Dear Brothers and Sisters in Christ,

What a wonderful 65th anniversary celebration! Thank you to all of you who helped to organize the event and participated in the service. From the impromptu singing of “The Old Rugged Cross” by the Wesley Melody Boys to the delicious potluck after the service, it was truly an exciting day. God has blessed Wesley with wonderful people (past and present!) and vibrant ministries. We pray that God will continue to bless our church for the next 65 years as we look forward to celebrating more exciting ministries and anniversaries!

Now that the anniversary service is over and the month of October is coming to an end, I’m reminded that Thanksgiving and Christmas are around the corner. Just this morning I was listening to the radio in my car and heard the radio announcers discussing Christmas decorations. Christmas is still two months away! But because of the society we live in, it seems that the Christmas decorating and holiday sales start earlier every year. And as a pastor, I’ve got to plan in advance for Advent, the four preceding Sundays building up to Christmas. So I suppose Christmas is on my mind early too!

Therefore, I’m pleased to announce that we will be doing an exciting sermon series and Bible study on Christmas carols during Advent. Do you have a favorite Christmas carol? One that you love to sing over and over again? It’s really hard for me to pinpoint my favorite Christmas carol.

I have fond memories growing up of singing “Silent Night” during the Christmas Eve service and leaving the church by candlelight. Or my mom leaning over and whispering “This is my favorite carol!” every time “O Holy Night” was sung. My favorite carol to spontaneously belt out is “We Three Kings” and probably my favorite carol to sing with a group of people is “Angels We Have Heard on High.” (Who doesn’t love singing, “Glo - - - - - ri-a in excelsis Deo!”)

During Advent, we will spend time looking at a few of these Christmas carols and gleaning meaning from those carols for our lives. Carols such as “O Holy Night,” “O Come All Ye Faithful,” “Away in a Manger,” and “O Come, O Come, Emmanuel.” And on December 13, the congregation will be treated with a musical performance of “The Gift Goes On,” a Christmas cantata, by Wesley’s choir. All are invited to Sunday morning services and Wednesday night Bible studies as we explore Christmas carols and await the birth of Christ. The Advent series leads up to the Christmas Eve service which will be a service of lessons and carols. If you love Christmas carols like I do, this will be an exciting season of Advent!

Advent also reminds us that it’s not about us, it’s about God. It’s about the birth of Christ and serving both God and those around us. We at Wesley strive to “Serve God by serving others.” Therefore, Wesley will once again be celebrating “Christmas is not your birthday” (CINYB) to remind us as a congregation that we are called to love and give to one another freely. As we sing “Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus” and await the birth of Christ, we realize that Christmas is a time to prepare our hearts for the coming of our Savior. It’s isn’t just about the Christmas decorations, holiday sales, or the Christmas carols (no matter how much we love to sing them!). It is a time to share Christ with those around us…
Therefore, I would encourage you to make a special donation to the CINYB offering. The offering will go towards church apportionments and Ti Goave, Haiti. Envelopes will be made available in mid-November to those who would like to make a special offering.

Remember, Jesus is the reason for the season! Let’s sing to that.

Blessings,
Pastor Christina

**CHOIR:**

What an honor to glorify our God through music as we worship each Sunday morning! The choir enjoys singing those songs/hymns that uplift His Name and in turn, we pray, uplift each of you in the congregation. The choir is busily working on “THE GIFT GOES ON”. This is our Christmas cantata that will be presented on Sunday morning, December 13th, at the 11:00 am worship hour. Please mark your calendars now so that you will not miss the beautiful music that creators Sue C. Smith and Russell Mauldin have arranged. Once upon a silent night, God gave a priceless Gift in the form of a Baby! Over two thousand years later, He invites us to join the heavenly chorus and celebrate this Christmas because THE GIFT GOES ON still today! May all of us have a song in our hearts as we celebrate the birth of Jesus, the Son of God.

