

JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

MARCH 2026

The Partner



“When Fast Is Slow”

“I love Lent ... because it invites us to slow down, to become intentional with our faith, and to re-center our lives on Christ. I have found no practice that does this more purposefully than fasting ... This fast may take many forms, such as abstaining from food, social media, habits, comforts, or practices that dull our attentiveness to God, but its purpose is singular: to make space for God to reorder our loves, reshape our minds, and reform our lives. Fasting is embodied prayer. It declares that Christ is our true sustenance and that our deepest hunger is for the living God.” ~ Bishop Latrelle Miller Easterling

Last month, just before the season of Lent began, Bishop Latrelle Easterling of our Baltimore Washington Conference wrote us a beautiful and compelling Lenten letter. In it, she shared the words above about Lent and about fasting. I recommend the entire letter to you, accessible via the link below:

<https://www.bwcumc.org/news-and-views/bishop-easterlings-lenten-letter-2026/>

Lately, and more than usual, I have been yearning to slow the time down.

I have 2 Thomas Kinkadee calendars, one I got for Christmas that hangs in my church office, and another I bought for myself that hangs in my den. They both had beautiful January prints of landscapes covered with snow. It seems like it was just days ago that I turned the page on those calendars to February, so poignant because I did it so reluctantly. And here it is, March already, and the pages have turned again.

Lent is helping. Like Bishop Easterling says, Lent invites us to slow down. Not that we do.

I’m working at it. Our Ash Wednesday service last month got me moving, slower I mean. The music and liturgy were so beautiful, I found myself relishing the moment, my cup filled with Christ. How do I stay in the moment? I did! In the days since, I have remembered the moments and even returned to them!

Then I read the Bishop’s letter, and I was moved by her words about fasting. I had never seen fasting defined before as she defined it. “Embodied Prayer!” Embodied Prayer is prayer put into practice, so that I experience Jesus sustaining me, keeping me going.

“Pastor’s Letter” continued on p. 2

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"Pastor's Letter" continued from p. 1

I found the idea so meaningful that the purpose of fasting can be way more than abstaining from certain foods or habits during Lent. Fasting's purpose is to "make space for God" to shape what we think, shape what and who we love, and shape how we live! So go ahead and give up that chocolate, or the fast food, or whatever else it may be ... after dinner sweets for me. Thing is, how will giving any of this up for Lent, help you make space for God to impact your living? I'm sure it can, yet how?



With help from our Bishop, I have some goals for Lent that I've never had before. And they are goals I am hopeful about sustaining after Lent. I am working at being a calmer driver, and yes, a bit nicer. I am looking for opportunities to engage in conversation that shows that I can differ with a neighbor or they can differ with me, yet we can do so peaceably, and have a dialogue that blesses both of us. This month of Lent, I want to fast from division, fast from judgement, and fast from accumulation that deadens my senses to the Love and Majesty of God all around me.

I want a fast from what speeds me up, from what makes the calendar pages flip too fast.
I want a fast that's slow.
I pray that for you as well.

Blessed and Holy Lent,
Pastor Doug

NEW ROOF NEEDED FOR ROWE HALL

Roofing renovations have begun for Rowe Hall. Thank you for your offerings which help with the upkeep of our beautiful church buildings.



Daylight Saving Time Begins
Sunday, March 8, 2026
Don't forget to move your
clocks forward one hour!!



MEDICAL EQUIPMENT AVAILABLE

The Church has found an extra wheelchair and walker. If anyone is in need of either of these items, please call the church office at 301-733-0391 or see Jim Fritsch on Sunday.



THE SOUNDS OF JOHN WESLEY —

ORGAN UPDATE



Good news! The repairs to the organ have been completed.

We recently had some major issues with the organ that caused the combination action component to fail. The combination action controls the organ stops, and therefore the different tones and volume.

Lewis & Hitchcock, Inc. has replaced the complete relay and combination action system with a new, upgraded system. The new system will also give us options we did not previously have on our organ. The total cost of this upgrade is \$45,500.00.


