

# wesleyan

MARCH 2023 EDITION

## LENT

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# Pastor's Column

We are in the midst of a new series in worship for the month of March that is based on a book, "Taking on the Cross." The book asks a number of questions about the death of Jesus and the meaning of the cross. For example, if Christ died for our sins, why does sin still remain? And if sin is only partially removed from the world, what was the purpose of Jesus' death? Does our veneration of violence and suffering somehow perpetuate violence and suffering around the world in ways God would never have intended? So, for this Lent, I am inviting you to join me in taking on the cross and to embrace these questions as together we reimagine the meaning of Jesus' life and death.

We often use the word "atonement" to talk about the death of Jesus. "Atonement is reparation for an offense or for having caused or committed an injury. In the Old Testament, it is the cleansing, enacted in the temple, in which a sacrifice purifies both persons and place. In the New Testament, it refers to the reconciliation of God and humanity, connected with the death of Jesus the Christ." (Rita Nakashima Brock) During the season of Lent, we will be exploring the concept of atonement from the perspective of the Bible, theologians and the voices of those who are less familiar to us, all in an effort to equip and support you in constructing an understanding of atonement using modern and historic ways of thinking. It is my hope that this series helps you develop a deeper understanding of God and the work of Jesus.

I hope you will join us for this series both online and in-person. If you'd like a copy of the book, I have a few copies available. Let me know. Most of all, while I am not interested in changing anyone's understanding of the cross, I hope this series sheds light on the struggles that many people have with historic understandings of Jesus' death but also the implications these understandings have on us today. What does Jesus' birth, life, teachings, death and resurrection have to do with building community and the liberation of all of God's people? I hope to see you in worship!

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

## February's Presentations

During the month of February we completed our laity series on naming values and the rituals that support them. The January overview was included in the February newsletter. On the pages that follow are an overview from February.

# February's Presentations

*February 5 Perspective by Jonathan Akyea*

**Value:** The importance of gaining perspective in our daily lives even in the face of death.

**Ritual:** Say to oneself: This too shall pass.

**Blessing** *by John O'Donohue.*

On the day when  
the weight deadens  
on your shoulders  
and you stumble,  
may the clay dance  
to balance you.

May a flock of colors,  
indigo, red, green  
and azure blue,  
come to awaken in you  
a meadow of delight.

May the nourishment of the earth be yours,  
may the clarity of light be yours,  
may the fluency of the ocean be yours,  
may the protection of the ancestors be yours.

And so may a slow  
wind work these words  
of love around you,  
an invisible cloak  
to mind your life.



# February's Presentations

*February 12 Listening to God by Katrina Baugh*

**Value:** God wants an intimate, real relationship with us right now. We can respond by inviting prayer to be a conversation, not just a monologue.

**Ritual:** Breathing meditations that focus on listening and responding.

**Blessing** *adapted from John O'Donohue.*

Each morning,  
when you become a pure vessel  
for what wants to ascend from silence,  
may you know the grace of a perfect danger  
that reaches beyond imitation and repetition,  
deep into the call of all that is  
unfinished and unsolved.

May you bask and dance in light  
as the veil of the unknown yields to your listening,  
stirring your senses and strengthening your heart.

While you listen for God,  
may you come to birth each day  
as a sound not yet heard,  
as a line calling space into a different shape.

As you listen, may you be known.  
As you listen, may you be seen.  
As you listen, may you be heard.



# February's Presentations

*February 19 Take Hold of the Life that is Truly Life! by Lynnette Singh*

- Value:** It is the small moments of generosity, sharing and human connection that make our lives truly worth living.
- Ritual:** There's joy to be found in sharing ourselves with others—whether it's time, talent, knowledge, or experiences.

**Blessing** *adapted from Ellen Bass' "Pray for Peace"*

Pray to whomever you kneel down to:

Jesus, Buddha, Adonai, Allah,  
Shekinah Queen of heaven and earth.

Then pray to the bus driver who takes you to work.  
On the bus, pray for everyone riding that bus,  
For everyone riding buses all over the world.  
Drop some silver and pray.

Make the brushing of your hair  
a prayer, every strand its own voice,  
Singing in the choir on your head.  
As you wash your face, the water slipping  
through your fingers, a prayer: Water,  
Softest thing on earth, gentleness  
That wears away rock.

With each breath in, take in the faith of those  
Who have believed when belief seemed foolish,  
Who persevered. With each breath out, cherish.

Pull weeds for peace, turn over in your sleep for peace,  
Feed the birds, each shiny seed  
That spills onto the earth, another second of peace.

Mumble blessing all along your way,  
And know in every moment: you are blessed.



