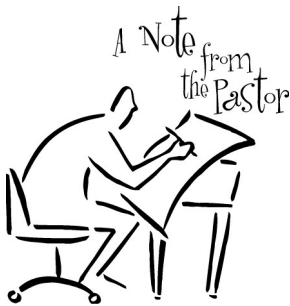


Wesley Witness



Perhaps you remember your first Christmas Eve candlelight service. You'll recall the lights being dimmed in the sanctuary, symbolizing the darkness we brush up against as part of our human experience. Then, the Christ Candle is lit as the first chapter of John is read and we proclaim together that *"The light shines in the darkness, and the darkness did not overtake it"* (John 1:5).

And you'll recall that holy moment as the flame from the Christ Candle is shared down the aisles of the congregation, brightening the sanctuary as the light spreads throughout the room. And finally, mid-chorus of Silent Night, that light reaches you, and you then share it with your neighbor next to you, bearing witness to the *"Son of God, love's pure light."*

These last few days of 2022 have me reflecting on this question: how do we continue to keep the light of Christ burning even after the presents have all been opened? After the lights and decorations come down, and the last Christmas carol has been played and sung, what does it mean to keep the light of Christ burning bright?

"You are the light of the world. A city on top of a hill can't be hidden. Neither do people light a lamp and put it under a basket. Instead, they put it on top of a lampstand, and it shines on all who are in the house. In the same way, let your light shine before people, so they can see the good things you do and praise your Father who is in heaven" (Matthew 5:14-16).

The Bible doesn't just tell us that Jesus is the light (John 1), but it also tells us that we as Christ's hands and feet are the light that He has set in this world of darkness. We are given the task of shining bright so that God can be seen, heard, felt, and that God may be praised and glorified even by those who may not know their Creator. What a blessing to be chosen by God to be God's representatives in the world today.

God is love personified through us (1 John 4:7-8), and God wants all people to be saved through the saving grace of Christ Jesus (1 Timothy 2:4). Knowing this, we as Christ's followers are called to be examples by living as God's beloved children, eager to reflect the same holy, loving, righteous, and gracious character that has been revealed to us in the one who was placed in a manger at birth.

(Continued on Page 3)



