilities of fundraising** and report these ideas to Pastor Tammy or members of the Task Force. As you go about your daily activities of life, work, school, lunch with friends, retirement, if you hear of **an organization or individuals who are looking for space for meetings or a small business space, or family birthday parties, bridal showers, etc., ask them to call the office at Wesley**. Pricing is determined by day, space, and times needed. Rooms are available on all 4 floors. We ask for donations/cost sharing fees.

**We will need everyone, the Governing Board, the Staff, the congregation, working and definitely praying together to accomplish balancing our budget. We pray that with God's help we will not become that statistic that shows Wesley, having had a rich congregational life of 170 years, has had to drastically downsize, or even close. Thank you.**

In your Service, Kathy Breazeale, Chairperson of Wesley Governing Board

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## Report from NIC Leadership Training in Barrington, Jan. 27, 2024

*Notes taken by Kathy Breazeale at Bishop Schwerin's Address*

Kathy Breazeale, Bob McKnight, Herb John and Pastor Tammy Scott attended from Wesley UMC.

- The church needs to understand the importance and have understanding of AI (Artificial Intelligence). We need to learn as it will impact us. It is seen as the new literacy.
- The UMC will be having massive budget cuts – 40 to 45%. 20 years ago, there were 55 bishops in the U.S. By the end of 2024 that could be 32, 27 or even 22.
- At the end of 2019, 32% of churches in the Northern IL Conference had 35 members or less, by the end of 2022 51% of the churches had 35 or less.
- The bishops will need to make the new system work. They will be setting new goals. Who needs a full-time appointment? Looking at church sizes, who pays apportionments, pension obligations, water bills? Probably considering longer term appointments. 71% of pastoral appointment in place now have been for 3 years.
- NIC and Wisconsin will share 1 bishop. Other conferences will be consolidating. This will be creating a new system of management with different support staffing (who actually know the local churches and pastors), as 1 bishop can't be available to the hundreds of miles of territory and churches involved in collaboration on a daily or even a weekly basis.
- The bishop expects regionalization will come into play. The UMC will become less U.S.-centric. (Ex. Africa will handle its own issues, Europe handles its own, etc.) UMC will not be so dependent on the General Conference. Bishop Schwerin feels it will be hard, but the hurtful anti-gay language in the Discipline will probably be removed at General Conference this year.
- Immigration and migration and the needed hospitality for all these people (estimated to be 65 million on the move in next few years) will be a struggle. More multicultural leadership will be needed. Mission will be from everywhere to everywhere, but remember, Jesus is with the church.
- Acknowledge the world is changing, what we are doing is changing, we cannot prop up what was. If we don't focus on changing, we will be left behind or non-existent. What used to work, isn't, and that can create chaos. We must experiment and learn from failures. A new structure is emerging...
- Bishop Schwerin's Advice...Stay with the UMC – stay, pray and help.

# Upcoming Fundraising Events



WESLEY UMC  
**SPRING CRAFT FAIR**

14 N. MAY ST., AURORA, IL 60506

SATURDAY  
APRIL 6TH  
9AM-2PM

HANDMADE ITEMS  
• JEWELRY • SWEET TREATS  
• AND MORE  
**\$2 ENTRY FEE**

QUESTIONS? CALL KELLY AT 630-291-2796

The graphic features a colorful illustration of a craft fair booth with a pink and yellow striped awning. The booth displays various handmade items like plates, a pitcher, and a teapot. A smaller cart in the foreground shows jewelry. The background is light blue with colorful bunting flags at the top.

## Mark your calendars!

### Crafters/Vendors **WANTED**

**Where:** Wesley United Methodist Church—14 N. May St. Aurora, IL

**When:** Saturday, April 6, 2024 from 9am-2pm

**Presented By:** Wesley Fundraising Task Force

**Cost:** \$40 per table  
or \$35 for a table if a door prize is provided

**Any Questions? Contact:**  
Kelly McCleary (630)291-2796 or [disneyfreak13@aol.com](mailto:disneyfreak13@aol.com)

Tickets  
on sale soon!  
Tell your friends  
and neighbors!