## Donations to The Precious Academy

If you'd like to donate to the school that Lynnette and her husband Khem have started in Pithoragarh, India, The Precious Academy, please click [here](#) or bring/send a check to church made out to Wesley UMC with "Precious Academy" in the memo line.

# A Note from Pastor John

On Sunday, February 26<sup>th</sup>, I announced at the in-person service and in a subsequent email that Alison and I will be moving to Louisville, KY. Alison has accepted an offer to open a new refugee resettlement agency there. She will be starting her new job the end of March. My last Sunday at Wesley will be June 4<sup>th</sup>. I will be using the remainder of my vacation days to pack and prepare for the move.

While I will be sad to leave Wesley United Methodist Church, there is a lot that we have accomplished together over the last 10 years. It will be important to me to have time to speak to each of you individually before I go, to say our good-byes over the next three months. I welcome opportunities to have coffee, to share a meal or to talk on the phone. I'm so grateful for each of you and the ways you have contributed to the community and enriched my life. I know that whoever comes to Wesley as your next pastor will be as richly blessed by you as I am.

Pastors are selected and appointed to local congregations by Bishop Dan Schwerin in consultation with the District Superintendent, Rev Jeffry Bross and the Staff Parish Relations Committee or what we call the Governing Board.

In the meantime, I look forward to journeying with you through Lent, rejoicing on Easter Sunday together and celebrating the gifts each of us brings to building up the community on Pentecost Sunday.

Blessings!



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.



# Pastoral Transition Process

On the following page is a list developed from the collaboration meeting of every member of the Governing Board that was given to our Northern Illinois District Superintendent - Rev. Jeffry Bross. These are the attributes we would like to see in our next pastor, what we feel would make the best fit for Wesley. The Bishop and the Cabinet hold sessions each week to discern appointments from all the candidates available for all the churches that will have openings. After that decision is made, a candidate will be sent to Wesley for an introduction and to be greeted and questioned. Both the prospective Pastor and our Governing Board will decide if there are any unacceptable large red flags that would make that person unacceptable to Wesley or for the candidate. If there are none of these, this person will become our new pastor as of July 1. An announcement of this new appointment will be made immediately after this introduction and acceptance, which could be in the next several weeks.

Kathy Breazeale, Chairperson

Roger Curless

Wally Loague

DiAnn Wiley

Mary Terrell

Jim Merk

Bob McKnight

Jonathan Akyea

Rev. John Bell



# Pastoral Transition Process

## WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

### STAFF PARISH COMMITTEE

#### Key Attributes for Senior Pastor

The Staff Parish Committee has established the following attributes required for a Senior Pastor at Wesley.

1. Administrative/Management
  - Wesley utilizes a single board governance model for the overall management of the ministry. This means the pastor is the central figure in managing all of the day-to-day work of the church. The pastor needs to be familiar with and comfortable with operating in this governance model. This model employs paid staff positions and volunteer coordinator positions. The staff and coordinators are managed in their various roles by the pastor.
  - The pastor leads staff/coordinators in engaging laity in all levels of the ministry and promotes the ministry of the laity.
  - The Governing Board is the overall administrative body of the church and the focal point of strategic and future planning for Wesley. The pastor is a member of the Governing Board.
2. Explicit in expressing the meaning of Wesley being a Reconciling Congregation. Openly affirming inclusiveness and explicit in putting forth liberation for all people. Versed in cultural competency.
3. Wesley in the Aurora Community
  - Wesley has established relationships and a long history of its presence in Aurora. The pastor will need to maintain existing points of presence and develop new relationships which enable Wesley to influence institutions and government operations in Aurora.
  - There is discussion within the overall strategic direction of Wesley in Aurora on how Wesley can extend its ministries from other sites around the community.
  - Asset Based Community Development has been one of the strategic tools Wesley has used in looking at its place in the immediate neighborhood and wider community. The pastor should be familiar with the concepts of ABCD and engage with the Governing Board in next steps.
  - The pastor should be able to provide leadership in the promotion and presentation of Wesley in Aurora.
  - With its location and extensive facilities Wesley is developing as a community center for a variety of groups. The pastor will be key in linking with groups that might make use of the facilities, extending Wesley into the community.
4. Embrace and utilize various forms of media to present Wesley and extend into the congregation and community. The pastor will be key in the online worship currently offered by Wesley. There has to be a level of understanding and competency in making use of the technology which makes Wesley available to a wider community. And yet, a balance, understanding that there are segments of the current congregation that are not comfortable with some of the new technology.



