### DECEMBER 2025

# Wesley Journal Newsletter

## Sunday Worship Times

## 8:30 a.m. In-Person & 11:00 a.m. In-Person & Online



Dear Friends,





Martha Ognibene Pastor

By now you may have heard that I have announced my retirement from active ministry, effective June 30, 2026. Just as Advent is a time of new beginnings, so this coming year will mark a new beginning for Wesley United Methodist Church. Our Superintendent, Rev. Stephanie Bennett, will work closely with both our Staff Parish Relations Committee and with our Bishop, Deborah Wallace-Padgett, and the other Superintendents to discern God's will for Wesley's next pastor. That new pastor will be announced sometime this coming spring.

When I arrived at Wesley, we were just beginning to come out of quarantine following the Covid pandemic. In the years since then, we have recovered in-person worship, and have greatly strengthened our on-line worshipping community. We have welcomed our Ukrainian friends into our midst and have seen them thrive and achieve much. We have increased our reach to include West Virginia University students, and welcome them into the life of our church. We have supported our community in many and varied ways, and have helped bring God's love to persons throughout the world. We have opened our doors to another worshipping community, who tell the good news in the Spanish language. We have begun new worship services and started new traditions. Wesley is an exciting place to be, and I can't wait to see what you do next in God's name!

However, next June is a long time from now, and we have much to do in the days and months to come. Please take note of the special events at our church this Advent/ Christmas season, and plan to attend as many as possible. During this time of year, especially, let us be mindful of those who are far from family, who are ill, who are mourning, or who do not have the support necessary to live well. Into the new year, we will continue to worship God and help our neighbors, as is our long custom. I give thanks for each one of you in this season, and always. Merry Christmas!



Cordially, Pastor Martha



## Special Events at Wesley UMC this Advent/Christmas Season Mark your calendar and get involved this year!!









Sunday, December 14, 10:30 AM Sunday, December 14, 10:30 AM Sunday, December 14, following worship Friday, December 19, 7:00 PM Tuesday, December 23, 6:30 PM Wednesday, December 24, 5:30 PM Wednesday, December 24, 7:00 PM Thursday, December 25, noon

Wednesday, December 10, 6:00 PM

Friday, December 12, 6:30 PM

Friday, December 12, 7:15 PM

Sundays, November 30, December 7 and 21, 9:30 AM Multigenerational Sunday School, Loft Hospitality for Christmas Parade, High Street Chime Recital & Christmas Sing-a-Long, Sanctuary Social Group Christmas Party, Lecture Room Choir Cantata, "Is He?" Sanctuary College Final Exam Snack Packs, Sanctuary Cookie Exchange, Loft

Rhythms of the Season Steel Drum Concert, Sanctuary Blue Christmas Service, Spruce Street UMC Children's Christmas Eve Service, Sanctuary Christmas Eve Candlelight Service, Sanctuary CM&A Community Christmas Meal, Davis Gym



**Calling all bakers! Christmas Cookie Exchange** Sunday, December 14th - 9:30 AM **Deadline for sign-ups is Friday, Dec 5th.** Contact Kristi DeLeurere Intrigue329@yahoo.com for more information.

## **COLLEGE SNACK PACKS**



Finals week is right around corner Dec 15th-19th! Sunday, Dec 14th Wesley UMC will be distributing College Snack Packs after both worship services to all college students preparing for finals. Just a little goodie bag filled with snacks

and given with prayers from your church family!



**MEMBER NEW MOVE/NEW ADDRESS** Caryol Longenecker 8911 Reisterstown Road, Rm 223 Pikesville, MD 21208.

## **WESLEY BOOK CLUB**



Do you like small group gatherings? Do you want to meet and get to know fellow % BOOK № Wesley folks better? hope for a deeper walk with God? If you answer "YES" to

any of these questions, consider being a part of a Book Club at Wesley. Mary Ragland will be the group facilitator. We meet by Zoom only the 1st and 3rd Tuesdays of every month at 7:30 p.m. Tuesdays December 2nd and 16th. Our first book to study is The Practice of the Presence of God by Brother Lawrence. If you are interested, call, email or text me: Mary Ragland 304-282-1947 / Mhragland5@yahoo.com.