**November**

Nov. 2       Pat Brafford
4           Taft Kirk
18          Candy McLamb
22          David Parker
26          Joel Clarke
29          Sandy Barker

**December**

Dec. 1       Jeff Meador
3           Ryan Barlow
5           Sharon Keeter
21          Sue Kirk
23          Jane Hardy
24          Sylvia Cole
26          Melanie Theriault
30          Ashley Walston
31          Colleen Theriault

If we have missed your birthday or anniversary, please notify the church office.

**SHUT IN’S APPRECIATE CALLS, CARDS, AND VISITS:**

During the coming holiday season it is particularly important to call, visit, or send cards to those members who are unable to get out and about. They will always appreciate your love and giving, but especially during the holiday season. Remember to call, send a card, a small gift or visit with these folks who are not able to get out.
Highlights for upcoming season

Tis a Joyous and Holy Season!

Opportunities for worship and fellowship:

November 1st  On All Saints Sunday we will remember Everette Parker and Eula Johnson. Congregation members will have the opportunity to light a candle and make an offering to the discretionary fund in memory of loved ones.

November 22nd  Thanksgiving luncheon after worship! Begin thinking about your Christmas Is Not Your Birthday offering. 50% will be donated to Ti Goave, Haiti and 50% to our apportionment.

November 28th  Come and decorate the church for Advent! Meet at 4:30 and stay for supper after.

November 29th, December 6th and 20th  Advent sermon series on Christmas carols.

December 2nd, 9th, 16th  Advent Bible study on Christmas carols.

December 13th  Cantata: “The Gift Goes On”

December 20th and 27th  CINYB offering will be collected.

December 24th  4:00 p.m.  Christmas Eve Service of Carols and Lessons. We will also celebrate Holy Communion together and leave by candlelight. Cider and cookies will be served following worship.

December 27th  Wesleyan Covenant Service

Outreach Ministry News

Our last day of volunteer service for this year at the Shepherd’s Table Soup Kitchen in downtown Raleigh was October 6, with six people helping prepare and serve meals. All who have helped with these soup kitchen lunches have enjoyed it and felt blessed to have been God’s loving hands in the process. We look ahead to 2016 and invite you to sign up for the next soup kitchen workday on Wednesday, January 6, carpooling from the church at 9:30 am, and back around 12:45. You can also mark your calendars for April 20, July 6 and October 5. Currently our Urban Ministries food pantry collection totals 2796 pounds for the year. Thanks to everyone who has brought canned & nonperishable foods to the food barrel or made a cash contribution. Cash allows Urban Ministries to purchase approximately 5 pounds of food for each dollar contributed. Let’s keep adding to the food barrel and contributions, to help provide food to our neighbors in need.

Habitat’s Building on Faith has made great progress on homes in the Crosstowne development off Garner Road. Everyone is invited at a home dedication on Saturday, December 12, 10 am. 829 Skinner Drive, to dedicate not 1 but 5 new homes. Wesley Memorial has had 11 different people participate, on 8 dates during the summer-fall, totaling 26 “people-days.” Sign up or ask Jerry about our two dates in November and come help build a home. Upcoming workdays are scheduled for Thursday Nov 5 and Saturday Nov 7. Notify Jerry if you can work one of those days – 919-847-4379 – and come join the Habitat home building adventure. Friends, neighbors, co-workers & relatives are also welcomed to join you as we complete our Building on Faith commitment to Habitat.

Wesley Memorial is sending $400 to Ti Guave, a small, rural community in Haiti, to assist them in putting a roof on their new church, and schooling and feeding 900 children. Pray for this tiny village and Pastor Brucely as they serve a poor, depressed area of Haiti.

Stewardship Thoughts

In November we will have a stewardship minute each Sunday and have a member share a testimony. If you would like to share, speak with Jerry Barker. One important aspect of our church stewardship is our apportionment giving to the conference. As Wesley Memorial is connected to other Methodist churches locally, nationally and abroad, the little we give through “apportionment” becomes part of our many, many efforts to serve the least, the last, the lost. If I give $20 it might end up buying a mosquito net in Africa, a meal for a family in NC, disaster relief assistance for SC flood victims, survival housing for immigrants in Europe, or to a child, their first Bible in their language. Our apportionment offering currently totals $3109, but our goal is $10,000. Please pray for how you can support our church budget, our apportionment and our commitment to God’s people in need.