# Laity Convocation Report

## Report from the NIC Laity Convocation by Kathy Breazeale

I attended the February 11th Convocation via Zoom. We had a welcome and prayers from various Co-Lay Leaders of the Conference. The new Bishop, Dan Schwerin, spoke about the growth of our mustard seed baptism. As John Wesley said, we are growing together in love. Like the Disciples, we are sent to places we wouldn't usually go or are unknown to us. We are in utter reliance on God. The way of God being known is by our sharing. We need to be thinking outside the church, to serve where Jesus would have us do so. The big picture is that we are sent out to show Jesus's love and passion. Whatever you are paying attention to, there you will find growth. When you water a garden, it grows.

The Keynote Speaker was David Teal of Discipleship Ministries, the laity and leadership director.

- In a nutshell: Life is good, some things are wrong, someone help.
- His other nutshell: Your call has a place, your place has a call, place your call.
- Wesley said "I want you to be all love." All love means all love all. Love has a learning curve. Love makes a plan. We are constantly modifying our growth plan.
- "God is nowhere" – becomes "God is now here."
- His best advice – be the social life of Jesus in your zip code.

We had break out sessions and watched four videos of how churches in the conference are reaching outside their church buildings and how they are reaching their community. Wesley had a video presentation about how our summer camps have lead to our Wednesday Community dinners.

Some of the other churches are doing the following:

- holding a special worship service that is dementia friendly,
- holding appreciation dinners for the local Fire Department,
- keeping in contact with their local food pantries so that can relay to their congregation what is most needed,
- invite neighbors to be a part of craft show or pop up business fair,
- helping to clean up yard in their neighborhood

**Ending words: " The Harvest is bigger than you can imagine, but few workers. Therefore plead with the Lord of the Harvest to send our workers for his harvest."**

# Outreach

## Mutual Ground Meal Train Dinner

Dear Wesley Friends & Family,

We are raising funds to provide a catered taco bar dinner to the Mutual Ground shelter residents on Wednesday, March 22nd. Any amount is welcomed and appreciated! You can donate online by clicking [here](#) (choose “Mutual Ground Meal Train Fund”) or leave a check or cash in church office making sure to mark it “Mutual Ground Meal Train Fund”. Thanks for your help!



# March Birthdays

Camille Sapnu 3/1

Monica Winfree 3/5

Rich Brown 3/5

Nancy Verbic 3/10

Lin Waid 3/13

Ben Smith 3/14

Shirley McKnight 3/22

Jim Gilbert 3/23

Iliana Rigaud 3/29

HAPPY  
BIRTHDAY

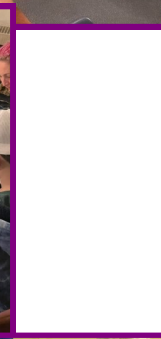
# Wednesday Night Gatherings

This past month we had conversation Spanish and English learning, we made 133 sandwiches for the downtown fridge and last night we had fabric arts with cat teasers for local shelters and weaving. Thanks to all who showed up to participate and shared in a friendly competition. We're excited to continue to feed families and engage in intergenerational activities! All ages are welcome!

**Join us for our next gatherings!**

**March 15th from 6-8 pm: Dinner & Activity TBD** Dinner from 6:00-6:45pm

**March 29th from 6-8pm: Dinner & Game Night** Dinner from 6:00-6:45pm



## SAVE THE DATE!

We are planning an Arts Camp for June 12th – 15th! We are in need of volunteers for leading activities, meals and supplies! Contact Michelle to get involved at [michellecuriel.wumc@gmail.com](mailto:michellecuriel.wumc@gmail.com).

# United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith's Circles, formerly United Methodist Women, have been meeting in person or via Zoom. The Susanna Circle will meet in person on March 21st at 7pm. The Hannah Circle will be meeting at Wesley on March 21st at 1:30 pm. All women are invited to attend either Circle meeting.

This year our Unit is launching a United Women in Faith Reading Club to discuss books from the UWF Reading Program List. We will meet four times a year on the fifth Wednesdays of the month. Our first meeting will be Wednesday, March 29 at 7:00pm at the church. We'll be discussing *The Four Winds* by Kristin Hannah, a novel described as "an epic saga of love and heroism and hope, set against the backdrop of the Great Depression and the Dust Bowl of the Great Plains".

We are excited about the plans for the April 22nd Soul Retreat. Make sure that you are saving the date. It will be held in the Prestbury Club House starting at 9:30 am.

We are continuing to work on our NO IDLING project. Please be aware of the impact on our environment and health when you have your car idling. Take an extra blanket to keep you warm if you and your car will be in a pick-up line for an extended period of time.

Please save the dates details. We look forward to seeing you. If you have questions about these United Women in Faith activities contact Emmy Lou John at [emmyloujohn@yahoo.com](mailto:emmyloujohn@yahoo.com).