## **HOLIDAY MISSION** OUTREACH PROJECTS

#### SCOTT'S RUN CHRISTMAS FAMILIES

Christmas is right around the corner and traditionally Wesley helps Scott's Run with monetary donations that goes towards Scott's Run Families Christmas wish list. If you would like to make a donation please write "Scott's Run Christmas" on the memo line thru Dec 7. Thank you!

#### CHRISTMAS GOODIE BAGS for the needy!

We are collecting the personal hygiene items and Christmas candies for our goodie bags. Items can be brought in thru December 7th.



## Altar Guild



**Deadline for Christmas Poinsettia/Dedications is Sunday, Dec 7th** Order form is on p.7 and copies are in the Church Office. Helping hands are needed for Saturday, Dec 6th at 9:30 a.m. **Members of Wesley's Altar Guild will be** setting up poinsettia's and will need to water each plant.





## **Guatemala Scholarship Project**

Leeann Danley is selling felt ornaments to provide scholarships for eight children in Guatemala. This is the thirteenth consecutive year of the scholarship project. For a child to attend school, the tuition prices range between \$220-\$463 per year. The price depends on the level of education. The ornament sale at Wesley United Methodist Church is on Sunday, Dec. 7th in the Lecture Room. Each ornament is \$5. You may pay for your ornaments with a check or cash when you pick them

## A Christmas Cantata to be enjoyed with family & friends! Sunday, December 14th

# "IS He?" 10:30 a.m. ONE SERVICE ONLY Scripture with Traditional & Contemporary Music

Music and Lyrics by Michael Elyard/Lyrics by Beth Elyard

The cantata "Is He?" grew out of the solo with the same name. After positive feedback I received after the solo was performed, I decided to write a cantata focusing on Mary. It must have been overwhelming for a young girl to suddenly be thrust onto the world stage in such a manner. As all of the fanfare and attention was bestowed upon them, she must have thought to herself "Is He really the Son of God? Am I really the mother of the Savior?" Luke 2:19 states, "But Mary kept all these sayings, pondering them in her heart." Imagine her thoughts as she quietly held her new baby that night.



The holiday season can be one of the most difficult times of the year for people who are experiencing various kinds of loss. A Blue Christmas service is a place to acknowledge the entirety of feelings that Christmas can engender in us, to ground our experience in the Biblical witness, and to find God's grace in the midst of pain. Join us for a Blue Christmas service on Tuesday, December 23 at 6:30 PM at Spruce Street United Methodist Church, to deepen and focus your Christmas experience.

## christmas Eve Servic Wednesday, December 240

### Children's Service 5:30 PM

Attention children, families, and creative minds-our Children's Christmas Eve service is the place for you! We'll gather at 5:30 PM on December 24 and travel to each of 5 stations where we'll hear and help to illustrate a portion of the Christmas story. We'll have fun retelling the Christmas story from the group pictures, and we'll share our artwork with the whole church after we've created it. Don't miss it!

## Communion & Candlelight Service 7:00 PM

At 7:00 PM on Christmas Eve, we'll participate in a traditional service. The Biblical story will be read; carols will be sung; and we'll share in the Sacrament of Holy Communion and a service of candle lighting. This service is a highlight of the year-see you there.

## Sacrament of Baptism & Celebration of New Members

New members will be received on Sunday, December 7. If you would like to join Wesley UMC, or if you would like to receive the Sacrament of Baptism for yourself or for your child, please contact Martha.

We welcome Ellis Oti Boateng, Inioluwa Okunlola, and Caroline Raley as full members of Wesley United Methodist Church. Ellis is transferring from First Baptist Church of Tallahassee in Tallahassee, FL; Inioluwa is transferring from Ajegunie Methodist Church in Oyo, Nigeria; and Caroline comes to us from Good Shepherd Lutheran Church in Pittsburgh, PA. Welcome!

## Offering & 2025 Contribution Statement

As this year draws to a close, we give thanks for your faithful generosity. Every gift has helped our church live out its mission-worshiping God, serving neighbors, and growing disciples. Your giving makes ministry possible, from the light in the sanctuary to the lives touched in our community and around the world.

If you find you've fallen a bit behind on your giving this year, there's still time to catch up. A year-end gift, whether large or small, helps our church finish strong and start the new year on a solid footing. Most of all, it's an act of gratitude-a way of saying "thank you" to God for blessings you have received.