The repairs/upgrade have now been completed. The organ is not only fully functional as it was before, but also has the capacity to do so much more. A Lewis & Hitchcock technician will be meeting with Stephen to go over these new options. In the meantime, the organ project is complete and we will be hearing more of those magnificent organ sounds in our sanctuary.

We thank the congregation for your prayers, your commitment, and your generosity to keep our magnificent organ in quality condition.

The Sounds of John Wesley is an ongoing capital campaign for keeping the organ in pristine condition. There are Sounds of John Wesley envelopes, designated for the organ, included with your monthly giving envelopes. With that fund, we were able to cover a good portion of this cost. Please continue to use them so that we may continue to maintain the condition of the organ, which is currently insured for a \$1.5 million replacement cost.

Our organ is part of the legacy of John Wesley United Methodist Church.

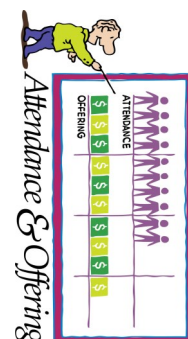
“Whatever you do, do all things to the glory of God.”

Barbara Hoover,
The Sounds of John Wesley 
and Property Committee

Attendance & Offering Report

Date	In-person	Online	Total Attendance	Total Offering
Feb. 1	30	1	31	\$ 1,189.74
Feb. 8	30	1	31	1,601.61
Feb. 15	29	1	30	1,029.74
Feb. 22	25	-	25	1,669.74

~ Blessings, Sheila & Sherry



FROM THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP

In Step with the Spirit — March 2026



Joy That Sustains Us

“The joy of the Lord is your strength.” - Nehemiah 8:10

Joy is often misunderstood. We sometimes think of it as happiness—something that shows up when life is easy and fades when things are hard. But the joy Scripture speaks of runs much deeper than circumstances. It is a steady, sustaining strength that comes from knowing who God is and trusting that He is with us.

Nehemiah spoke these words to a weary people. They had worked hard, faced opposition, and carried heavy burdens. And yet, they were reminded that their strength did not come from their own endurance, but from the joy of the Lord. Not joy they manufactured. Not joy dependent on the moment. But joy rooted in God’s faithfulness.

That same joy is available to us today.

Joy sustains us when we feel tired.

Joy steadies us when life feels uncertain.

Joy reminds us that God is still at work—even when the road is long.

As a church family, we are called to be people who carry this kind of joy into our worship, our ministries, our relationships, and our community. Not because everything is perfect, but because God is present.

Where Does Joy Grow?

Joy grows when we:

- Remember what God has already done
- Stay connected to one another
- Choose gratitude over discouragement
- Trust God’s promises more than our fears

Joy is not the absence of struggle—it is the presence of God in the midst of it.

A Simple Practice for March:

At the end of each day this month, take a moment to name one thing for which you are grateful. Write it down, say it out loud, or offer it in prayer.

Over time, these small moments of gratitude help us see joy at work—even on ordinary days.



FROM THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP—CONTINUED

Your Call to Action This Month:

This March, I invite you to:

- Bring joy into our shared life together—through encouragement, laughter, and presence
- Support one another in times of challenge
- Look for ways to serve with a joyful heart

Joy is contagious. When we live it, others feel it. And when the church lives in the joy of the Lord, it becomes a source of strength for the whole community.

May God’s joy be your strength this month—and may it carry us forward together.

In Step with the Spirit,

Ryan L. Chapin

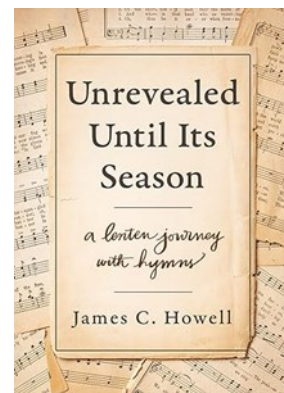
Leadership Team Chair of John Wesley UMC

WEDNESDAYS HEAVENLY LIVING WORKSHOP

We are continuing in a 6-week Zoom discussion each Wednesday evening as part of Wednesday Night Alive from 7:00 pm until 8:00 pm. (Meeting ID: 828 4006 3526 Passcode: 404756 Phone: 1-301-715-8592) Please join us!!!!

