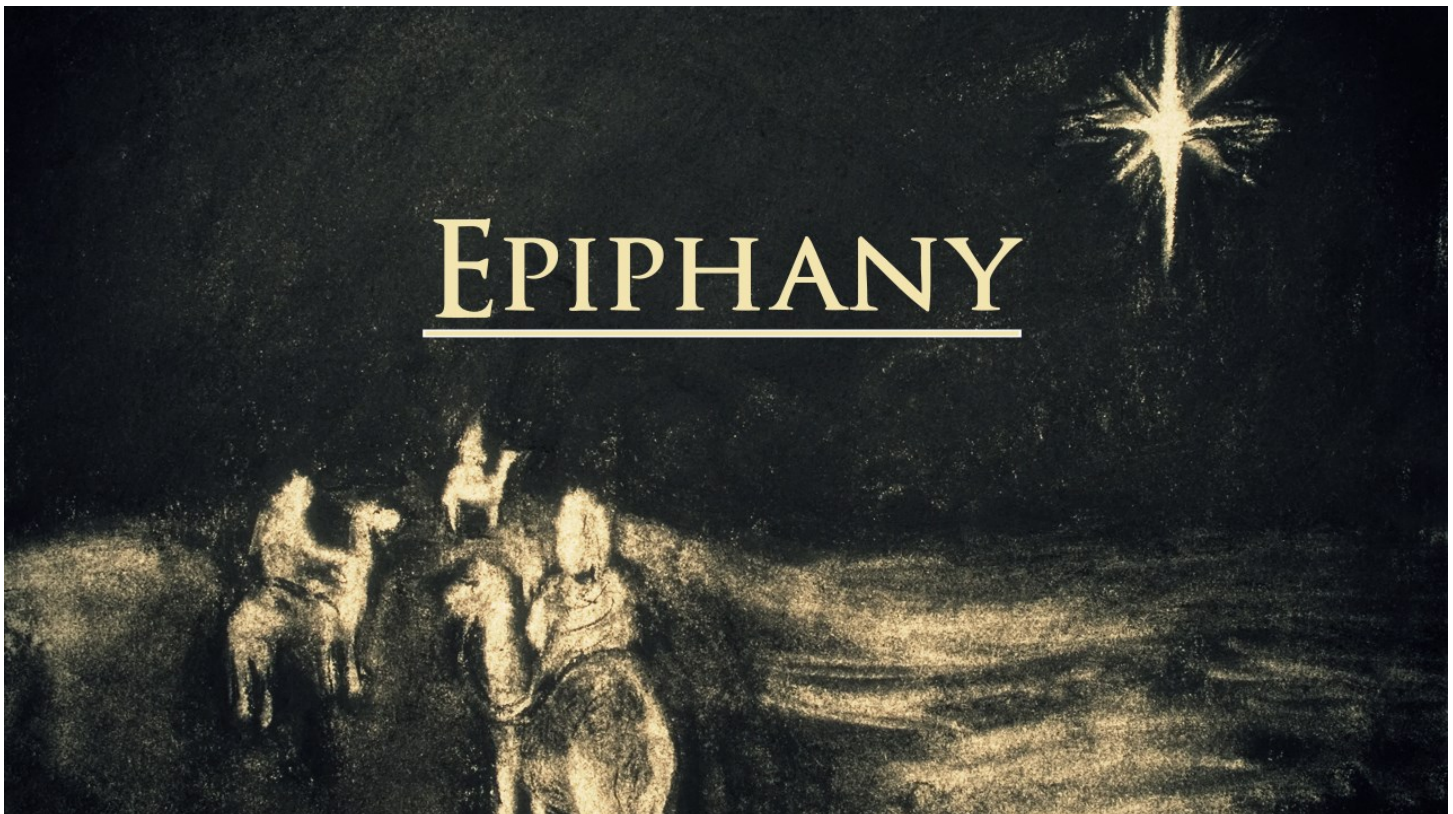


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JANUARY 2023 EDITION



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Pastor's Column

Traditions and rituals lose their importance when the values that are associated with them are lost. New rituals are created as communities adapt to new values and principles. I like this definition of ritual: “an act or series of acts regularly repeated in a set precise manner.” Values reflect our priorities and beliefs and serve as a filter for our behavior.

Pastors who are new to a faith community are keenly made aware of a congregation's traditions and rituals. However, it often takes time to understand the underlying values that support them. Conversations about values quickly can turn into conversations about specific people and the importance of historic figures in the church who are associated with a ritual. People often say, we do it this way or that way because it's the way this person used to do it. It's much more challenging but also more meaningful to uncover the value associated with the beginning and ongoing practice of a ritual.

I'm increasingly aware of how important it is to talk about our individual values and beliefs. Theology, which literally translates into God logic, is best understood when we practice talking about it to others. It is in the discussions we have with each other about theology that we better understand and integrate beliefs and values into our daily practices.

There are three opportunities coming up for us to reflect on our values and beliefs. The first is more internally focused. Instead of having Laity Sunday, we are having Laity Season during the time of Epiphany. The scriptures during this season often reflect Jesus' words, “Come and see.” It is an invitation to journey and discover. We have invited seven people from the congregation to talk about a value they have and how this value might be expressed in a ritual. I am beyond thrilled that seven of you are willing to embrace the assignment!

In conjunction with this project, workshops will be offered in January to help all of us work on this assignment of exploring an important value we have. I hope you will attend one or more of the workshops being offered. They are listed here in the newsletter.

