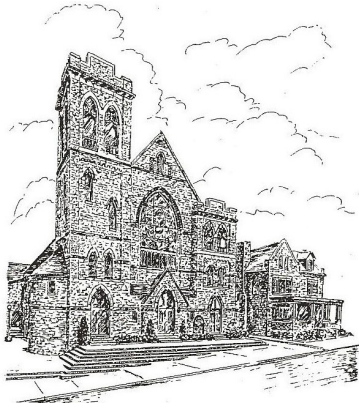




JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

SEPTEMBER 2026

The Partner

“God’s Compelling Will”

Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven.” — from “The Lord’s Prayer” in Matthew 6:10

PASTOR:

Rev. Doug Hoffman
revdhoff@gmail.com

DIRECTOR OF MUSIC/ORGANIST:

Stephen Pompa
stephenpompa26@gmail.com

VITALITY CONSULTANT:

Cindy Reeder
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CHURCH SECRETARY:

jwumcmd@yahoo.com

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With His “Lord’s Prayer,” Jesus taught us a prayer upon which to model all of our prayers.

“Hallowed be thy name” invites prayer full of more adoration and praise!

“Give us this day our daily bread” gives us permission to share with God our needs and petitions.

“Forgive us ... as we forgive” teaches us to confess sin, ask for Grace, and then become agents of Grace.

“Lead us not into temptation” shows us how to pray for the discernment needed to avoid doing harm.

“Thy Kingdom come. Thy Will be done, on earth as it is in heaven” teaches us that prayer must always submit our will to God’s Will. It then helps us experience how compelling God’s Will can be!

Most everything we do as a congregation begins with prayer.

Every meeting we have begins with prayer that asks God to help us do His Will. We pray that God’s Holy Spirit will help us understand God’s Will and then align our will with God’s Will.

It is a wonder to behold the activity of God with us, moving in our hearts and souls and minds, helping us see what God wants us to see. It is a wonder to behold, when Jesus guides us to common ground and common understanding around a new idea, a new understanding, or a new discovery. It is a wonder to behold when our prayer to do God’s will, leads to God sending us someone new, a new friend who has valuable gifts, insights, and direction to offer our ministry!

It all helps us discern what God’s Will is for us, and where God is leading us next!

Our ministry and mission is impacting our community so much, because God keeps sending us new friends to help us share the Love of Jesus Christ in new ways. In past years, God sent us new partners who led us to community service through REACH. God provided new friends, who led us to Micah’s Backpack and its outreach to hungry children. God sent the Hope and Gratitude Narcotics Anonymous group our way to

“Pastor’s Letter” continued on p. 2

"Pastor's Letter" continued from p. 1

find a home. Four years ago, God led our youth to fellowship with veterans in recovery at the Northpoint Home, just blocks away from us. On September 5, our young people will join the Northpoint Vets in more rich fellowship, at a Flying Boxcar baseball game. Two years ago, God sent us Janessa Chapman to show us how to join her in feeding our community on a weekly basis.

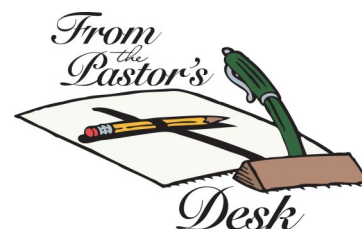
Our latest new partners include Brooks House, Habitat for Humanity, and professionals in the building trades who have befriended our vision to utilize 131 N. Potomac St. (the old parsonage) for a valuable common good. They are enthused by the remarkable quality of the building and all the good it can do.

One of our newest friends is Melanie Watts, an administrator at Habitat, who experienced and embraced the vision and mission of John Wesley through her attendance at Wednesday Night Alive (WNA). She volunteered to lead our summer WNA Meals, so that its valuable ministry avoided a summer gap. Melanie also secured a grant through her work at Habitat to provide a unique 8-week Financial Literacy Training, customized for Young Adults, to build the foundational habits that will allow them to afford a home one day. Melanie will lead the training on Wednesday nights, at WNA, for our new Young Adult Fellowship and for any other interested young people from our Hagerstown HUB churches.