# United Methodist Men



Herb John, United Methodist Men's president at Wesley, speaks Saturday, Feb. 18, at Journey of Hope United Methodist Church in Elgin. Herb was among speakers at an annual Lenten breakfast and worship service by Prairie Central District, UMC Northern Illinois Conference.

# 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](mailto: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! Everyone is a wee bit Irish on St. Patrick's Day, so haul out your green sweaters and locate your favorite Irish recipes and join Let's Go for a St. Patrick's Day party at the home of Shirley and Bob McKnight on Friday, March 17 at 6 pm.

The McKnight's will provide the corned beef and cabbage. Guests are asked to bring a green and/or Irish dish, savory or sweet, to share, along with your favorite beverage. You can RSVP to the McKnight's at [shirleymck1015@gmail.com](mailto:shirleymck1015@gmail.com) or give them a call at 630-772-5287. 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!



# Discipleship

## Bad Girls Bible/Book Study

Bad Girls will be meeting at the home of Char Dillon on Wednesday, March 8, 2023. We will have a chili 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](mailto: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](mailto:le.burnett@yahoo.com) for details on our next meeting.



*January 2023*



# Fox Valley Brass Band

## **Fanfares, Overtures & Hymns—Fox Valley Brass Band Concert**

**Sunday, March 5, 2023 at 3pm in Wesley's Sanctuary**

Brass Fanfares, Overtures, and Hymns including music of Gregson, Sparke, and Himes. Relish in William Himes, "Amazing Love" and yield to the majesty of Philip Sparke's "A London Overture".

**Ticket Prices Online:** Student/Seniors: \$12; Regular: \$15

**Ticket Prices at the Door:** Students/Seniors: \$15; Regular: \$18

Click [here](#) to purchase tickets in advance.

*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.

# Financial Update

	1/1—2/15/23	Annual Budget for 2023
<b>Pledge and Non-Pledge Giving</b>	37,899.14	280,899.96
<b>Other Income</b>	27,120.86	188,979.12
<b>Expenses</b>		
<b>Worship</b>	256.00	8,049.96
<b>Discipleship</b>	367.74	4,350.00
<b>Outreach</b>	1,000.00	3,500.00
<b>Operating Costs</b>	20,748.35	127,009.12
<b>Salaries &amp; Benefits</b>	38,951.87	288,244.80
<b>Apportionments</b>	0	37,000.00

Questions? Please contact Jennifer Pawlowski, Financial Secretary, at [jennifer.wumc@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:psalmmom418@gmail.com)

**Fine Arts Committee**

TBD

**Hesed House**

Bob McKnight  
630-896-5287  
[redwoodcats@sbcglobal.net](mailto:redwoodcats@sbcglobal.net)

**Let's Go Fellowship**

Meredith Lindgren  
630-788-6911  
[psalmmom418@gmail.com](mailto: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](mailto:rwb7247@gmail.com)

**NDY Group**

Lynn Burnett  
[le.burnett@yahoo.com](mailto:le.burnett@yahoo.com)

**Prayer Shawl Ministry**

TBD

**Special Events Coordinator**

Lynn Burnett  
[le.burnett@yahoo.com](mailto:le.burnett@yahoo.com)

**Faithlinkers (held on Monday Night at 7pm CST via Zoom)**

Emmy Lou John  
630-264-2892  
[emmyloujohn@yahoo.com](mailto:emmyloujohn@yahoo.com)

**Tuesday Crafters**

TBD

**United Methodist Men**

Herb John  
630-264-2892  
[herbjohn@ymail.com](mailto:herbjohn@ymail.com)

**United Women In Faith**

Emmy Lou John  
630-264-2892  
[emmyloujohn@yahoo.com](mailto:emmyloujohn@yahoo.com)

**Wesley Gardeners**

Meredith Lindgren  
630-788-6911  
[psalmmom418@gmail.com](mailto:psalmmom418@gmail.com)

**Wesley Golfers**

Ralph Breazeale  
630-897-6657  
[jrbreeze47@comcast.net](mailto:jrbreeze47@comcast.net)

**Yoga Classes**

Ann Merk  
630-643-3115  
[asm52@yahoo.com](mailto:asm52@yahoo.com)

# Governing Board

Bob McKnight

Kathy Breazeale

Wally Loague

Jim Merk

Mary Terrell

DiAnn Wiley

Roger Curless

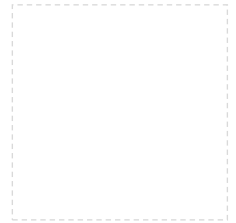
Rev. John Bell

Jonathan Akyea



**Wesley**  
UNITED  
METHODIST  
CHURCH

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



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630.896.1033 | [wesleyumcaurora.org](http://wesleyumcaurora.org)

Office Hours: 8am-12pm

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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!