Together, we are the body of Christ, and every offering-every dollar, every prayer, every act of service—strengthens our shared witness.

**NOTE:** Wesley Church will receive all final 2025 contributions on Monday, December 29th during church office hours 9 AM - 3 PM. This is the last day for all contributions that will be applied to your 2025 Contribution Statement.



[Serving sit-down and to-go meals]

Anyone that would like to donate a dessert, please bring by Christmas Eve!



Wesley will provide 100 Christmas Goodie Bags for those that attend! Donations of hygiene items, hot hands/feet packets, and Christmas candies are needed!

Wesley United Methodist Church Davis Gym

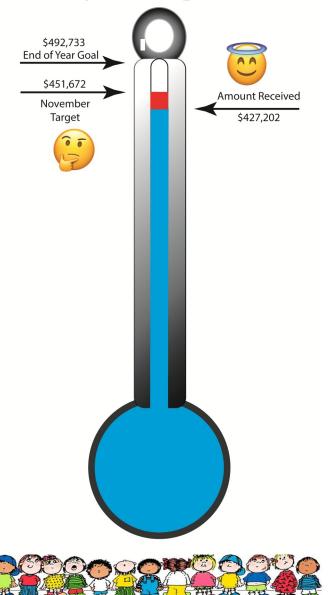
503 N. High Street~Morgantown, WV 26505

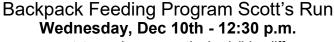
Hosted by the Christian and Missionary Alliance Church

Thursday, December 25<sup>th</sup> 12pm-2pm

## 2025 Finance Budget Thermometer

## Sunday Offerings Jan - Nov





Do you want to make a practical, visible difference in the life of a child? Then come help fill weekend backpacks for Mon County students at Scotts Run Settlement House. Every second Wednesday—so, October 8 this month—is our turn to help fill bags with shelf-stable, easy to consume food items for over 800 students who would otherwise go hungry from Friday night to Monday breakfast. We begin around 12:30 PM, and the work takes about an hour. Come help somebody-join us at Scotts Run!

#### **Cheat Lake location:**

750 Fairchance Road Morgantown, WV 26508 304-435-5098



Quick & Easy method for your
Sunday offering.
SCAN the QR Code with your
electronic device! THANK YOU!

# Chime Recital & Christmas Sing-a-Long

Wesley United Methodist Church will be hosting a Chime Recital on Friday, December 12, 2025, at 6:30 p.m. in the sanctuary. Jesse Ratcliff, carillonneur and native of Hinton, West Virginia will offer a short program that will include familiar Christmas pieces on Wesley's Chimes as solos interspersed with Christmas song sing-a-longs. Grab your friends and family and head on over to Wesley UMC to participate in some Christmas fun.



Bring a snack/dessert and celebrate Christmas with

your Wesley friends! Join in the \$10 gift exchange...something cute or fun!





## Wednesday, December 10th 6:00 p.m. Downtown Morgantown Parade Hospitality Team ~ Volunteers Needed December Committee Meetings

For over 10 years Wesley UMC has organized a hospitality ministry for several local parade events. Free hot & cold beverages are provided to parade participants and attendees. Volunteers are needed to help set-up tables, prepare beverages & serve those beverages. Serving areal will be located in front of both church & gym doors. All ages are invited to volunteer and also, an opportunity for Community Hours. To be a part of outreach, please contact Karen Kelley King at karen.kelley.king@gmail.com. All helpers please arrive by 5:00 p-.m. at the church.

## **FAITH FORMATION** at Wesley UMC

Sunday School is an integral part of our Christian life and the growth of our faith as we stretch our minds and search for deeper meaning in community with others.

#### All classes begin at 9:30 am following the 8:30 am Sunday worship service

#### Children - Room 301 on the 3rd floor

Children's Sunday school is available for children ages three years through fifth grade. Children experience the Bible through stories and hands-on-activities.

#### Middle & High School - Room 313 (3rd floor)

Both Middle & High School Sunday school helps our young link what they learn from the Bible to their real-life experiences. This class equips young adults to know Jesus, build a relationship with Him, and grow in their faith and knowledge of scripture.

