

Spring 2019

Sharing the Story

Wesley Freedom: Generosity in Action

Magazine



Why do you look for the living among the dead? He is not here, but has risen.
- Luke 24:5b

Photo by Brenda Bowman



Pieces from the Pastors

May The Lord Be With You

Rev. Dr. Bill Brown and Rev. Elizabeth LeMaster

Change is difficult and I know we have been presented with a significant amount of change recently. Yet I'm reminded of the change experienced by Jesus' first disciples. I can imagine them standing with Jesus, following his resurrection, amazed that he was with them again. Then we read in Acts 1:8-9 – "But you shall receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you; and you shall be my witnesses in Jerusalem and in all Judea and Samaria and to the end of the earth."

And when he had said this, as they were looking on, he was lifted up, and a cloud took him out of their sight.

Just when they thought he was with them for good, he goes away again. But in the midst of this change, he gives them direction that they are to be his witnesses. They are to share all that he has shared with them. The 3 years he spent mentoring them was not in vain. It was now their turn to mentor others, and share this good news with the world.

We too are called to witness to the love of God as seen in Jesus. We are not eyewitnesses. How could we be? We didn't encounter the Lord along the Emmaus road. We weren't in that closed room to see him display his hands and feet, and eat that piece of broiled fish. No, God is looking for a different sort of witness. He's looking for us to be not eyewitnesses, but character witnesses.

That sort of witness sometimes has a role to play in court cases. If defense attorneys are angling to undermine the prosecutor's argument, they're likely to call one or more character witnesses: people who know the defendant well, who are willing to vouch for that person, to observe how unlikely it is that their esteemed friend or colleague would ever commit a crime.

You and I are called to be character witnesses for Christ. We can't tell firsthand stories about the resurrection — other than the timeworn, smooth-as-a-piece-of-beach-glass accounts that have been passed down through the generations.

But we can witness to a personal Christ, a living Lord whom we know, one who has touched our lives and made a difference. So with whom will you share the love of Christ? In the midst of change this is our constant.

Peace and Joy,

Rev. Bill

When Jesus left this world for the final time, he gave his disciples two instructions:

*You will receive power when the Holy Spirit has come upon you;
and you will be my witnesses... to the ends of the earth. Acts 1:8*

Wesley Freedom is entering a time of transition and change, and our human nature is to fear change. However, God's plan for us is rooted in change. The changing of hearts and minds that leads to a relationship with God and a growing faith. The mission of Wesley Freedom is **to make disciples of Jesus Christ who share the story of God's grace.** That mission is not dependent on your pastors. That mission comes from the very command of Jesus Christ himself, along with the promise of the power of the Holy Spirit. It has been my privilege and honor to serve the congregation of Wesley Freedom these four years. I encourage you to embrace this change as an opportunity to grow your own faith and to bring others into relationship with God.

Many Blessings,

Rev. Elizabeth

WESLEY FREEDOM'S CHURCH COMMUNITY

Community Helping Community

It Started With A Phone Call

By Sharon Feldman, Director of Community Life

In mid-January I received a phone call from one of the guidance counselors at Eldersburg Elementary. She wanted to find a project that some of her students could work on together to prompt unity. I told her about our guests at Feed My Sheep and with Valentine's Day approaching it would be nice if her students would assemble goodie bags. So, on February 11th, I received a delivery of over 40 bags; all hand decorated for Valentine's Day and stuffed with granola bars, candy, hand sanitizer, packs of tissues and more. The guests of Feed My Sheep were surprised and appreciative of the thoughtfulness.



Look Up!!