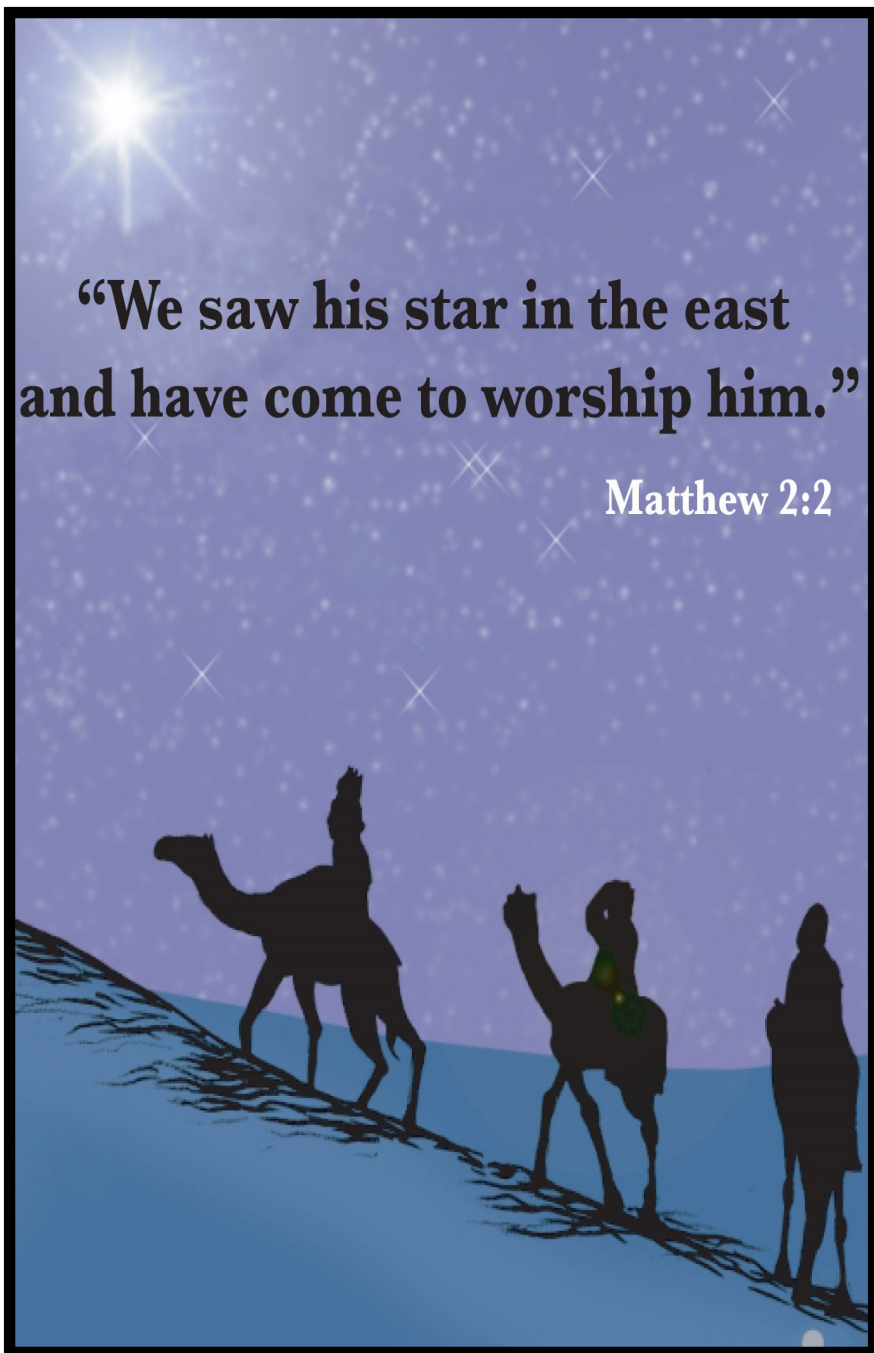
Bible Study



PASTOR'S BIBLE STUDY—Join us for Bible Study on Tuesdays from 11:30-12:30PM. Help Pastor Kolby study for his Ordination exam.

**“We saw his star in the east
and have come to worship him.”**

Matthew 2:2



Wesley United Methodist Church

Mission Statement

Celebrating God!

Growing in Faith!

Changing the World!

Pastor Kolby Gollhofer

826 NW 23rd Avenue
Gainesville, FL
32609

Office: 352-372-2845

We are on Facebook!!!

Pastor's E-mail:

Kolby@gainesvillewesley.org

Secretary's E-mail:

Terri Manche

secretary@wumc.cfcoxmail.com

Witness Articles E-mail:

Sharren Gibbs

sharrenleegibbs2020@gmail.com

Deadline for articles: 15th of each
month

Website:

www.WesleyUMCon23.org

www.facebook.com/WUMCGVL

Weekly Sunday Activities

Worship @ 10:45AM
(Sanctuary)



Here are just a few ways we can truly be the light of Christ for others:

1. Always be loving towards others!

"I give you a new commandment: Love each other. Just as I have loved you, so you also must love each other. This is how everyone will know that you are my disciples, when you love each other" (John 13:34-35).

2. Do what is good and right, even when it's difficult!

"Who will harm you if you are zealous for good? But happy are you, even if you suffer because of righteousness! Don't be terrified or upset by them. Instead, regard Christ the Lord as holy in your hearts. Whenever anyone asks you to speak of your hope, be ready to defend it" (1 Peter 3:13-15).

3. Avoid all forms of evil and live as an example of the light of Christ yourself!

"You were once darkness, but now you are light in the Lord, so live your life as children of light. Light produces fruit that consists of every sort of goodness, justice, and truth. Therefore, test everything to see what's pleasing to the Lord, and don't participate in the unfruitful actions of darkness. Instead, you should reveal the truth about them. It's embarrassing to even talk about what certain persons do in secret" (Ephesians 5:8-12).

These are just a few examples of ways in which we can bring Christ's light in a world filled with challenges. I'm sure you can think of many more yourself. Get creative! Come up with new ways you can be light in the darkness for someone as we enter this new year. I look forward to hearing your experiences.