It is this phenomenal energy that God has gathered around our ministry efforts, that leads us at John Wesley to press on in our resolve to become and remain a congregation full of vitality and viability. We pray daily for this. We pray that God's Will be done. We pray for God's Spirit to show us the way. When God answers our prayers and our faithfulness like God has, it becomes most compelling to follow the Will He shows us!

In Christ's Love,

Pastor Doug



"WEDNESDAY NIGHT ALIVE" IS BACK!

We are excited to announce that Wednesday Night Alive (WNA) is back again for another full year! After its successful trial run, WNA is back for its rich weekly offerings of fellowship, worship, and enrichment. It's a family night for all ages.

We will gather on Wednesday evenings in our Social Hall at 6:00 pm starting this month on September 9th. We will begin with a meal at 6 pm, continue with worship at 6:30, and then at 7 will offer an expanded menu of small group options for all ages. Small group options will include Bible Study, games in the Social Hall, meditation, and workshops on a range of topics and how-to's.

Worship will be informal and welcome a variety of musicians to lead us in a rich variety of expressions to draw us ever closer to God!

We are hopeful about WNA being a Family Fun Night full of connection and empowerment for us all! Please join us!



CONNECTING FROM THE SHARING TEAM

Sharing Team met in August.

- ♦ During the months of June and July, John Wesley hosted a Cooling Station on Saturday afternoons in our Social Hall, to include a light lunch and fellowship.
- ♦ An ice cream social was enjoyed, following the UMW Women's Sunday service on August 23.
- ♦ Bell Choir and Choir Rehearsals, Wednesday Night Alive, Wednesday HLW Study or Thursday Zoom will resume in September. See additional articles in this month's newsletter for details and times.
- ♦ Sunday, September 13 is the annual church picnic at Marty Snook (Halfway) Park, Pavilion 4. It's not too late to sign up. Reservations are due by September 8. Find detailed information elsewhere in this newsletter, including the sign-up form. Plan to join us!
- ♦ Coffee Fellowship time will resume in October on the second Sunday of the month.
- ♦ Micah's Backpacks will be starting a new school year. Any participation at John Wesley will be on a limited basis this year. Thank you for your past support. Watch for updates.
- ♦ Lunches with Love continues to operate on Sundays. Janessa is currently preparing and delivering about 60 lunches each week. She could use some volunteer help after church. Food and monetary donations are also always needed.
- ♦ Mummers Parade is right around the corner. The Youth Group will soon begin working on plans for this year's event.
- ♦ The Houses of Worship Tour will be back on the schedule this year. John Wesley will once again be participating.



The next scheduled Sharing Team meeting will be on Monday, September 14 at 7:00 pm via Zoom, when we will be discussing upcoming fall events. If you would like to join us, contact Barb or Greg.

Blessings,

Barb & Greg Hoover

Attendance & Offering Report

Date	In-person	Online	Total	Total Offering
August 2	25	-	25	\$ 2,459.74
August 9	32	-	32	1,990.91
August 16	25	5	30	944.74
August 23	31	-	31	1,729.74

~ Blessings, Sheila & Sherry



SAVE THE DATE!

JOHN WESLEY CHURCH PICNIC

Sunday, September 13

Marty Snook/Halfway Park - Pavilion #4



The picnic is being held on Sunday, September 13 - the same day that the fall schedule resumes - at Marty Snook Halfway Park. It will be in Pavilion #4 again this year.

Pavilion #4 is the last pavilion back (and easily accessed off of Bower Avenue, if you're coming from that direction). There is parking right there by the pavilion, the area is pretty flat. There is also playground equipment at that pavilion.

The committee is starting to work on plans, but the time will be 2:00 pm – 5:00 pm, as in the past. We plan to have chicken again and some special cool treats from the *Sweet Blessings* ice cream truck after the meal. Some vespers and hymns, and as always, fun and games and good fellowship.

Chicken, drinks, and place settings will be provided. Bring a dish to share. Friends and family are welcome. Just be sure to sign them up. If you would be willing to help with the picnic, or provide a Bingo prize, please see Barb or Greg Hoover. Additional details will be out closer to the date.

