

wesleyan

APRIL 2023 EDITION



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Pastor's Column

We are living in extreme times. The level of rhetoric and escalating violence in our country and around the world is concerning. Polarization is running rampant among politicians, church folk, neighbors and throughout all of society. It's a troubling reality for all of us.

The resurrection of Jesus, the Good News of Easter, took place during an extreme period. The Jews were living under an oppressive, occupied empire of the Roman Government. Rebellions and wars were vast and many. And Jesus died a violent death at the hands of the state.

For over 2000 years, even going back to Old Testament times, God's children have been struggling to build a beloved community. They always get tripped up by human violence and oppression, often at the hands of extremists. People flourish, not at the poles or at extreme homogeneity but within the context of diversity, challenge and possibility. And yet, over and over again, history repeats itself as we struggle to embrace all of God's good creation. I often find myself saying, "We've been down this road before and it doesn't end well for anyone."

So, what are the steps towards building a diverse, less polarized and loving faithful community? What is required of us to be the beloved community?

During the months of April and May we will be exploring this topic: *Building a Beloved Community – living between the extremes*. We will explore ways to balance between judgement and forgiveness, between varying beliefs including doubt, explore ways to remove obstacles and build foundations, explore the difference between challenge and oppression and finally, participate in celebrating the gifts of individuals and community. We will also get to hear from United Women in Faith who always stand as an example of beloved community.

I hope you will join us during this Easter Season to celebrate the beloved community that Jesus calls us to build. Hope to see you in worship!

Happy Easter!

A handwritten signature in cursive script, appearing to read "John".

Holy Week

Holy Week Events

- | | |
|-------|---|
| 04 02 | Palm Sunday Service: 10:30am |
| 04 05 | Wednesday Night Gathering —
Dinner & Egg Hunt/Easter Crafts: 6pm |
| 04 06 | Maundy Thursday —
Soup & Bread Supper: 6pm
Communion Service: 7pm |
| 04 07 | Good Friday Service: 7pm |
| 04 09 | Easter Service: 10:30am |

Farewell to Pastor John

You're Invited!

What: Farewell Dinner for Pastor John

When: Saturday, June 3rd 5:00pm

Where: Gathering Place



After serving for 10 years as our Pastor, John is moving to Louisville, KY, to follow his wife Alison's new job opportunity working with refugee re-settlement. We are certainly going to miss him and want to celebrate and thank him for his ministry at Wesley and his outreach and connections he has made in the city of Aurora.

We will be having a Farewell Dinner for Pastor John on Saturday, June 3rd at 5:00pm at the church. Everyone is welcome and invited. A light dinner of sandwiches, salads and dessert will be provided. Reservations will be quite helpful in determining how many to prepare for. A link to the reservation page is included here <https://churchteams.com/m/Register.asp?a=ZSs0OFINL21mSVU9>

We will also be asking everyone to create a personal thank you note or letter to honor and thank John for how he related to or helped you in your faith journey at Wesley, or any funny or good memories you have from his time here. Make it creative. Make it simple. Make it full of love. Start sending them in now. These can be submitted digitally to Jenny in the office at jennifer.wumc@gmail.com or can be dropped off or mailed to the church office, 14 N. May St., Aurora, IL 60506. We would need these by May 10, 2023.

We would also like to have everyone look through any pictures you might have of John involved in church activities – weddings, Trunk or Treat, Confirmation, meetings, preaching, gardening, washing dishes, setting up tables – any pictures that show him at work in our midst. These can also be sent digitally to Jenny in the office – or a hard copy to be dropped off or mailed to the church office. We want to fill a scrapbook full of memories for him and Alison and their family. Our crafter/scrapbooking group is going to be working on this book and would need them by May 10, 2023.

We will also be taking a love offering for John to thank him financially. A check can be mailed or dropped off at the church – or there is now a link on the church website where you can designate an amount of money to the “Love Offering” category.

We hope everyone will participate in some way to show love and appreciation to John for being the 2nd longest serving pastor in Wesley's history. We will miss him!