Finally, we are looking for people to be recorded for a project we are developing to promote Wesley United Methodist Church in the community. We are looking for individuals who are willing to talk on camera about an aspect of community they find useful at Wesley UMC. Again, this is a values conversation. Sean will be seeking out individuals to help with this project. Please be on the lookout and sign up!

January is a good time to evaluate our values and beliefs and to consider rituals and practices to best support them. I look forward to working on this for myself and together with you as a faith community. May God bless our efforts to live more intentionally in our collective future.

Happy New Year!



Workshop Schedule

What was the moment you knew?

Storytelling Workshops with Thew Elliott

Focusing on the moment an important value in your life first took hold

- **Wednesday, January 4**
- **Thursday, January 5**
- **Wednesday, January 25**
- **Thursday, January 26**

All workshops are from 6:30 to 8pm

Shared meal and conversation at 6pm

These workshops are open to anyone who wants to participate, and participation in at least one of them is required for folks who are presenting in our Epiphany series.

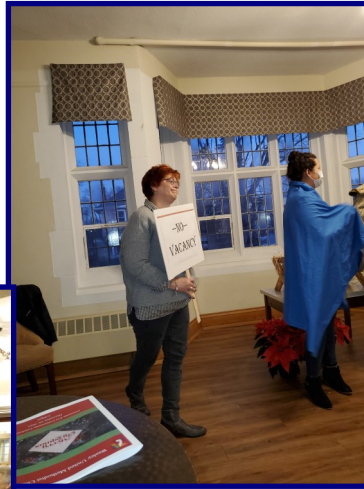
1. Your story

With creative exercises, journaling, conversation and free writing, we'll be focusing in on a moment in which an important value in your life took hold. We'll pinpoint the value, then we'll work on telling the story of that moment in a way that lets listeners fully in to your personal experience.

2. How you live the value

Using some principles of ritual design, we'll talk about the ways you live out that value, and share or create rituals that help you remember and share it.

Christmas Eve



Prior to the service, we shared cookies and cocoa in the parlor. Along with entertaining us with holiday songs, Thew led us in a dramatic telling of the nativity story.

Wesley United Methodist Church has Safe Gatherings trained and screened staff and volunteers. For more information, please go to <https://safegatherings.com/about-us/who-we-are/> or scan QR Code.



Outreach

AID Holiday Hopes Gift Program

Thank you for your generous gifts! Thanks to you we were able to help brighten the holidays for 10 of AID's (Association for Individual Development) clients!



Let's Go



Participants had a great time at the Let's Go Holiday Party at Meredith's home on December 17th!



Wednesday Night Gatherings

We have great news! Wednesday Night Gatherings was chosen to receive a grant of \$2,000 from the United Methodist Foundation of the Northern Illinois Conference. We are excited that others see our effort to build a safe community space with our direct neighbors. The grant will go towards food as well as activity supplies.

In December, we spent our time celebrating the Christmas Season with Card Making led by Emmy Lou John and a Christmas party filled with Caroling led by Thew Elliott and cookie and ornament decorating.



On the 1st and 3rd Wednesday of every month, we gather from 6-8 pm. Dinner is served from 6-6:45 and multigenerational activities are from 7-8 pm.

Please join us for our upcoming events:

January 4th

Dinner: Baked Potato Bar

Activity: Step-by-Step Canvas Painting

January 18th

Dinner: Lasagna and Salad

Activity: Game Night! Bring any family-friendly board game or card games you'd like to play with those who show up. Let the games begin!

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! We had a great time at our annual Let's Go Ugly Sweater/White Elephant Christmas Party on Saturday, December 17 at the home of Meredith Lindgren. It was fun to be together to celebrate the Christmas season! We haven't made plans yet for another get-together but stay tuned for information for our next party! 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 Meredith Lindgren on Wednesday, January 11, 2023. We will have a soup dinner at 6 pm, followed by a book discussion. We will be 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.

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.

Congregational Care

Birthdays

Karen Covalt 1/1

Ralph Breazeale 1/7

Nedra Price 1/11

Wally Loague 1/14

Isabel Erickson 1/14

Claudia Smith 1/25

Carolyn Jones 1/27

Kathy Breazeale 1/29

Thank You from

SD129's Diaper Drive



Wesley United Methodist Church,
Thank you for supporting
The Diaper Basket and SD129's
Diaper Drive! Your generosity
ensures the infants and parents
in West Aurora have a happy
and healthy life!
We are so grateful for your
willingness to partner with us.
We hope we can continue this
partnership for future needs.
Thanks so much!
-Michelle Frieders
-Melissa Steward

Ruth Ann Little enjoying a poinsettia used to decorate the church on Christmas Eve which was delivered to her at Fox Knoll by Carol Stoffel.



Financial Update

	2022	Annual Budget for 2022
Pledge and Non-Pledge Giving	306,044.17	280,899.96
Other Income	164,951.68	188,979.12
	Expenses	
Worship	6,970.78	8,049.96
Discipleship	4,515.77	4,350.00
Outreach	3,063.04	3,500.00
Operating Costs	153,630.17	127,009.12
Salaries & Benefits	286,987.93	288,244.80
Apportionments	37,000.00	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
(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

Monday Morning Study

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

Tuesday Crafters

TBD

United Methodist Men

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

United Methodist Women

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

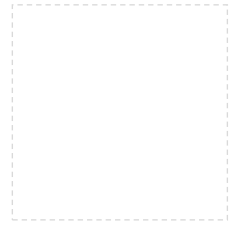
Jonathan Akyea



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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!