Please let us know if you are planning to attend. We are going to try to accommodate your choice of chicken pieces. So complete the form below and place it in the offering plate or you can email them directly to Barb Hoover at bhoov72@aol.com. Additional forms can be found on the table by the ramp door. Reservations are due by Tuesday, September 8.

~ Your Family Life Committee ~

WE HOPE TO SEE YOU THERE!



JWUMC CHURCH PICNIC – Sunday, September 13

2:00 - 5:00 pm – Marty Snook/Halfway Park – Pavilion #4

Chicken, drinks, and place settings provided – Bring a Dish to share!

Name: _____

No. Adults: _____ Children's names and ages: _____

Please note your Fried Chicken preference:

_____ Breast _____ Wings (2) _____ Thigh _____ Leg

WOMEN'S SUNDAY 2026

Women's Sunday is a day set aside to praise God's action in our lives and to celebrate the work of the women of John Wesley United Methodist Church.

Officially there are two Circles, Wilson Wright Circle and Susanna Circle. The Wilson Wright Circle manages the Micah's Back Pack project and Susanna Circle creates the cards that are sent to our church members who are unable to attend church.



On Women's Sunday these groups prepared and presented the worship service which is an annual August event. This year they presented messages describing selected symbols of the church, The Paschal Candle, The Cross, The Trinity, The Fish, The Alpha and Omega. Selected scriptures and hymns were enjoyed for each of the symbols. Of course, the biblical significance of the symbol was explained. The goals of this group are education in addition to service for the church and developing wonderful friendships. Following the service an ice cream social was enjoyed in the Social Hall.

New members are always welcomed. The Wilson Wright Circle meets on the third Tuesday evening of each month at a restaurant. Contact Barbara Hoover for information. The Susanna Circle meets in the Church Social Hall at 10 am on the Third Wednesday of each month September through May. Contact Barbara Diefenderfer for information.



Our prayers and sympathy
are extended to
the family and friends of

Robert Fennel
who passed away on
July 30, 2026

REST FOR THE SOUL

Studies show many Americans don't get enough sleep, and the effects can take a toll on both body and mind. Whether it's a packed schedule or restless nights, a lack of rest makes it harder to think clearly, stay focused and care for our overall well-being. Over time, that constant fatigue begins to wear us down.



Our spiritual lives follow a similar rhythm. When we rush from one task to the next without pausing to spend time with God, we can feel just as drained. We need consistent, quiet moments with Him to stay grounded, encouraged and strong in our faith.

Even Jesus made space for this kind of rest. Luke 5:16 tells us that He often withdrew to quiet places to pray. If He needed that time with the Father, how much more do we? When we step away from the noise and listen for God's voice, we find the renewal our souls have been longing for.

~ Newsletter Newsletter, September 2026



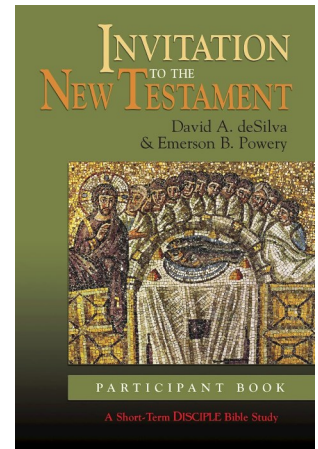
**CHURCH OFFICE
WILL BE CLOSED**

Monday, September 7

WEDNESDAYS HEAVENLY LIVING WORKSHOP

We have an opportunity to engage in a 8-week Zoom/Conference Room discussion each Wednesday evening as part of Wednesday Night Alive from 7:00 pm until 8:00 pm beginning September 9. (Meeting ID: 828 4006 3526 Passcode: 404756 Phone: 1-301-715-8592) Please join us!!!

“Invitation to the New Testament: Short-Term Disciple Bible Study” by David deSilva & Emerson Powery



Matthew Explore the writings of the New Testament using the story of Jesus as the starting point. This survey of the testament looks at how the early church took ownership of and was shaped by the story of Jesus and how the church learned how to develop as disciples and create communities of faith.

Participants find a deeper conversation with the writers of the New Testament and a renewal of our commitment to be shaped — personally and communally — by the story of Jesus.