To live in the light is to center our lives wholly around its only true source: Jesus Christ. Jesus powerfully declares in John 8:12, *"I am the light of the world. Whoever follows me won't walk in darkness but will have the light of life."* As those committed to following Jesus, we are constantly being led by him into the light. He's always shepherding us through the darkest valleys of this world and calling us to a life centered around him and his kingdom.

Turn your gaze fully toward Jesus this new year. Center your life around his love. Open your ears and heart to our amazing and good God who would lay down his life to save yours. Follow Christ in full faith wherever the Spirit guides you and God will lead you into a more abundant life, full of those things we've been talking about over the course of the Advent and Christmas season: Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love!

Blessings in this New Year,

Pastor Kolby

SUNDAY SCHEDULE

Worship Service—10:45AM

WEDNESDAY SCHEDULE

2nd Wednesdays—WWS at 5:30 PM












Most meetings are Wednesdays at 6:00 unless otherwise noted

WESLEY UNITED METHODIST
CHURCH

826 Northwest 23rd Avenue
Gainesville, Florida 32609
352-372-2845

Rev. Kolby Gollmer, Pastor

January 2023

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 Communion Sunday Epiphany Sunday 	2 Office Closed 	3 11:30 AM Pastor's Class 1:30PM Wesley Whit- tlers	4 6:00PM Trustees	5  11:30AM Card Club	6 11:30 YAHs at Piesano's 	7
8 Noon UWF Executive Meeting	9 6:30PM Nightingales	10 11:30 AM Pastor's Class	11 11:30AM DAR 5:30PM WWS 6:00PM SPRC	12  11:30AM Card Club	13	14
15	16 Office Closed 	17 10:00AM Morning Stars 11:30 AM Pastor's Class 1:30PM Wesley Whit- tlers 7PM Finance	18 6:00PM Church Visioning meeting 	19  11:30AM Card Club	20	21
22 UWF Sunday 	23	24 11:30 AM Pastor's Class	25 7PM Admin Council	26  11:30AM Card Club	27	28
29	30	31 11:30 AM Pastor's Class 1:30PM Wesley Whit- tlers				

Jim Arnett

Carolyn Clarke

Rachelle Hines

Barb Loehr

Clydia Reichert

Dale Smith

The Strawder Family

Doris Welsh

Barbara Baldwin

Michael Gibbs

Bonniesue Humphlett

Beth Loehr-Moody

Joe Reichert

Linda Smith

David Tattersall

Clarence Witt

Linda Baldwin

Helen Goddard

LaRue Landsberry

Paula Mathis

Beth Senn

Janice Smith

Nick Tattersall

Carla, Robert, Steve,

Molly & Buddy

With God
ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE



MISSION OF THE MONTH

ST. FRANCIS HOUSE

Mission Statement: The overall mission of St. Francis House is to provide emergency food, temporary shelter, transitional housing, and related support services in a safe, secure environment for women and children in the Alachua County region who, for whatever reason, find themselves confronted with homelessness and hunger.

This ministry was established in 1980 by Father Baker, with a goal to provide the basic necessities to help the impoverished and hungry in the community.

Contributions may be marked on your check or envelope and placed in the collection box or on the altar. You may also mail your checks for St. Francis House to the church office during the entire month of January.



Young at Heart
Fellowship

The YAHs are starting out the new year at a favorite! We will dine at Piesano's at Hunters Crossing on January 6th at 11:30AM. Please RSVP to the church office by January 2nd. And yes, here's another photo of us from last month.!

Donna



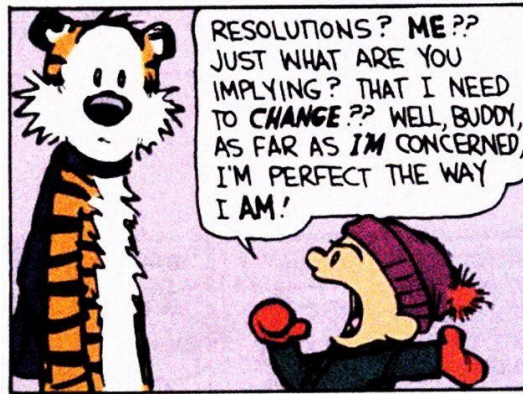
Front Row: Pastor Kolby and Nancy

Second Row: Helen, Joan, Sherry, Sherry's mom Rosie, June, and Donna

Back Row: Sharren, Barbara, Paula, Jan, Cindy, Becky, and Sonny

It was SO nice to see June again. Her son Edgar brought her and her daughter, Debbie, to the event.