Meet Pastor Tammy

Rev. Tammy Scott

Rev. Tammy Scott is the oldest of three sisters who grew up in Lockport, IL. From a very young age she was active in Sunday school and later, youth group at First UMC Lockport. Rev. Scott majored in communications at The University of Illinois at Chicago which has served her well in ministry. After college, Rev. Scott answered her call to ordained ministry which she realized had been present for many years. In 2006, Tammy earned her Master of Divinity degree at Garrett-Evangelical Theological Seminary in Evanston. She was commissioned a Probationary Deacon in 2006 and ordained a Deacon in Full Connection in 2009. In January 2018, Tammy's call to ministry shifted and she began to pursue ordination as an Elder. On April 24, 2021, Tammy was ordained an elder in The United Methodist Church.



Rev. Scott has served churches in Joliet, Wilmette, Bolingbrook, Minooka, Naperville, and Sugar Grove. Her ministry areas of focus have included children, youth, families, administration, leading Bible studies, as well as confirmation, in addition to preaching, and participating in pastoral care. Pastor Tammy currently serves as the Lead Pastor at Sugar Grove UMC in Sugar Grove, IL. Tammy is passionate about including all persons in the life of the church from the youngest to the oldest and everyone in between.

Beyond the local church, Tammy has served at both the district and conference level. She is currently a member of the Prairie South DCOM and the Chair of the NIC Conference Council on Finance & Administration (CCFA). She has also led several workshops at district training events on stewardship, finance, and youth ministry. Tammy also served as one of the clergy leaders for the NIC Residency Programs for clergy during their provisional years and currently mentors a clergy candidate who is working toward ordination.

Pastor Tammy is mom to identical twin girls, Hannah & Haylee, who are currently in 2nd grade. Much of Tammy's free time is spent supporting her daughters in their favorite activities: cheerleading and Girl Scouts. Tammy's parents, Tom & Joan Biltgen, moved in with her and her daughters in February 2020 to offer additional care and support, little did they know how important that would be once the pandemic began. Pastor Tammy's favorite things include spending time with her daughters, nieces and nephews, and sisters whenever possible. She is a lifelong Cubs fan, a former triathlete and long-distance runner who has exchanged long runs for in-home workouts 4-5 days a week, and loves to be outdoors as much as possible in the warm months of the year.



Preschool Board

After 70 years of educating youth, the preschool of Wesley United Methodist Church in Aurora closed in March 2022. The school's legacy will continue to be felt with grants totaling \$2,000 to help church staffers provide youth and family programs.

On Sunday, March 26, Paula Loague, preschool board president, presented \$1,000 checks to Michelle Curiel and Thew Elliott to help fund their work with the children of Aurora through Wesley summer programming and Citizen Arts. The other preschool board members are Lynn Burnett, Kathy Breazeale, Shirley McKnight, Carolyn Jones, Laurie Studdard, Kelly McCleary, Marilyn Ruby, Vicki Martin, Carol Stoffel and Judy Brown.



United Women in Faith Book Club

Our new United Women in Faith Book Club met for the first time on Wednesday, March 29th to discuss Kristin Hannah's The Four Winds.



United Women in Faith

Sarah Swanson presented the program Growing Seeds to both United Women in Faith Circles last month. It was based on the parable of the Sower found in Matthew 13:1-9. Joining her for the Hannah Circle were her daughters, Elena and Lora.

The next Circle meetings will be held on April 18. Hannah at 1:30 pm and Susanna at 7 pm. The program will be on PEACEMAKERS AND JUSTICE SEEKERS.

SOUL CARE RETREAT

Wesley's United Women in Faith (formerly United Methodist Women) are excited to be inviting women to participate in our Soul Care Retreat. It is being held on April 22, 2023, from 9:15 a.m. to 2 p.m. at the Prestbury Club House in Sugar Grove.

Some of the activities we will be doing are: chair yoga meditations with Amy Jackson; a presentation on hair care; and card making. The box lunch will be a choice of either a sandwich, a salad or a half and half combination from Panera.

It will be a good time for you to personally meet our new pastor Rev. Tammy Scott who will be leading our closing Communion Service.

The two photos below are of some of the women who attended the Susanna Circle and their Mosaic Seed art work. Pictured are Mari Curless, Meredith Lindgren, Emmy Lou John and Sarah Swanson who presented the program "Growing Seeds."



United
Women
in Faith



Hannah Circle: Pictured standing are members: Lynn Burnett, Lois Scott, Emmy Lou John, Wendy Evans, Sharon Livingston, Ruth Jamison. In front are Elena, Sarah Swanson and Lora.