In the weekly video segments, listen as scholars fascinate you with facts and information that opens new understanding and enlightenment for your group. In the second video, sit in on a table conversation between guest scholars and debate key issues in the text. Participants gain a deeper understanding and appreciation of the New Testament as an integral part of the Christian Bible and a renewed discovery of our identity in God and God's vision for all things .

Session titles:

1. Jesus Calls Us into God's Redemption Story – September 9
2. Jesus Calls Us to a Transformed Life – September 16
3. Jesus Calls Us to Minister to a Hostile World – September 23
4. Jesus Calls Us to Complex Communities of Faith – September 30
5. Jesus Calls Us to Serve One Another – October 7
6. Jesus Calls Us to a New Relationship with Tradition – October 14
7. Jesus Calls Us to Live in Light of His Coming Again – October 21
8. Jesus Calls Us to Experience the Gifts of His Dying and Rising – October 28

WESLEYAN CLASS SUNDAY SCHOOL

The Wesleyan Class meets at **9:00** on Sunday morning in the Wesleyan Room. We have a short devotion, a prayer and two hymns. We are currently using the Cokesbury Adult Bible Studies curriculum for our lessons. And occasionally we will put the curriculum aside for something a little different in order to share thoughts and discussion. We would welcome anyone who would like to teach on occasion. There is a Teacher guide book that accompanies each lesson and a short DVD video.



We invite and would love for you to also come and join us on a Sunday morning! Our fall session will begin on September 6.

Blessings to you.



HAGERSTOWN'S MUMMERS' PARADE

Save the date — October 31st!

We will be reserving seats to view the Mummers' Parade again this year. The Youth will be selling all kinds of yummy concessions. So plan to join us for this annual Hagerstown tradition! Tickets will go on sale October 1st.



GOOD-BYE TO OUR CHURCH SECRETARY

Dear John Wesley Members & Friends,

I am very grateful for the chance to have served this church family for the last 5 years. Thank you for your support and kindness during my time here. I have decided to follow a different ministry adventure at Heritage Academy. May God's blessings be upon you as you follow God's leading. John Wesley UMC and its congregation will always remain in my prayers.

Much Love,

Karen Stamper



FROM THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP

In Step with the Spirit — September 2026



Gentleness That Heals

"Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." - Philippians 4:5

As we continue our journey, *In Step with the Spirit*, we've been discovering how the Fruit of the Spirit shapes our lives and our life together as a church. This month, we reflect on gentleness... a quiet strength that has the power to heal relationships, encourage weary hearts, and reveal the nearness of Christ.

Gentleness is often misunderstood. Some see it as weakness or passivity, but Scripture paints a very different picture. Jesus, the King of Kings, described Himself as "gentle and humble in heart." His gentleness wasn't a lack of strength... it was strength guided by love.

Paul writes, "Let your gentleness be evident to all. The Lord is near." What a beautiful connection. Gentleness is not merely good manners or a pleasant personality. It is evidence that we are living with the awareness that Christ is present among us.

When we remember that the Lord is near... our words become more thoughtful. Our reactions become more patient. Our disagreements become more gracious. Our relationships become stronger.

Every day we have opportunities to choose gentleness. Sometimes it's listening before speaking. Sometimes it's assuming the best in another person. Sometimes it's offering grace when we could have insisted on being right. We never know what someone else is carrying. A gentle word may be exactly what another person needs to keep going.

Where Gentleness Grows:

Gentleness grows:

- When we choose understanding over judgment.
- When we listen more than we speak.
- When we correct with love instead of criticism.
- When we remember that every person we meet is deeply loved by God.
- One gentle conversation can restore hope.

One gentle response can calm conflict. One gentle invitation can help someone feel they truly belong. That is how Christ often works... quietly, patiently, and lovingly.

A Simple Practice for September:

Before responding in a difficult conversation this month, pause and silently pray:

"Lord, help my words reflect Your heart."

FROM THE HEART OF LEADERSHIP - CONTINUED

Then listen carefully before you answer. You may be surprised how often that brief prayer changes not only your response, but the entire conversation.