“Unrevealed Until Its Season — A Lenten Journey with Hymns”

By James C. Howell



These hymns are all readily available in hymnals such as “The United Methodist Hymnal” (UMH) or on streaming services like YouTube. Try different combinations of reading lyrics and listening to recordings of the day’s hymn.

There is a meditation associated with each hymn in the book.

Hymn-Inspired Lenten Wednesday Night Alive Meditation Schedule:

“Jesus, Lover of My Soul” – 479	March 4
“It Is Well with My Soul” – 377	March 11
“Be Thou My Vision” – 451	March 18
“Joyful, Joyful, We Adore Thee” – 89	March 25



Please Join Us for Special Events & Observances for Lent 2026!



In addition to our Sunday Worship during Lent ... please join us for any or all of our unique and special gatherings during Lent for worship and fellowship.

Beginning the Wednesdays following Ash Wednesday, we join with neighboring Hagerstown United Methodist Churches for a series of **Wednesday Lenten Services** to renew a favorite way of experiencing Lent together! The evenings will begin with a meal at 6 pm, followed by worship at 7 pm. We will host the event on Wednesday, March 4 serving the meal and leading the service in our beautiful sanctuary with our Chancel Choir providing Special Music. Pastor Doug will preach on March 25 at Shiloh UMC. We hope you will join us as often as you can! Here is the full schedule:

- Wednesday, February 18 @ John Wesley UMC for Ash Wednesday
- Wednesday, February 25 @ Otterbein UMC
- Wednesday, March 4 @ John Wesley UMC
- Wednesday, March 11 @ Grace UMC
- Wednesday, March 18 @ Emmanuel UMC
- Wednesday, March 25 @ Shiloh/Washington Square UMC



These Wednesday Lenten Services will lead us into Holy Week, this most reverent week that remembers the Passion of our Lord Jesus Christ, that led to His Cross, to save us all! We will gather at John Wesley for a **Good Friday Service of Tenebrae** on Friday, April 3 at 7 pm. Earlier that Good Friday, HARC will offer again its traditional Cross Walk at City Park. Details about the start time and exact meeting place at the Park will be provided soon.

All of these Lenten experiences will prepare us for a Glorious Easter on Sunday, April 5. We will celebrate our Easter Festival that joyous morning at our 10:30 worship time. We will fill our floral cross again that morning and then rejoice in Jesus' Resurrection with memorable music with our newly updated organ and celebration!

Please make every effort to join us for as many of these offerings as you can. You will be blessed!



My Thoughts – A Peek Inside

Having just experienced Transfiguration Sunday and now participating in the journey through Lent, I am reminded of the power to be transformed. Not just as an individual, but also as a church.



I've been working with the Leadership Team for one year and can report that, as a TEAM, they have made great strides. They have been willing to learn many things that were unfamiliar a year ago. They have taken bold steps in faith to look beyond the obvious and seek the unknown. And, they have learned to lean on each other and embrace God's unwavering presence to sustain them.

However, this year is truly a very important year for the Team as they prune what is not producing fruit, clear the path for new opportunities and wait on the harvest of their investment of time and energy for new ministries. This truly is the year to stay connected to Christ Jesus, the vine, which supplies their existence.

Since the congregation is also a vital part of the vine, please join the Leadership Team on:

Sunday, March 8th
Immediately following Worship
For a Lunch & Learn
Social Hall
11:30 am – 12:45 pm

The Leadership Team is hosting this presentation in order for them to share information about the current budget and ministries and also share their work for sustainability and future ministries. Everyone is invited to gather for soup and conversation as collectively we share our joys and concerns and realistically ponder options and opportunities for the congregation at John Wesley.