Guest Column by Sean Moore

Reflections on the Need to Create a Better Future

Wesley UMC Aurora's message is refreshing in comparison to my experience with other churches and Christianity at large. I went to two Churches when growing up. These two churches were the types that were ultimately the reason why I stopped attending Church. I will describe them to you. The first Church was in Ohio. I'd go there every few months when I visited my cousins. I distinctly remember the Pastor. He was a great storyteller, and I always left his services feeling inspired to be more kind. He often spoke of compassion: how we must love our family and friends. As I grew up, I went to church less and less, but I still held a fond image of him and his message. However, as I've grown up, and see the glaringly obvious structural failings of society to be loving, to be Christlike, I find it massively disappointing, how this man, clearly kind, well-meaning, and passionate, never suggested any aspect of Christianity and its relationship to things outside *personal life*. I'm aware that many enjoy Church as a solace from the political nightmare we currently live in. However, if we practice radical love, inclusivity, and social justice, these behaviors transcend politics, and are in themselves Christlike.

I don't mean to completely disparage the work of this Pastor. They did service, they did charity, and they certainly had a positive influence on me. However, I critique him because he can take it. Now, I believe it is the duty of the Church to simply move past treating the symptoms of problems (poverty, hunger, racism, violence), and treat the core problems. Although not all of us will agree on what needs to be changed, there is a growing sentiment that there are structural problems in the U.S. and the world. If your Church's message seeks to perturb nothing except an individual in their personal life, it is an implied acceptance of the status quo.

The other type of Church I attended was my Grandpa's church. It was very different from the first. His Church would actively grow a sense of fear amongst the audience. They cultivate a fear of the Other, and use this fear to defend the status quo. In essence, they say: We need to defend what we have, ourselves, our values, our current systems. The Other threatens the way things are. What these audiences see as their way of life, they might describe it as "simple", or "honest", or "anti-woke". They see divisions between people as "natural", and suffering is "deserved". As John has exposed with his recent messages on Substitutionary Atonement, these ideas that conservative Christians defend as "natural" or "Christian Values" are something that was constructed at a very particular point in time in history. In no way is it eternal, natural, or Christlike. It may be Christian, because it's the dogma that certain Churches have promoted, but that doesn't mean that it is what Jesus would have practiced. That's why I say Christlike rather than Christian. These ideas which govern the way most people see the world may have been implanted through the idea of substitutionary atonement. This idea that we suffer because we are sinners is deeply embedded in the psyche of the U.S.. This is where the idea "pull yourself up by your bootstraps" comes from. Or,

Guest Column by Sean Moore

in the mind of conservatives, for example "immigrants should suffer because they don't belong here anyway". These ideas mirror ideas taught historically by Christian ideas of atonement. This is an idea so widely held, that most of us, myself included, tend to think of it as a fundamental part of reality. We *must* suffer because that is what life is. It's like the water a fish swims in, it's all around us. It's an incredible and necessary leap to undo this deep-seated thought. The idea of substitutionary atonement is an idea that arose along the course of human history: it was invented by a group with particular need for power. It is not how Jesus lived his life, or what he taught. Once we reach this understanding, we are capable of moving past this idea. We can imagine a different future, where Christianity stands not for "going back to Christian family values", but imagining a radically more Christlike future for Society.

For me, this is what is different about Wesley UMC Aurora. Sometimes I feel like I was thrust into a world already moving at such a breakneck speed that I feel overwhelmed, like how did we get here? I don't even know how to engage with the world, it feels like everyone is speaking different languages and about different things. There's so much knowledge and connectivity, but no meaningful meaning-making. The *modus operandi* at Wesley UMC is inclusion and revolution. Both of these ideas are consistently reflected in the content of the message every Sunday, music lyrics, and Generations Together meetings, to name a few. I hope that us at Wesley can continue to grow and partner with other groups that prioritize social change for the better.



Discipleship

Mug Club



Enjoy a cup of coffee and conversation. This is a social group of men with lots to talk about and too much time on our hands. We have not had too many solutions, but we've had lots of fellowship. We invite you to join us! For more details call or email Rich Brown at 630-881-7931 or rwb7247@gmail.com.