Your Call to Action This Month:

This September, I invite you to intentionally practice gentleness:

- Welcome someone with warmth and genuine interest.
- Speak words that encourage rather than criticize.
- Offer grace when someone makes a mistake.
- Listen carefully before offering your opinion.
- Remember that every interaction is an opportunity to reflect the character of Christ.
- Our church is at its strongest when people experience not only the truth of the Gospel but also the gentleness of God's people.

May John Wesley UMC continue to be a place where people encounter both... a community where truth is spoken in love, grace is freely given, and every person is welcomed with the gentle heart of Christ.

In Step with the Spirit,

Ryan L. Chapin

Leadership Team Chair of John Wesley UMC

****Little reminder that folks are always welcome to the Leadership Team Meetings, the only caveat is that at the end there may be a closed SPRC (HR) session, if necessary. The September meeting is on the 28th at 6:00 pm in the Conference Room.**



CHOIRS ARE BACK!

Choirs are starting back up for the year. If you are interested in Singing or Ringing, please see a current member of the choir! Bell Choir rehearsals are on Wednesdays at 4:00 pm, and Chancel Choir rehearsals are also Wednesdays at 5:15. Please consider joining us as we “make a joyful noise to the Lord!”



LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATES

Key Decisions & Updates from our meeting on August 24, 2026.



- ♦ Non-profit paperwork for Connexion, Inc. was signed... the Articles of Incorporation and Bylaws. The current Leadership Team members will serve as the initial board of directors until replacement members are recruited.
- ♦ Property Rental (131 First Floor): Approved renting the first floor (excluding the kitchen) of 131 to Dawn Beckley for \$200/month with church-provided utilities through the end of the year. It will transition to a month-to-month arrangement afterward, pending construction timelines.
- ♦ Church Secretary Vacancy: Karen Stamper submitted a two-week notice. The team unanimously authorized SPRC members to interview candidate Melissa Price for the Interim Office Manager role and negotiate pay/hours, while Ryan updates job descriptions regarding wedding and financial duties.

Upcoming Events

- ♦ Charge Conference: Scheduled for Saturday, October 24 at Otterbein.





Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
30	31	1	2	3	4	5
			4pm - Bell Rehearsal 5:15pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - WNA Meal	8:30am - Men's Breakfast	7pm - Hope and Gratitude	6pm - Flying Boxcars
6	7	8	9	10	11	12
9am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC	Office Closed 7pm - Hope and Gratitude		4pm - Bell Rehearsal 5:15pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - WNA Meal 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - Heavenly Living 7pm - WNA Programming	2:30pm - Zoom	7pm - Hope and Gratitude	
13	14	15	16	17	18	19
9am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC 2pm - Church Picnic	7pm - Hope and Gratitude 7pm - Sharing Team	12pm - HARC Meeting 6pm - Wilson Wright Circle	10am - Susanna Circle 4pm - Bell Rehearsal 5:15pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - WNA Meal 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - Heavenly Living 7pm - WNA Programming	2:30pm - Zoom 7pm - Trustees/Property	3pm - Lighthouse (HARC) 7pm - Hope and Gratitude	
20	21	22	23	24	25	26
9am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC	PARTNER DEADLINE 7pm - Hope and Gratitude		4pm - Bell Rehearsal 5:15pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - WNA Meal 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - Heavenly Living 7pm - WNA Programming	2:30pm - Zoom 6pm - HCCA Board	7pm - Hope and Gratitude	
27	28	29	30	1	2	3
9am - Sunday School 10:30am - Sunday 11am - Lunches w/love 1:30pm - New Light MCC	6pm - Leadership Meeting 7pm - Hope and Gratitude		4pm - Bell Rehearsal 5:15pm - Choir Rehearsal 6pm - WNA Meal 6:30pm - WNA Worship 7pm - Heavenly Living 7pm - WNA Programming			



September Birthday

- 5th: Francis Brown
Erin Moyer-Shevock
Bennett Will
- 7th: Caitlyn Donley
Lori Routzahn
- 8th: Rikker Chapin
- 15th: Zachary Kimmel
- 17th: Sarah Saunders
- 18th: James Willson
- 22nd: Rev. Patrick Ricker
- 27th: Patricia Eckard
- 29th: James McMurtrie
Richard McNew
- 30th: Amy Rowan