#### FaithSeekers - Room 203 (Haden Chapel) 2nd floor The FaithSeekers class explores a variety of topics from scripture to Christian fiction.

#### Guideposts - Room 202 (2nd floor)

The Guideposts class meets weekly for study and discussion of the adult Bible study curriculum.

#### **NEW Berean Class** (2nd Floor Classroom)

All Wesley adults are welcome to join our class which is led by Brian Woerner. This class is both a study and discussion of Scriptures. Class will resume Sunday, January 4, 2026.

## PRAYER TEAM IS LOOKING FOR PRAYER WARRIORS!

THE PRAYER TEAM women and men who receive prayer requests via email and devote time to praying about them. It is personal choice as to where, how long and when in the day or night a member prays. For more information, please contact Rachel Beach at rplybonbeach@gmail.com.

**Finance Meeting** No Meeting

**Trustees Meeting** No Meeting

**Administrative Council SPECIAL** Meeting Sunday, Dec 7th 12:15 PM

> **SPRC Meeting** Monday, Dec 1st - 7:00 PM

**Prayer Shawl Ministry** ~ Tuesday, Jan 6, 2026! ~ 10:00 AM - Lecture Room If you can knit, crochet or would like to learn please join us!

Bible Study Fellowship ~Thursdays at 1:00 p.m. Choir Room 3rd FL ~ Study break Dec 18th thru Jan 8th

> All Wesley women are welcome to join this weekly bible study. Anyone interested please contact Ann Gore at 304-673-4124

## THANK YOU! THANK YOU! THANK YOU!



Sincerely, Dorís Pítman

Many thanks to everyone that participated in the mission outreach Thanksgiving Baskets for Scott's Run families! Wesley provided 32 gift cards totaling \$2,300 for families of Scott's Run.



# POINSETTIA & MISSIONAL DONATIONS CHRISTMAS 2025

It's that time of the year the Altar Guild are making plans to decorate the altar for the Advent Season & Christmas Eve service. We are planning for a beautifully decorated altar of poinsettias in celebration

of the coming birth of Our Lord and Savior, Jesus. Poinsettias can be purchased for \$20 each in loving memory or in honor of someone special in your life. When the number of poinsettias needed to decorate the altar is reached, all other donations will be given to our local feeding ministries. Completed order forms with payment can be placed in the offering plate, mailed to the church or dropped off to the Church Office. **Deadline for orders will be Sunday, December 7th**. Listings will be announced in the bulletin on Sunday, December 14th, 21st, and Wednesday, December 24th ~ Christmas Eve.

Wishing everyone a beautiful and blessed Advent. Thank you. Wesley's Altar Guild

I (We) would like to provide poinsettias/missional gifts for Christmas Eve Services:

In <u>Memory</u> Of:	
Given By:	
Phone #:	
Amount Paid: \$ Cash or Check #:	
I (We) would like to provide poinsettias/missi	onal gifts for Christmas Eve Services
In <u>Honor</u> Of:	
Given By:	
Phone #:	
Amount Paid: \$ Cash or Check #:	

## **Wesley United Methodist Church Officers-2026**

### Staff Parish Relations Committee

Class of 2026: Helen Ashenfelter, Amy Cartwright, John Lewis Class of 2027: Sharon Murray, Jessica Wood, Mary Koike Class of 2028: Stacy Whanger, Kyle Swisher, Paul Ragland

### **Trustees**

Class of 2026: Allen Hammock, Chad Harvey, Linda Bagby Class of 2027: Chris Lewis, Ann O'Neal, Mary Plevich Class of 2028: Bill Wasson, Scott Blosser, Ralph Plummer

#### **Nominations Committee**

Class of 2026: Jean Ann McGuigan, Jeannie Douglass, Jeff Stewart Class of 2027: Alison Cihla, Glenn Gallagher, Patrick Murphy Class of 2028: Brian Woerner, Bev Kirby, Kaitlyn Swisher

### Finance and Stewardship Committee

Class of 2026: Karen Davis, Steve Stroupe, Joe Andria Class of 2027: Susan Rickards, Bob Beach, Kara Blosser Class of 2028: Blake Lillard, Barbara Hildebrand, Patrick Murphy

## United Methodist Youth Fellowship Leaders Arielle and Chad Harvey

Andre and onder raivey

Annual Conference Member
Caleb DeLeurere



Being a caregiver for a person with a long term illness can be tough, and everyone could use some support. That's in the works at Wesley! Elizabeth (Buffi) Guffey is getting together a support group for caregivers. The group will meet at Wesley United Methodist Church and will be led by a trained counselor. For more information, or to join up, please contact Buffi at 304-685-1297.



wesleymorgantown.org 503 North High St. 304-292-9485



Dear Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Redeemer, Jesus Christ.