## Spring 5B's BBQ

TUESDAY APRIL 16TH

4:30-6:30PM

**Presale \$15**

**Day of \$16**

**Hot Dogs \$7**

# WEDNESDAY NIGHT GATHERING

You're welcome to join us for dinner and multigenerational activities on the 1st, 3rd, and 5th (when applicable) Wednesdays of every month.

These are the events planned in March:

## March 6 - Science Night!

Dinner is served from 6-7 pm then Jim Merk will challenge us in bridge building from 7-8 pm! All ages are welcome to build the strongest bridge possible!

## March 20 - Easter Brunch, Easter Crafts and a Glow in the Dark Egg Hunt

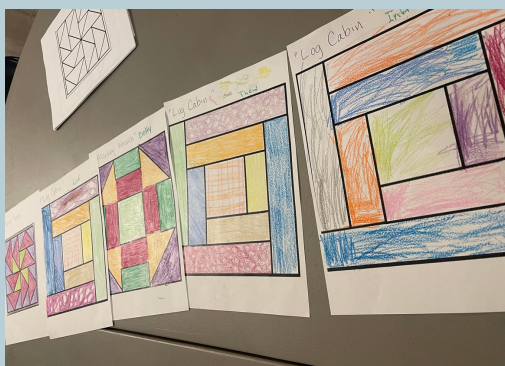
Here's what we've been up to this past month:



### COLD WEATHER KITS



### VALENTINE'S DAY CARDS



### UNDERGROUND RAILROAD QUILTS



# United Women in Faith had a busy February.



United Women in Faith

The **Tuesday Crafters** facilitated a Wednesday night dinner craft time helping participants make over 40 Valentine's Day cards. (see more on next page)

**Prayer Shawls** will be blessed during the in-person worship March 3. They are in the wooden box outside the office and are for you to take and share with people needing comfort and healing. Just make sure that you sign the book with the shawl number, to whom you are giving it, and the date. We thank the knitters in our congregation for these gifts.

Several members of our unit will be participating in the **World Federation of Methodist and Uniting Church Women's Observance Day, March 9**, in Chicago. This meeting brings together women from the African Methodist Episcopal, African Methodist Episcopal Zion, Christian Methodist Episcopal and United Methodist Churches' women's missionary groups.

**We are looking forward to sharing United Women in Faith Sunday worship with you on April 14**



Members of the Hannah Circle that meets the third Tuesday of the month at 1:30 pm.: Rev. Tammy Scott, Lynn Burnett, Vicki Martin, Kathy Breazeale, Sharon Livingston, and Emmy Lou John holding the latest copy of "Response", the United Women in Faith magazine. (not photographed: Ruth Jamison)

Emmy Lou John, Mari Curless, Shirley McKnight and Lekha Cristanujaya of the Susanna Circle, that meets the third Tuesday of the month at 7 pm, are in front of Dr. Emoto's ice crystals.



Both United Women in Faith Circles met Feb. 20 and our program was on "Living Water". We saw a set of photographs that were produced by Dr. Masaru Emoto who studied the properties of water and how it can hold vibrations. Water was exposed to pleasant words/music and frozen and photographed and showed beautiful crystals. Then water was exposed to mean-spirited words and the frozen crystals were misshapen. We are 70% water so what happens when mean-spirited words are spoken to another person or to a baby that is about 90% water?

You are invited to check out his work to see the difference in the crystals when the words "THANK YOU" or "YOU FOOL" are spoken. <https://www.emotopeaceproject.net/water-crystal-gallery>

**Our next Circle meetings will be held on Tuesday, March 19th.  
Hannah at 1pm. and Susannah at 7 pm. and in the Parlor at Wesley UMC.**





Some Crafters met and made Valentine's Day cards for our home bound members which were then signed at church by the congregation.



Laurel Gilbert is signing cards after church along with Emmy Lou John.

When the Tuesday Crafters met on Feb. 13, we made small book marks.  
 Photo L to R: Meredith Lindgren, Vicki Martin, Emmy Lou John & Mari Curless.



Crafters will be meeting on **Tuesday, March 12 at 7pm** using the theme **ALL THINGS EASTER AND SPRING.** All persons are invited to come and share their crafting passions.