September Anniversary

- 1st: Norris & Barbara Diefenderfer
- 1st: Richard & Betty Willson
- 6th: Butch & Linda Sappington
- 8th: Steve & Kathleen Miles
- 11th: Major & Vangie Osborne
- 14th: Pastor Doug & Donna Hoffman
- 16th: Greg & Barb Hoover
- 19th: Wade & Debra Markell

(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



A sweet reminder that God is always growing something new, no matter the season. As summer winds down and a new school year begins, remember He is at work in your life, helping you grow in faith, kindness and courage. With His help, you can grow in wisdom, build friendships and shine His love wherever you go.

What you need:

- 2 cups milk
- 1 (4-serving) box chocolate instant pudding mix
- 1 (8 oz.) tub whipped topping, thawed
- 1 (16 oz.) package Oreo cookies, crushed
- 8 (9 oz.) clear plastic cups
- Gummy worms or frogs (optional)



What you do:

1. In a large bowl, whisk together milk and pudding mix for 2 minutes. Let stand for 5 minutes until thickened.
2. Gently fold in the whipped topping.
3. Add a layer of crushed cookies to the bottom of each cup.
4. Spoon pudding mixture on top, filling the cups about $\frac{3}{4}$ full.
5. Sprinkle more crushed cookies on top to look like "dirt."
6. Add gummy worms or frogs for fun.
7. Chill until ready to serve, or enjoy right away.

See, I am doing a new thing!
Now it springs up; do you not
perceive it? — Isaiah 43:19 (NIV)

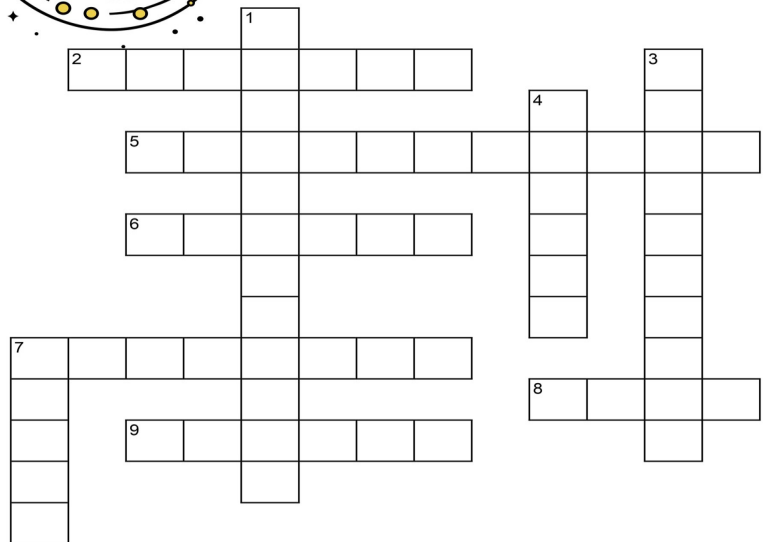


Puzzle!



BEATITUDES

Fill in the blanks below to complete the crossword. Answers are based on Matthew 5:1-13, NIV.



ACROSS

2. _____ and be glad, for your reward is great in heaven.
5. Blessed are the _____, for they will see God.
6. Blessed are those who _____ and thirst after righteousness.
7. Blessed are the _____, for they will receive mercy.
8. Blessed are the _____, for they will inherit the earth.
9. Blessed are those who hunger and _____, for they will be filled.

DOWN

1. Blessed are the _____, for theirs is the kingdom of heaven.
3. Blessed are those who are _____ for righteousness' sake.
4. Great is your _____ in heaven.
7. Blessed are those who _____, for they will be comforted.

Answer key: 2 Across: Rejoice, 5 Across: pureinheart, 6 Across: hunger
7 Across: merciful, 9 Across: meek, 9 Across: thirst, 1 Down: poorin spirit
3 Down: persecuted, 4 Down: reward, 7 Down: mourn

JOHN WESLEY UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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CHANGE SERVICE REQUESTED

SEPTEMBER 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."*