This past year, United Methodists around the world have prayerfully participated in voting on four constitutional amendments approved by the 2024 General Conference. I am writing to share that these amendments — including the one on Regionalization — have now been overwhelmingly

ratified by the **Amendments** required threefourths of the aggregate votes from Amendment I 34,148 3,124 91.60% all annual Amendment II 33,895 2,920 92.00% conferences combined who have Amendment III 33,875 2,989 91.90% voted thus far. Some Amendment IV 33,952 2,792 92.40% conferences have not voted yet. Those

votes will be included in the final totals when received but are not expected to affect the two thirds needed for ratification.

This decision represents an important moment in our life together as a global church. The Regionalization amendment recognizes that the Body of Christ is beautifully diverse, and that our shared mission benefits from each region of the world having the flexibility to shape its ministry and fit its unique context.

In practical terms, this means that the next several years will be a season of preparation and discernment, as the Church carefully develops the structures and systems that will bring regionalization to life. The formal implementation process will take place during the 2028–2032 quadrennium. It will take time, prayer, and collaboration to fully carry out this work faithfully. During that process, our connection remains strong. We are still one Church, bound together by our shared mission, our Wesleyan theology, and our covenant to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.

Other amendments that were ratified include affirming inclusiveness, racial justice, and consistency in clergy voting. These also reflect the heart of our faith: that all people are of sacred worth, created in the image of God (Genesis 1:27), and called to live in holy love with one another (John 13:34).

John Wesley often spoke of the "catholic spirit," a generous heart that allows us to differ in opinion while uniting in love. These changes invite us to embody that spirit anew: to honor our connection across cultures and continents, to listen deeply to one another, and to extend Christ's grace to those within and beyond our beloved United Methodist Church.

I encourage each of us to hold these words from Ephesians 4:2-3 close to heart:

"Be completely humble and gentle; be patient, bearing with one another in love. Make every effort to keep the unity of the Spirit through the bond of peace."

In the months ahead, the General Church, Council of Bishops, Jurisdictional and Annual Conferences, and local churches will continue discerning together how these constitutional changes will be lived out.

Together, may we continue to experience God's renewal, grow in grace, and transform Appalachia through God's love, as one people, rooted in Christ and reaching out to the world.

As always, it is a joy to serve as your bishop. Blessings,

Debra Wallace-Padgett
Resident Bishop
Holston and West Virginia Conferences
The United Methodist Church



# Wishing our Wesley Church Family a very Merry Christmas!

Holiday Office Hours:
Christmas Eve ~ Wednesday, Dec 24th
8:00 a.m. - Noon
Christmas Day ~ Thursday, Dec 25th
& Friday, Dec 26th
Closed

Happy New Year!
May your 2026 be filled
with love, prayers, and blessings!



Holiday Office Hours: New Year's Eve ~ Wednesday, Dec 31st 8:00 a.m. - Noon New Year's Day ~ January 1, 2026 Closed **UMYF/Youth Group** 

Wesley Youth enjoying a beautiful fall day hike!

All 6th - 12th graders are welcome!
Bing a friend:)



# Youth Leaders Chad & Arielle Harvey

\*Meet on Sundays
(info below)

\*Fun Activities and
Outings!

\*Community Service
hours

\*Fellowship w/youth!

\*Faith filled lessons

& discussions



## COLLEGE BIBLE STUDY ALL COLLEGE STUDENTS WELCOME!

College Study led by Lawrence DeLeurere
Contact info: 304-319-7740 / semangeloph@gmail.com
\*Will NOT MEET Sunday, DEC 14TH-Sunday, JAN 11TH

<u>UMYF</u> \*United Methodist Youth Formation) ALL YOUTH (6th thru 12th grade) WELCOME!