Every Thursday at 9am at Sugar Grove Café, 1942 Rte. 30, Sugar Grove

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! Several people attended our annual St. Patrick's Day Party on March 17. We had a great time wearing the green and eating Irish food. We have no further plans for a future get-together yet, but hope to get together again before summer gets here, so stay tuned for information. 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. I will gladly add you to the list!

Bad Girls Bible/Book Study

Bad Girls will be meeting at the home of Paula Loague on Wednesday, April 12, 2023. We will have a soup dinner at 6 pm, followed by a book discussion. We are reading the book "Native: Identity, Belonging, and Rediscovering God" by Kaitlin B. Curtice. Here is what Nadia Bolz-Weber (author, speaker, and theologian) said about this book: "In Native, Curtice takes the reader along as she bravely weaves together her spiritual, tribal, religious, cultural, and familial history into a cord that anchors her as she makes sense of herself, her world, and her identity. After reading this book, I may just touch a tree now and again and see it as prayer. I'm so grateful for Curtice's voice."

If you are interested in joining us for fun, fellowship, and great book discussions, contact Meredith Lindgren, 630-788-6911 or psalmmom418@gmail.com.

Discipleship

Wesley Garden Club

Calling all gardeners! Our Wesley gardens are in need of some TLC after a long winter. As the weather warms up and the ground thaws, there will be much work to do to get the gardens back into tip-top shape. I anticipate getting out into the gardens in April and I'd love to work with others on tidying things up! With many hands we can bring our beautiful gardens back into beautiful bloom, bringing joy to many as they enter our building. If you have questions, please call Meredith Lindgren at 630-788-6911, or email me at psalmmom418@gmail.com.

NDY (Not Dead Yet) Group

Remember this group is NOT just for Wesley members. We normally meet for lunch the last Friday of each month. All are welcome! Contact Lynn Burnett at le.burnett@yahoo.com for details on our next meeting.



Fox Valley Brass Band

Save the date for the following:

Brass Americana—Fox Valley Brass Band Concert

Sunday, June 25, 2023 at 3pm at Simmons Park (1201 E. Indian Trail)

Come soak up the summer sun with the Fox Valley Brass Band and enjoy show tunes, cinematic favorites and patriotic melodies! Gershwin, Porter, Sondheim, Williams, and more!!! Donations to Wesley.

Outreach

Mutual Ground Meal Train Dinner

Dear Wesley Friends & Family,

We provided a catered taco bar dinner to the Mutual Ground shelter residents on Wednesday, March 22nd. Thanks for your support in helping to provide a meal for the residents!



Meetups

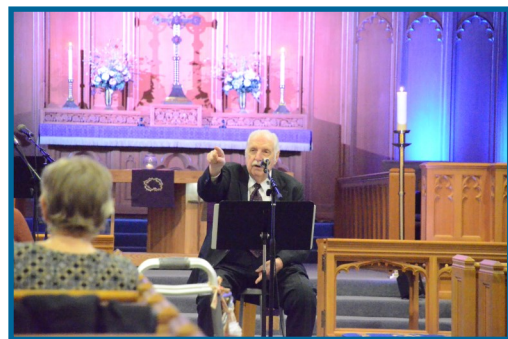
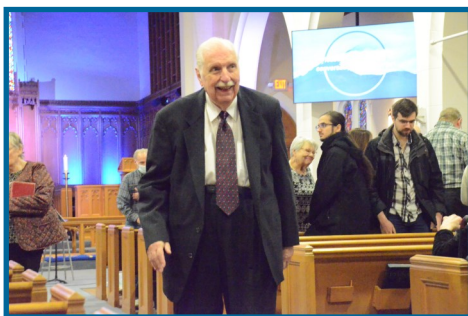


Wesleyans Together in Florida!

Carol Stoffel visited Larry Miller and Jude Dunn in Marco Island, FL.

Guest Pastor

Wesley was blessed to have Rev. Leo Waynick
preach for us on Sunday, March 26th!



Children & Families

This past month we explored some fiber arts through weaving and making cat teasers to donate to our local shelters! Thanks to all who joined us for dinner and activities.

Join in on the fun coming up:

Wednesday Night Gathering—April 5th 6-8pm:

Easter Party! - Join us for a glow in the dark egg hunt and easter crafts for all ages!