# Bible Sunday

On Sunday, February 25th, our 3rd and 4th Graders received **Bibles** and **honey**! What's the significance of the honey you might be wondering...well Psalm 119:103 says, *Your word is so pleasing to my taste buds—it's sweeter than honey in my mouth!*



## Congratulations

Lucy Jackson

Hannah Scott

Haylee Scott



Join us for  
**Get to Know  
Your Bibles**  
Sunday March 3rd  
11:30am-1pm

The event is geared toward children and families, but all are welcome to attend!

Bring your favorite Bible! We will spend time getting to know our Bibles: Table of Contents, Old vs. New Testament, maps, etc. We will have some games and activities to help us learn more about what's in the Bible and how we might use it. A light lunch will be served.





Camille Sapnu 3/3  
Monica Winfree 3/5  
Rich Brown 3/5  
Nancy Verbic 3/10  
Lin Waid 3/13  
Ben Smith 3/14

Hannah Scott 3/17  
Haylee Scott 3/17  
Joan Biltgen 3/21  
Shirley McKnight 3/22  
Jim Gilbert 3/23  
Iliana Rigaud 3/29  
Sanath Cristanujaya 3/30

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## SAVE THE DATE!

We are planning an Arts Camp for June 24th –27th!  
We are in need of volunteers for leading activities, providing meals, and donating supplies!

Contact Michelle to get involved [michellecuriel.wumc@gmail.com](mailto:michellecuriel.wumc@gmail.com)

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Please join us for  
Girl Scout Sunday,  
March 10th at 10:30am

Celebrating the powerful ties between Girl Scouting and faith. Honoring Girl Scouts and volunteers who make our world a better place.

# DISCIPLESHIP



## **Let's Go Adult Fellowship—ALL ARE WELCOME!**

Let's Go is a social group open to all adult members and friends of Wesley. All Are Welcome. Our Groundhog Day Chili Party at the home of Dave and Lois Caldwell on February 10 was great fun. We tried three different chilis and had plenty of other food to ease the heat!

**Our next event will be our annual St. Patrick's Day party at the home of Ralph and Kathy Breazeale on Saturday, March 16. The party starts at 6 pm. Bring your favorite Irish-themed or green food item to share, along with your favorite beverage and get ready for a fun time!**

**Don't forget the wearin' of the green! Everyone is Irish on St. Patrick's Day!**

If anyone would like to host a get-together, or if you have any ideas for get-togethers, please contact me. If you are interested in attending future Let's Go functions and aren't on the list, please contact Meredith Lindgren, 630-788-6911 or [psalmmom418@gmail.com](mailto:psalmmom418@gmail.com). I will gladly add you to the list!



## **Bad Girls Bible/Book Study**

Women of Wesley and friends, do you love to read? Are you looking for a group of people with whom to discuss really good books? Then check out the Bad Girls Bible/Book Study! We have read some great books over the past many years and our discussions are quite lively! **Bad Girls will be meeting**

**Wednesday, March 13, 2024, at the home of Laurel Gilbert. We will meet at 6 pm for a delicious soup dinner. Discussion of our book begins at 7 pm.** We began our study of "The Gospel of Mark: A Beginner's Guide to the Good News" by Amy-Jill Levine and have discussed Chapter 1. We will discuss Chapter 2 at Laurel's. We will meet on Wednesday, March 27 at the Holmstad, hosted by Sue Clark and discuss Chapter 3. Books are still available in the church office for \$15. This is the same study that Pastor Tammy is hosting during Lent. If you are interested in joining us, contact Meredith Lindgren, 630-788-6911 or [psalmmom418@gmail.com](mailto:psalmmom418@gmail.com).



## **WANTED: READERS AND GREETERS!**

Are you looking for ways to serve at Wesley? Do you like to read? Are you friendly and welcoming? Then I have a job for you! I could use more readers for Sunday worship and for the online service, and I would love to have a few more greeters to welcome friends and guests each Sunday. I provide the readings each week for the readers, along with instructions on recording for the online service. Help is available for those who don't know how to record. Readers need to be at church on their assigned Sunday by 10:10 to go over details and do a sound check. It's that simple! Greeters are stationed near the doors to welcome people as they come in and offer any assistance that is needed. For those visiting our church for the first time, it is so helpful to be greeted by a friendly face! Greeters need to be at church by 10 to greet and direct people to worship. If you are interested in one or both of these ministries, please contact Meredith Lindgren at 630-788-6911, or [psalmmom418@gmail.com](mailto:psalmmom418@gmail.com).