John Wesley is fortunate to have devoted and committed leadership and you can help by breaking bread with them and learning more about where they feel God is leading.

Make plans to join the Leadership Team on March 8th!

Many Blessings!

Cindy Reeder
 Vitality Consultant

Connecting from the Sharing Team

Sharing Team met in February as we move into the Lent and Easter season for 2026.

- ◆ JW Service Team has been holding Warming Shelter Saturdays during the months of January and February, with a light lunch prepared by Janessa.
- ◆ Ash Wednesday, which was Feb. 18, marked the beginning of Lent. We celebrated Shrove Tuesday the evening before, with a pancake supper in our Social Hall. Starting that following week, several of the local United Methodist churches will be hosting Wednesday evening community Lenten services, beginning with a meal and fellowship at 6:00. John Wesley's host week will be March 4. See complete schedule elsewhere in this newsletter.
- ◆ Wednesday Night Alive events will continue to be held during Lent with a modified schedule. Beginning at 6:00 for a meal and fellowship, 6:30 for a time of worship, and then 7:00 for available activities. On March 4, attendees will be encouraged to attend the Lenten worship service being held in John Wesley's sanctuary.
- ◆ The Youth Group will be taking part in the upcoming Ignite Conference Retreat in Ocean City in March 20-22.
- ◆ A new Young Adult group has been formed and meets regularly during the WNA activities time.
- ◆ A new Members Class is also currently being held.
- ◆ Micah's Backpacks continues to do well. We are now sponsoring 20 students from the Ruth Ann Monroe School.
- ◆ Kitchen Committee reminds everyone to please help keep our kitchen organized and clean so we can continue to have it available for use to our various committees. The Annual Maintenance inspection on the appliances has been completed, along with a repair to the ice machine.
- ◆ The Heavenly Living Workshop study "Unrevealed Until Its Season" will be a Zoom study only. The Zoom Meditation on Thursday afternoons will continue to meet (details of dates and topics can be found elsewhere in this newsletter.)
- ◆ Coffee Fellowship continues the second Sunday of the month with March 8 being hosted by the UMW Wilson Wright Circle.

Sharing Team will be taking a break during the month of March. Therefore the next scheduled meeting of the Sharing Team will be held Monday, April 13 @ 7:00 pm via Zoom.

Anyone is welcome to join and share at this meeting. If you would like a link to the meeting, contact Karen in the church office or Barb or Greg.

Blessings,

Barb & Greg Hoover



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
<p>8am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC</p>	<p>7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>		<p>4:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - Lenten Series (JW) 7pm - WNA & Lent PM</p>	<p>8:30am - Men's Breakfast 10am - Micah's 2:30pm - Zoom Bible</p>	<p>7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	
<p>8am - Sunday School 10am - Coffee Fellowship 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 11:30am - Lunch & Learn 1:30pm - New Light MCC</p>	<p>7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	<p>10am - ARC Packers</p>	<p>4:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - Lenten Series 6pm - WNA Dinner 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - WNA Programming</p>	<p>10am - Micah's 2:30pm - Zoom Bible</p>	<p>7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	
<p>8am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC</p>	<p>PARTNER DEADLINE 7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	<p>12pm - HARC Meeting 6pm - Wilson Wright Circle</p>	<p>10am - Susanna Circle 4:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - Lenten Series 6pm - WNA Dinner 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - WNA Programming</p>	<p>10am - Micah's 2:30pm - Zoom Bible 6:30pm - Property Team</p>	<p>Ignite Youth Conference 7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	
<p>Ignite Youth Conference 8am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC</p>	<p>6pm - Leadership Team 7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	<p>10am - ARC Packers</p>	<p>4:30pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - Lenten Series 6pm - WNA Dinner 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - WNA Programming</p>	<p>10am - Micah's 2:30pm - Zoom Bible</p>	<p>7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	
<p>8am - Sunday School 10:30am - PALM SUNDAY 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC</p>	<p>7pm - Hope and Gratitude</p>	<p>Candy/Making</p>	<p>1</p>	<p>2</p>	<p>3</p>	<p>4</p>