Youth Leaders Chad & Arielle Harvey

Contact info: 304-619-9441 / simplysouthernphotographywv@gmail.com Youth are invited to bring a friend!!

\*Youth will not meet Sunday, December 21st-Sunday, Jan 11th



## **CIRCLE OF FRIENDS - WESLEY CHURCH 2025**



Dec 13 Dec 14 Morgantown Service League Melanie & Dave Braun

Donna Tennant

304-449-1410

#### FOOD WILL BE DISTRIBUTED FROM WESLEY'S GYM.

Please refer scheduling questions to Carolyn Hendricks (304-276-6580). Thank you!

Circle of Friends has a few open weekends which means there is an opportunity to serve others in need! Work Groups, Families, Friend Groups, or any Individual...Come and be blessed by the fellowship and ministry of helping others : )



Unspoken prayer requests may be placed on the Prayer Tree located in the back of the sanctuary. Simply write your prayer on a slip of paper, place in a clear plastic bulb, and hang on the tree.

## **Hat & Mitten Tree**

Anyone that would like to donate new hats, mittens, or scarves to the families of Scott's Run Settlement House can drop them off at the church or send a donation.

Even though we don't have the tree up this year we are still collecting items. Donations will be delivered to Scott's Run on Monday, January 4, 2026.

## **ENJOY COUPON BOOKS**

Wesley's Church is selling the NEW Enjoy Coupon books for \$40 each. All proceeds will be applied to Wesley's 2025 final apportionment obligation. Books have been ordered and will be distributed from the Church Office when they arrive.

Please notify the church office at 304-292-9485 or wesleymorgantown@gmail.com if you would like to place an order.

## **LECTIONARY STUDY**

## w/Pastor Martha

We'll be meeting weekly via Zoom on WEDNESDAYS at 6:00 PM. Everyone is invited to take part in this lively discussion of the upcoming Sunday's scripture lessons. Contact the church office to get the Zoom link. **No Study Wednesday, Dec 17th-31st.** 

## **December Lectionary Scriptures**

**December 2nd - Second Sunday of Advent** 

Isa 11:1-10

Ps 72:1-7, 18-19

Rom 15:4-13

Matt 3:1-12

#### **December 14th - Third Sunday of Advent**

Isa 35:1-10

Luke 1:46b-55

James 5:7-10

Matt 11:2-11

#### **December 21st - Fourth Sunday of Advent**

Isa 7:10-16

Ps 80:1-7, 17-19

Rom 1:1-7

Matt 1:18-25

### Wednesday, December 24th—Christmas Eve

Isa 9:2-7

Ps 96

Titus 2:11-14

Luke 2:1-20

#### December 28th—1st Sunday after Christmas

Isa 52:7-10

Ps 98

Heb 1:1-4 (5-12)

John 1:1-14



#### **Wesley Church Office Hours & Contact Info:**

9:00 a.m. to 3:00 p.m. (Monday - Friday) 304.292.9485 / wesleymorgantown@gmail.com website: wesleymorgantown.org

#### **WESLEY STAFF CONTACT INFORMATION:**

Martha Ognibene, Pastor

304-813-7214 / mlsognibene@gmail.com

Marianna Miller, Church Office

304-685-6883 / wesleymorgantown@gmail.com

Lya Stroupe, Director or Music & Children's Ed. 304-290-5436 / lyastroupe@comcast.net

Zach Beckett, Building Care Specialist 304-644-2605 / zachbeckett7@gmail.com

Colton Davis, Media Tech Coordinator 304-685-3609 / Wesleyintermedia@gmail.com

Dan Headley, Custodian

304-777-7921 / danheadley7@gmail.com

Rebekah Bledsoe, Bus Driver

304-276-0320 / rebekahbledsoe@juno.com

Ann Gore , Organist

304-673-4124 / musicannconcord@yahoo.com

Joe Andria, Accompanist

304-288-1330 / sax711@hotmail.com

**Coleman Guenther, Bookkeeper** 304-/ wesleymorgantownfinance@gmail.com

Wesley United Methodist Church 503 N. High Street Morgantown, WV 26505



### **Non-Profit Organization**

U.S. Postage Paid

Morgantown, WV

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