Or see me at church on Sundays!

# SMALL GROUPS

## Bad Girls Bible Study

Meredith Lindgren  
630-788-6911  
psalmmom418@gmail.com

## Hesed House

Bob McKnight  
630-896-5287  
redwoodcats@sbcglobal.net

## Let's Go Fellowship

Meredith Lindgren  
630-788-6911  
psalmmom418@gmail.com

## Knitters & Knotters

Claudia Smith & Betty Aquize  
Claudia: 312-523-6688  
Betty: 331-222-6364

## Mug Club

Rich Brown  
630-881-7931  
rwb7247@gmail.com

## NDY Group

Lynn Burnett  
le.burnett@yahoo.com

## Special Events Coordinator

Lynn Burnett  
le.burnett@yahoo.com

## Faithlinkers

(held on Mondays at 7pm CST via Zoom)  
Emmy Lou John  
630-264-2892  
emmyloujohn@yahoo.com

## Tuesday Crafters

(held on the second Tuesday of each month)  
Emmy Lou John  
630-264-2892  
emmyloujohn@yahoo.com

## United Methodist Men

Herb John  
630-264-2892  
herbjohn@ymail.com

## United Women in Faith

Emmy Lou John  
630-264-2892  
emmyloujohn@yahoo.com

## Prayer Shawl Ministry

TBD

## Wesley Gardeners

Meredith Lindgren  
630-788-6911  
psalmmom418@gmail.com

## Wesley Golfers

Ralph Breazeale  
630-897-6657  
jrbreeze47@comcast.net

## Yoga Classes

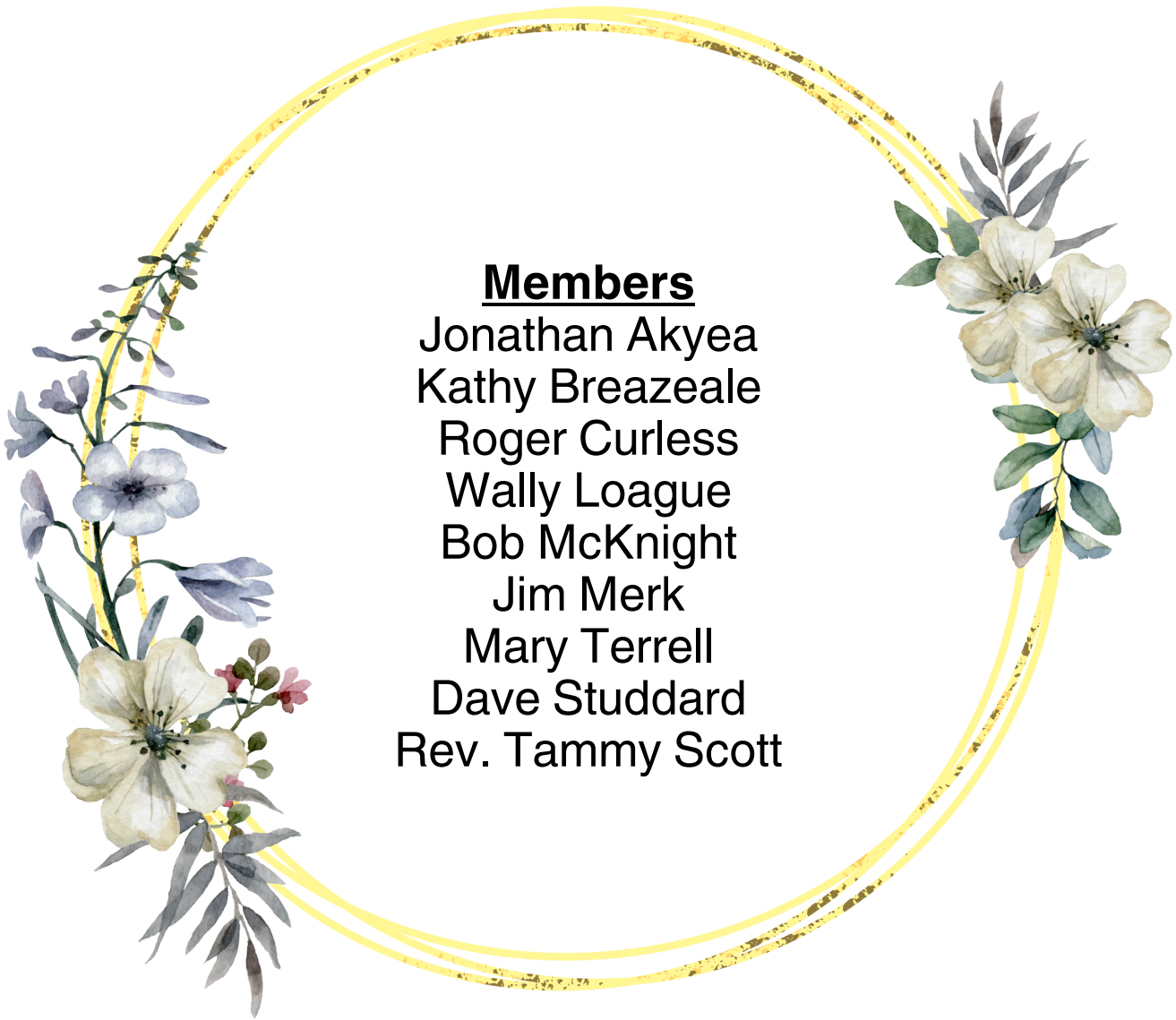
Ann Merk  
630-643-3115  
asm52@yahoo.com