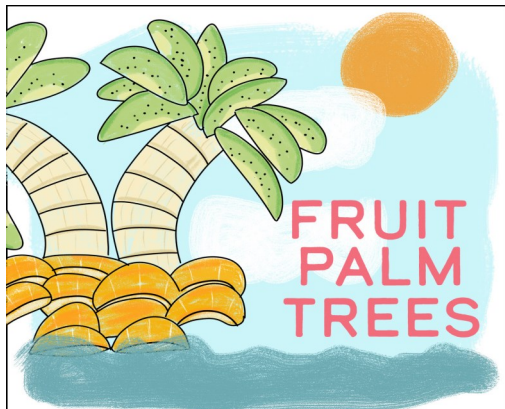
- 2nd: Mia Baughman
Ralph Chapin
Larry Gibson
- 4th: Samantha Brandt
Emily Harrelson
- 6th: Stephanie Snyder Pompa
- 8th: Beverly Hoffman
- 10th: Keith Deau
- 11th: Crystal Richards
- 12th: Garey Diefenderfer
- 13th: Tina Feigley
- 14th: Katherine Fowler
Iris Kresge
- 15th: Andrea Wine

- 16th: Lori Baughman
- 18th: Adria Moyer
Susan Saunders
- 19th: James Snurr
- 20th: Lisa Blair Palmer
- 21st: Frances Parks
- 25th: Jacob Fisher
Matthew Payne
- 26th: David Wine
- 28th: Rebecca Shaw
- 29th: Allison Wine
- 30th: Major Osborne
Carole Trumpower



(If your birthday or anniversary is this month and does not appear on this list or appears incorrectly, please call the church office or email us at jwumcmd@yahoo.com and let us know. Thank you!)

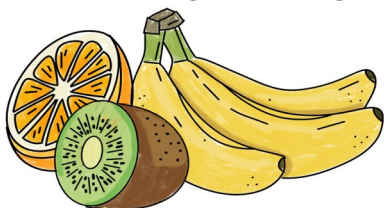
PUZZLE PAGE



These cheerful "palm trees" make a bright reminder of the celebration that greeted Jesus as he entered Jerusalem.

What you need:

- Bananas (for the tree trunks)
- Kiwis or green grapes (for the palm leaves)
- Mandarin oranges (for the ground)



What you do:

1. Slice bananas in half lengthwise and place vertically on a plate.
2. Arrange kiwi slices or grapes at the top to form palm fronds.
3. Add oranges at the base.
4. Serve immediately or chill until ready to serve.

Scripture Tie-In:

"Blessed is he who comes in the name of the Lord!"
—Matthew 21:9 (NIV)



Puzzle!

HOW'S THE WEATHER?

Use the code below to fill in these forecasts in places where Jesus traveled:

CODE:

A = ☺	D = ❄	H = ❄	M = ☆	P = ◆	T = ■	W = ☒
B = ♠	E = +	I = ✨	N = ↑	R = ●	U = □	Y = ↻
C = ☼	G = ✨	L = ★	O = ↓	S = ○	V = ☒	Z = ↻

Mt. Hermon ○ ↑ ↓ ☒

Jericho ❄ ↓ ■

Jerusalem ☆ ✨ ★ ❄

Dead Sea Area ■ ● ↓ ◆ ✨ ☼ ☺ ★ ❄ ✨ ☺ ■

Sea of Galilee ✨ □ ○ ■ ↻ ☒ ✨ ↑ ❄ ○

Mediterranean Coast ♠ ● ✨ ✨ ↻ ↻





JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

MARCH 2026 *PARTNER*

VISION STATEMENT:

“We strive to be a Christ Centered Church, advancing the Kingdom of God by nurturing and ministering to all peoples.”

MISSION STATEMENT:

“Our Mission is to make disciples for Jesus Christ through: Vibrant Worship, Christian Fellowship, Spiritual Growth, Loving Service, and the Sharing of God’s Word.”