What is living “missionally?”

On any given Sunday more people pass through the doors of the local Starbucks than in 90% of local churches. It is time to take off our Christian culture colored glasses. Christians are now Resident Aliens. Suddenly we are awakening to the fact that while we were sitting cozily in our sanctuary singing hymns and arguing over praise songs and worship styles, the world changed. It didn’t change a little, it radically shifted from embracing Christianity to
being annoyed, to being angered by it in some places.

Living “missionally” means living like you are a missionary. Taking a missionary posture in your conversations and actions. It means demonstrating the love of Christ long before you speak of it. It means gaining credibility in the community and serving sacrificially. Perhaps the most difficult thing is that it means inviting people into your life, not just inviting them to church.

When you take on a missionary world view you begin to see the world differently. You embrace the truth that 70% are staying home on Sunday morning, or hitting the ball field, gym, or coffee shop. Church attendance is no longer the default setting on Sunday morning. If you are a real missionary it may mean you have to change your ideas about Sunday morning as well in order to be where the people are. I mean, to be where the normal people are, the everyday, hustling to make a living, and exhausted people who live in our neighborhoods. When you are a missionary you realize they are “spiritual but not religious” which requires you to adjust the settings on your expectations and develop real, long-term, sustainable relationships. They don’t need one more thing to do, especially on the only morning of the week they can sleep in. What they do want is a real connection with others, with God, and the invitation to do something with their life that really matters.

What does this mean for you? It means that you have to set another place at your table. You will need to open up your dining room and coffee tables for real relationships to develop and invite them into your home, even when it is a mess - their house is probably a mess too.

You will need to invite them into your life, long before you ever consider inviting them to church. This is a radical shift for most people of faith. We don’t mind inviting folks to sit, sing, and soak up information based sermons in an institutional environment (the church), but inviting people into your life can get messy. Suddenly my spiritual life and my “real life” collide. You allow others unfettered access to your spiritual and life journey.

Finally, you invite them to the communion table where they can encounter Christ. Worship becomes a celebration of what God has done. Coming to “the church” is a validation of the spiritual journey they have already been on, not the first step.

Living missionally means your life is going to have to change. It means you are going to reorient your focus toward living out God’s calling for you to make disciples. So, set another place at the table, open the doors, pick up desert and have a few folks over for dinner. You will be glad you did. Welcome to the table.

FINANCIAL INFORMATION

We are almost to the end of the year and we are continuing to be able to pay our obligations and send money to our apportionment. We have paid $4,539.57 thus far. Our goal by year end is to have paid 75% of our apportionment of $14,081.00. That will leave us $9,541.45 by the end of the year. God has blessed our church in many ways and we want to continue to give Him thanks and ask for His guidance in all we do to help brings others to Him.

Where We Are
(as of October 25, 2015)
$58,640.14

Where We Should Be
$78,687.42

UMM

The Wesley Memorial Methodist Men will meet @ 8:30AM on November 14, 2015 and December 12, 2015. Come join us for some good food and great fellowship!!

As I Have Grown Older:

As I have grown older, I have noticed that my body continually is changing. My eyes have changed to where I need
both distance glasses and reading glasses. Arthritis, back, indigestion problems, and the list goes on and on. This caused me to start thinking more about God. As I have changed, I wondered…has God changed with me? Is the God of my 30’s…the same God of my 60’s, 70’s and 80’s? I sometimes wonder if my faith has strengthened in the past 40 years. As I read the Bible, I find and learn new things that I missed before. How did I miss them? Even how I worship and praise the Lord seems to be growing a little stale. We see churches with different focus than we have and they seem to be growing.

Eight years ago, eight Wesley members attended an event at the RBC Center to hear a Californian evangelist named Greg Laurie. He was a great speaker! The service was an entirely different worship experience than what I am accustomed to. But what struck me most was all the young and middle age Christians. Christians who weren’t afraid to stand…to clap, to sing or to show a different type of enthusiasm—they were actually jumping up and down to praise music. They had smiles of anticipation on their faces and seemed excited to be there. I wondered if we were worshipping the same God…the same Jesus! I have thought about this and what I have decided is that there are many different ways to praise and worship GOD, our Father and his Son Jesus. GOD honors all praise to him and Jesus. God honors all worship of him and Jesus. God is not much swayed by the display we put on. GOD is in the heart business and if we are worshipping from the heart, GOD is pleased.