Photos from Let's Go Groundhog's Day Party

# GOVERNING BOARD

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## Members

Jonathan Akyea  
Kathy Breazeale  
Roger Curless  
Wally Loague  
Bob McKnight  
Jim Merk  
Mary Terrell  
Dave Studdard  
Rev. Tammy Scott

The next Governing Board meeting is  
**Tuesday, March 6th at 6:30pm** on Zoom.

# STAFF



Rev. Tammy Scott  
Lead Pastor  
revtammyscott@gmail.com



Thew Elliot  
Director of Worship  
thew.wumc@gmail.com



Michelle Curiel  
Asst. Director of Worship and Dir.  
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Jennifer Pawlowski  
Office Manager  
jennifer.wumc@gmail.com



Sean Moore  
A-V Editor & Tech  
sean.wumc@gmail.com



Claire Agoro  
Custodian

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# COORDINATORS



Carol Stoffel  
Congregational Care



Meredith Lindgren  
Worship

# Holy Week at Wesley

## **Sunday, March 24th Palm Sunday**

Worship 9:30am (online); 10:30am in person

## **Thursday, March 28th Maundy Thursday**

Simple Dinner 6pm; Worship 7pm in person

## **Friday, March 29th Good Friday**

Worship 7pm in person

## **Saturday, March 30th**

Easter Vigil Worship 7pm  
at St. David's Episcopal Church

## **Sunday, March 31st Easter Sunday**

Worship 9:30am (online); 10:30am in person

### **Maundy Thursday:**

As we recall the last meal Jesus shared with his friends before he was handed over to the authorities of the day, we'll share a simple meal and tell each other the story of that evening. We'll end with communion shared at tables.

### **Good Friday:**

In this service of remembrance, we'll reflect on events of our own time as we connect them to each of the "seven last words" uttered by Christ as he approached and endured his death at Golgotha. This service includes time for introspection, sharing, and candle lighting.

# WELCOME BACK JENNY!



We are excited to announce that Jenny Pawlowski has accepted our offer to return to Wesley as our Office Manager! Jenny was an integral part of our staff and making sure everything ran smoothly at Wesley! We could not be happier to welcome her back! Please stop by or call and welcome Jenny back personally!

## **NEW Church Office Hours**

as of February 26, 2024

Tuesdays 9am-2pm

Wednesday 9am-Noon

Thursdays 9am-2pm