Summer Programming

We need your help! In order to continue the work we do at the Meals on the Move Program at Blackhawk Park and Summer Camp, we need all the volunteers we can get. Please consider ways you can be involved.

Meals on the Move:

Every Tuesday and Thursday from 1-2:30pm from the months of June to August, Wesley sets up a tent with arts & crafts, outdoor games, learning activities, and sports equipment for families attending the lunch program provided by the Northern IL Food Bank at Blackhawk park. We need volunteers who are willing to get to know our neighbors through conversation and through interacting with children. All abilities are able to help! There is room for all to help. Volunteers can simply engage in conversation with neighbors, or help set up our tent and games. Contact Michelle with any questions.

Art & Soul Camp:

This summer we are holding an Arts Camp centered around self love and communal love. Art & Soul Camp will be held from **July 10 - 13 from 5-8pm**. We need kitchen volunteers, crew leaders, station leaders from art, culinary, and music/movement. There is room for all abilities to help. Please consider ways you can be a part of providing a free and fun camp for our neighborhood! Contact Michelle with any questions.

Girl Scouts



Pancake Breakfast Fundraiser

Help Alaina Get to Go to GSUSA National Convention



Wesley United Methodist Church
Gathering Space
Saturday, April 8 8:00am to 11:00 am

Pancakes , Biscuits and Gravy, Sausage, Bacon, Fruit, Juice, Coffee
and Milk

\$7.00 Adult \$5.00 Child or \$25 Family

Dutch Auction \$1.00 a bid or 6 bids for \$5.00

Online purchase can be Zelled to Dara Nelson @(630)430-2207
UseAuction or Pancake Breakfast

April Birthdays

Paula Loague 4/6

Bob McKnight 4/7

Ann Merk 4/7

Cindy Whitehall 4/7

Donna Doubek 4/8

Ziyad Yacoubou 4/9

Lora Swanson 4/14

Meredith Lindgren 4/18

Henry Clarke 4/26

Billie Sears 4/27

JT Connell 4/28

Delia Akyea 4/28

Financial Update

	1/1—3/15/23	Annual Budget for 2023
Pledge and Non-Pledge Giving	58,658.64	280,899.96
Other Income	35,321.82	188,979.12
Expenses		
Worship	786.41	8,049.96
Discipleship	546.07	4,350.00
Outreach	922.44	3,500.00
Operating Costs	39,344.00	127,009.12
Salaries & Benefits	64,522.77	288,244.80
Apportionments	0	37,000.00

Questions? Please contact Jennifer Pawlowski, Financial Secretary, at jennifer.wumc@gmail.com.

Staff



Rev. John Bell
Senior Pastor



Thew Elliott
Director of
Traditional Worship



Michelle Curiel
Director of Praise &
Worship /Children & Family



Jennifer Pawlowski
Administrative Coordinator



Sean Moore
Audio-Visual Editor
and Technician



Claire Agoro
Custodian

Coordinators

Jennifer Pawlowski
Administration & Outreach
(pictured above)



Carol Stoffel
Congregational Care



Meredith Lindgren
Worship

Small Groups

Bad Girls Bible Study

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

Fine Arts Committee

TBD

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

Prayer Shawl Ministry

TBD

Special Events Coordinator

Lynn Burnett
le.burnett@yahoo.com

Faithlinkers (held on Mondays at 10am CST via Zoom)

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

Tuesday Crafters (held on the second Tuesday of each month via Zoom)

TBD
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

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

Governing Board

Bob McKnight

Kathy Breazeale

Wally Loague

Jim Merk

Mary Terrell

DiAnn Wiley

Roger Curless

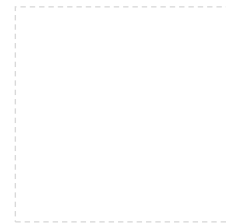
Rev. John Bell

Jonathan Akyea



Wesley
UNITED
METHODIST
CHURCH

14 N May St, Aurora IL 60506-3867
Return Service Requested



14 North May Street, Aurora IL 60506-3867
630.896.1033 | wesleyumcaurora.org

Office Hours: 8am-12pm

Scan QR code
to donate

Remember to "Like" our Facebook page at Wesley UMC in Aurora, IL and our NEW
Instagram Page at Wesley UMC Aurora
to stay up to date on everything that is happening at Wesley!