HAPPY★NEW★YEAR

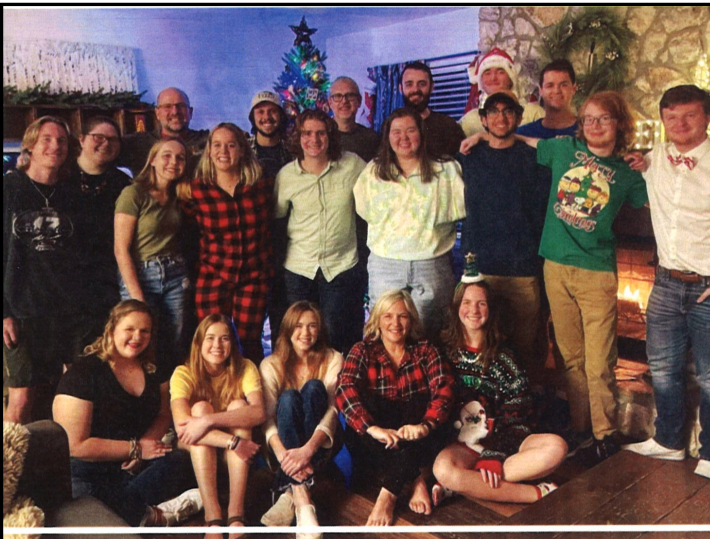


FROM THE KITCHEN COMMITTEE



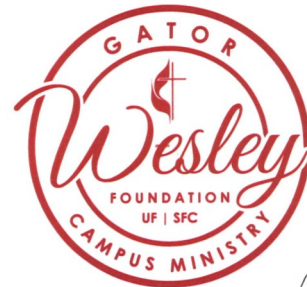
Our January fellowship dinner will be on Wednesday, January 11th at 5:30PM. The main course will be chicken with yellow rice. Please let me know if you will attend, as we need at least 25 people signed up to be able to have this dinner each month. Just call the church office by January 2nd and let Terri know if you're coming.

Donna Weseman



**MERRY
CHRISTMAS**

From Gator Wesley



So thankful to have local churches like y'all cheering us on. Thank you for your generous donations this year. Your support means the world to our staff & students.
Joel + Heather

Aided by money from the Kitchen Fund, Wesley helped GatorWesley students find nourishment (of a sort) while they studied at the center. As you can see from the above note, our efforts were well appreciated!



If you watch any shows on Public Broadcasting System, I know you've seen their ads for helping fund their programming. Lately, they have one for funds you don't need but must take from your IRA. Could this work for us? And you?? Before he left, Skip Manasco provided the following information from an answer to a question posed by a reader of www.investmentnews.com and wanted to share it with the congregation. And of course, it's always best to check with your accountant or financial planner about tax shelter opportunities.

QUESTION: Has my ability to make direct charitable donations from my IRA when I reach the age of 70 1/2 been affected by the new tax law? — *Connie Beroza, 69-year-old retiree, Buffalo, N.Y.*

ANSWER: In short, the strategy of donating to charities directly from an IRA after age 70 1/2 is still around under the new tax laws. The qualified charitable distribution (QCD) has been around for years but was only codified as a permanent law a few years ago. A QCD allows those age 70 1/2 to give money to charities directly from their IRAs in a tax advantageous manner. This allows IRA owners who have attained age 70 1/2 to distribute money directly from the IRA to a qualified charity. Total annual QCDs from all IRAs cannot exceed \$100,000 for an individual. Spouses can each make up to \$100,000 of QCDs.

Making a QCD as opposed to a normal charitable gift has two main advantages. First, a QCD counts toward satisfying the individual's required minimum distribution for that year. Second, the distribution is excluded from the taxpayer's income. It is this second benefit that really shines under the new tax bill. With very few individuals expected to itemize (some estimates say around 5% of filers), the income tax deduction for contributions to charities will be lost for many people. However, if you make a QCD, you get a full exclusion of that income from taxes. So, for any retiree who is 70 1/2 or older, owns an IRA subject to RMDs, and is charitably inclined, a QCD really works out as a way to preserve an income-tax-reducing charitable deduction under the new tax law.

