

The Outlook

WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH
"Open Hearts, Open Minds, Open Doors"

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Vol. LXIV, #23

Anne Schlesinger, Pastor

December 7, 2022

10:30 a.m. Worship on Facebook and In-Person

Anne Schlesinger, preaching

Third Sunday in Advent, December 11, 10:30 a.m.

Isaiah 35: 1-10, Luke 1: 46b-55, Sermon: "Sacred Space"; Theme: Joy

Fourth Sunday in Advent, December 18, 10:30 a.m.

Isaiah 7:10-16; Matthew 1:18-25, Sermon: "Sacred Knowing"; Theme: Peace

Christmas Eve, Saturday, December 24, 6:00 p.m.

Titus 3:4-7; Luke 2:1-20, Sermon: "Sacred Being"; Theme: Emmanuel

Christmas Eve Celebration will include Scriptures and Carols.

Christmas, December 25, 10:30 a.m.

Isaiah 52:7-10; John 1:1-14, Sermon: "Surprisingly Sacred"; Theme: Messiah

Epiphany Sunday, January 1, 10:30 a.m.

Isaiah 63: 7-9; Matthew 2:13-23, Sermon: "Sacred Doing"; Theme: Action



♫ A Note from the Pastor

***For everything there is a season and a time for every matter under heaven...
~Ecclesiastes 3:1***

There is a popular holiday song that says, “It’s the most wonderful time of the year.” Other than a brief mention of “Christmases long, long ago,” it could be about any winter holiday as we gather with friends and family to celebrate with loved ones. It’s the season to hear that song on the radio once again, and it got me to thinking about how wonderful this season really is. But then I remembered how much I love Thanksgiving. And Easter. Oh, and Pentecost, too.

We have been reading Ecclesiastes in our Disciple IV study, and the first eight verses of the third chapter—perhaps the best known verses in that book—are just about the only verses in that book I find cheerful. The whole book is a clear reminder that obeying commandments and worshipping God are the most important things we do “under the sun.” Qoheleth (Hebrew for the Greek word Ecclesiastes) is the unnamed writer of the book and he sees everything as meaningless. Nothing brings him joy. (Although he claims there is a time to laugh.) He claims that there is nothing new under the sun. It is true that Christmas is not new. Christians have been celebrating the birth of our savior in December since sometime in the third century CE. But we can feel a newness, a real sense of anticipation each year during this dark time in the northern hemisphere. I hope you feel it, too. One of the special things about this season is singing Christmas Carols—both hymns and fun songs like “Jingle Bells.” If you would like to lead or join a group of carolers to sing to people unable to get out this season, please let Barbara Dethlefsen know. There is more information about that in this newsletter.

I have heard some positive feedback about our “Reflecting the Sacred” worship series that began the first week in Advent. It will continue through Christmastide, which officially ends on Epiphany, which we will celebrate January 8. I hope you’re able to join us in the sanctuary or on Facebook during this season. The season following Christmastide is referred to “Epiphany Plus” by Worship Design Studio. We will be focussing on scriptures from the Hebrew Bible in a series called “Spiritual Affective Disorder. This is the synopsis: “Seasonal Affective Disorder happens when a lack of sunlight affects our moods and ability to cope effectively. Spiritual Affective Disorder can also be a condition when we’ve had prolonged stress and life is disturbingly uncertain. What is our faithful response to our strained mental health? What if everyday life activities could become spiritual practices—deepening our experience of a meaningful life and helping us shine a light on the ‘blahs?’” This worship series sounds like an antidote for the depression Qoheleth seemed to be speaking of in much of Ecclesiastes! Blessings, Pastor Anne

Memorial Service

A memorial service for Jack Henderson, will be held at Wesley Church on Wednesday, December 14 at 10:30 a.m.

Prayers

We lift up the names of people in need of healing:

• Bill B • Anne S • Anne's brother Robert D & Jeremy (family friend) who both have COVID • Fred Cramer—he is out of ICU, but needs continued prayers for healing • David A • Alvesa C • Falamao S • Carolyn A • Mary D • Eddy L. • Cindy and all the Curtis family with the flu • David A. (Flu and the reaction to a shingles vaccine) and prayers that Sherry can stay well • Kristen and her family are all sick • Brian West (Liz B's brother)—and discernment for his medical team for next steps • Glenn M (Corby's step father) facing surgery • Balthazar—healing and patience • Lea—healing and patience—and patience for the whole household until healing is complete • Bonney F—recovery from a fall • Judi—recurrence of cancer • Carol—serious sinus infection • Angelina and Lydia—mother and daughter with serious heart ailments

Travel mercies:

• Nancy S. Moving to Pacific Grove
• All who are traveling during holiday season • Vance & Linda traveling to North Carolina

Those who grieve:

• The family of Jack Henderson
• All who are grieving losses following mass shooting in Colorado Springs, CO and Chesapeake, VA • All who mourn losses—human and property—following the earthquake in Indonesia • The family, friends and church members on the loss of Pastor Barry Ballard

We pray for other needs:

• Edee E and the child she cares for
• All children in Foster Care • Students facing final exams at the end of the semester—may they study and succeed • Ryan (tense family situation)
• Hopefully Wesley can hire dependable nursery care worker • Luca, Kirsten and Brandon

In gratitude, we give thanks for our many blessings:

• Luca continuing to grow, and he is breathing on his own • Thankful for Stella who is getting people ready to carol to shut-ins • The healing that has happen in Bill's body • Linda T. Is grateful for the love and support she receives from her church family, and has been especially blessed by a visit from her Mom, her daughter, and her son-inlaw. • RAIN! • David and Sherry's daughter Elisa who is taking good care of her parents • Sherry is thankful for the experience of a lifetime (recent trip)
• Brenden is feeling much better
• Grateful for the good news on the front page of the Bakersfield Californian—people are reaching out and helping one another
• A very good outcome for Sales in court case • The gift of the committee member making calls to invite people to church • For the life of Mike Garcia who passed away



On Sunday afternoons, December 11th and 18th, small groups of Wesley carolers will be sharing the Christmas spirit by caroling for Wesley folk who are not able to come to worship. If you would like to sing

with a group or know someone we should sing to please contact Barbara Dethlefsen, 872-1530. Let's bring a little light into our neighborhood! Please come sing with us.

From Nancy Schwartz

Greetings...have been trying to find time to call you...but have been swamped!! Short story...decided to move to Pacific Grove to Forest Hill to be near son and family...house sold in 3 hours of first day...but buyer wanted me out by Dec 1!!! No way...but he extended it to Dec 5...so estate sale is over...guys with trailers hauling off leftovers and trash...and I will leave on Monday! Want to extend thanks to members of Wesley for sharing worship...prayers...moral support...and just "keeping me going" thru this past 10 months...with much appreciation I say farewell for now!! Always accepting visitors to the Monterey Peninsula...although I have only 600 sq. feet and only 1 bed!

With much love,
Nancy

Finance Campaign Ongoing

Many thanks to all who have prayerfully considered their 2023 giving to Wesley. If you have not turned in your pledge card, please send it to the church office P.O. Box 6577, 93386. We have received 19 pledges totaling \$ 74,125. Our goal is 30 pledges.

Administrative Council

The Administrative Council will meet Tuesday, December 20, at 5:30 p.m. via zoom.

Thank You

\$174.25 was collected for United Methodist Student Sunday. Thank you for your generosity.