My hope is that visitors to worship at Wesley Memorial UMC will see in me a “Smile of Anticipation” on my face. There are people today who will say…Who is Jesus and why should I worship him? We all have a choice. God does not force himself on us…They may ask themselves…do I really need him…and for what? I hope they can see some of these answers in you and me. Greg Laurie made a statement that Friday night that answers that question. There is a void, a hole, an empty spot in our hearts. There is absolutely nothing on this earth that can fill that empty spot in our hearts but Jesus…No one on this earth can do what Jesus has done for you! No one can give you eternal life. No one can give you forgiveness for anything that mankind will not. We were made by GOD to praise him! We were made by GOD to worship him!

Do you still seek Jesus on a daily basis? If you have that empty feeling, like something is missing in your life, don’t let this moment pass, for He is waiting for you. He is still right there by your side. You have a choice…in your own way…ask him to help you become enthusiastic about your daily walk with Him. GOD will honor that. Jesus is waiting for you. There is a song that answers the question…Why do I need Jesus?

**Without Him I could do nothing,**
**Without Him, I’d surely fail,**
**Without Him, I would be drifting,**
**Like a ship without a sail,**
**Without Him I would be dying,**
**Without Him I’d feel enslaved,**
**Without Him life would be worthless,**
**But with Jesus, thank God, I’m saved,**

Oh Jesus, oh Jesus, do you know Him today,
Please don’t turn Him away,
Jesus, my Jesus,
Without Him how lost I would be,
Without Him how lost I would be!

Is the God of my 30’s…the same God of my 60’s, 70’s and 80’s? I know he is. What has changed in the past 40 years is the maturity of my spirit, my knowledge of Him. Being a Christian is a journey…not a destination. Jesus still fills a need in our lives that cannot be replaced by any other person or thing. I still have so much to learn but I cling to the promise of John 3:16, especially when I insert my name into it. Try it out yourself.. you will like the sound of it.

“For God so loved me, that he gave his only begotten Son, that if I believe in Him, I shall not perish, but I shall have eternal life.

Joe Massey
**Wesley on Whitaker: How Will Our Garden Grow?**

**What is Happening?**
A wonderful Garden Consecration Liturgy was offered during our Oct. 25 Homecoming Service.
Four raised beds have been constructed and filled with soil and compost. 16 people finished all the work on one Saturday morning.
Four neighbors have signed up to help us. One of them has donated to us a beautiful, three-story dollhouse to help us raise funds, through the sale of raffle tickets, for the garden.
Three Eagle Scouts are designing projects to help the garden.
 Twelve middle schoolers participating in an afterschool program with First Baptist Church/Wilmington Street will join us on Friday to learn about soil, plant life, nutrition, growing and preparing vegetables.
More soil and compost will be coming soon. We will plant our beds in clover seeds to enrich the soil, and get ready to PLANT in early March 2016.

**What can YOU do?**
- Bring Compost – Coffee grounds. Fruit and Veggie Scraps. Grass Clippings etc.
- Know a garden center or plant nursery person? Ask them for discounts or to Donate Bags of Prepared Compost, good topsoil, organic fertilizer, seedlings in the Spring
- Come and work with children on Friday afternoons, 4 to 5:30 pm. Help Plan a Program? Put us in touch with an expert?
- Come and work for an hour, THIS Saturday morning, October 31.
- Tell Your Friends to Come and GROW with us.

**What we need ASAP.**
(Donations can be named in a Friend or Loved One’s Honor. Bring them any day or we will come pick them up.)
- 4 Fruit Trees to plant SOON!!!!
- 2 Butterfly bushes
- 2 Wheelbarrows (in good condition)
- 2 Water Hoses (in good condition)
- 12 pair of garden gloves for middle schoolers
- **LARGE** Terracotta or other Decorative Pots
- A Bird House
- Garden Art