Mr. Hopkins

Reprinted from the July 2019 Witness



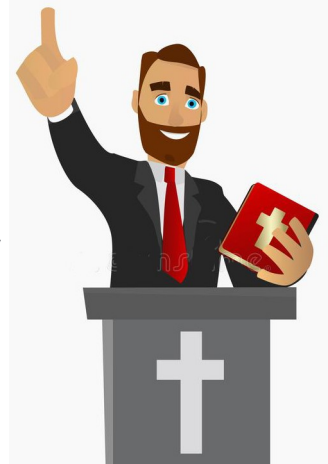


CHURCH VISIONING DAY

YOU are invited to come "vision" with us on Wednesday, January 18th, at 6pm. We will be looking over the Calendar for 2023, discerning where the Holy Spirit is calling us to start new ministries, and reflecting on ways we can make our current ministries even better. If you have an idea you'd like to share, or you'd simply like to be a good steward of this church by joining the conversation, PLEASE BE THERE.

SERMON SERIES 1/8 - 2/12: NEW YEAR, SAME PROMISES

When a new year greets us we often think about new things and all the ways we wish we could improve: weight loss, less stress, better health, etc. In the midst of all this change, sometimes it's good to remember the constancy of God and God's promises to us. So while it may be a new year, the promises of God to us are always the same.



CHRISTMAS STOCKING THANK-YOUS



Psalm 91 – This is how I see Wesley standing firmly on God's Word. Thank you for all the cards and love you have shown me through the years. It has been greatly appreciated.

Love, *William*

Dear Wesley Family, Thank you so much for the cards, gifts and goodies. Your generosity is so greatly appreciated!

Happy New Year, *Terri*

Special thanks to all our volunteers who came in and decorated Wesley for Christmas! Some of Donna's grandchildren, Riley, Charlotte, and Brooke, came in and helped Grandma decorate the tree in the fellowship hall.

Donna, Irma, Nancy C, and Sharren got the sanctuary finished in almost record time, thanks to Sharren's organizational skills the day before. Everything was in place and ready to decorate when the volunteers came in. And thanks to Nancy S and Sharren for receiving and placing all the poinsettias. Thanks to Sharren for setting up the candles for the lovely Christmas Eve service.



CHRISTMAS MORNING BRUNCH

Well, it was a small group (only NINE people!) who came in Christmas morning, but we had fun and a nice variety of food. Everyone went home with a take-out box of goodies for later.

And doesn't Pastor Kolby look great in his most appropriate Christmas sweater? I love it...

We hope to do this again some time, but sure do hope more people will come!





Committee Meetings

1/4	6:00PM	Trustees
1/11	6:00PM	SPRC
1/17	7:00PM	Finance
1/18	6:30PM	Church Visioning
1/25	7:00PM	Admin Council

January Birthdays

1 st	Irma Hales
2 nd	Joyce Welsh
5 th	Joe Reichert
8 th	Paula Mathis
	Carmen Arnett
10 th	Ron Case
14 th	Linda Yaxley-Nosko
20 th	Grayson Nosko
27 th	Paul Humphlett
28 th	Jim Nelson

January Anniversaries

19th Lisa & Matt Alday



Celebrate!

FUN AND GAMES



Join the Canasta card club at Wesley United Methodist Church! Have fun and meet great people! Invite family and friends, the more the merrier!

When: Thursdays, 11:30 AM (except holidays)

Where: Wesley United Methodist Church
826 Northwest 23rd Avenue
Fellowship Hall

Call Cindy Holmes at 352-256-9485 for information.

We have wonderful members waiting to teach you Hand and Foot Canasta! **Please have received both doses of the COVID-19 vaccination, as well as the boosters!**

Card Club Guidelines

- Bring a sack lunch and beverage if you wish.
- Please arrive on time if possible.
- Please help clean up after the games end.
- Please give us your email address and phone number in case of scheduling changes.