Ceilings Bring People Together

By Ruth Whittenburg, Office Manager

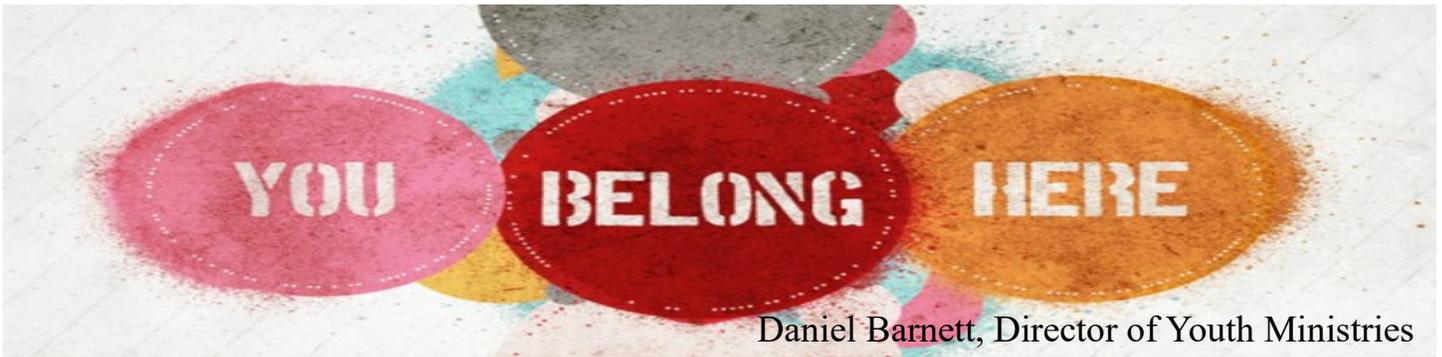
It started with one person, Walt Curtis, who asked another for a little help. Before long, he had a team assembled of willing servants, to take on the task of replacing the worn-out, discolored and stained ceiling tile in the Gathering Area and main hallway. After just one day working together, we now have a team of *Good People*

Willing to Give their Time and Talents to Help, who are excited to take on minor projects to improve the look of our facility.

*It is amazing what we can do
if we simply ask,.....
can you help!*

- Walt Curtis





Daniel Barnett, Director of Youth Ministries

Almost four years ago, I came to Wesley Freedom. One of the first ideas of the culture of this church that I grasped was the three words that represent our discipleship pathway: Belong, Become and Serve. These three words resonated with me as they began to shape what we do in youth ministry. If our mission is to make disciples of Jesus Christ who share the story of God's grace, this is how we are supposed to do it. We need to help students belong to God and to the church, guide and disciple them to become like Christ and then, serve alongside them as Jesus would do.



One of the ways that we help students belong at Wesley Freedom is by giving them ownership. To that end, one of the biggest events in youth ministry as well as one of the biggest investments of the youth ministry budget is the event called Discovery. Discovery is a weekend retreat that high school students, with adult assistance, put on for middle school students.

From the end of October 2018, students and adults have been meeting to plan this year's

Discovery. This year, we took another step to help give students ownership of Discovery by giving them a bigger role on the leadership team. Over 20 students stepped up to be on the leadership planning team. They chose to have more ownership of the biggest event of the year. These were the students who gave updates on their assigned team's progress, planned worship, games, meals, and activities. They were given a voice to influence the culture of Discovery and they came up with some great ideas. With adult support, these students led 40 other high schoolers to put on a retreat for 60 middle schoolers. This year's theme was *Peace – Discovering the Peace That Comes from God*. As always, this year's Discovery was an awesome sight to see. Lives of middle schoolers, high schoolers, and even adults were changed. Discipleship opportunities were provided and relationships were formed. By giving our students ownership, they feel needed and wanted and they feel like they belong here.



Another way that students at Wesley Freedom have taken ownership is through a new event called ALL-IN Sunday School. It is a quarterly event where High School and Middle School Sunday classes put on a one room Sunday School class for our children in Kindergarten thru 5th grade. They lead the little ones in worship, a lesson, games, and activities. We have done this twice this school year and the feedback from children, youth and adults has all been positive. After checking in with students, the message was clear they cherish being needed. They want to be at church more. They feel like they belong here.

We are thankful and blessed to have so many youth who take an active role in the ownership of some of our ministries here at Wesley Freedom. Hopefully, in the next few months, we can start engaging more students and providing ownership opportunities in our Sunday School classes, in worship (Shout out to our Director of Worship, Dan Eschliman, for already making this happen), in youth ministries, in hospitality, in church work projects and in the life of the church as a whole. Youth are not only the future of the church, they are a vital part of the church now. I am excited for what the future holds for our youth and our church.



Finally, we as a church can help students feel like they belong here by welcoming them. We do this by introducing ourselves to young people, engaging them in conversation, and learning what excites them about church. It is awesome to see adults seek out students to make them feel welcomed. A few months ago, I walked into worship and noticed that one of our youth was sitting by themselves in worship. Before I could act I saw a couple who were once involved in the youth program turn around and invite this student to sit with them. This is very idea of helping students belong. I know there are more stories like this one in our church especially as it relates to the choir and to hospitality where students are regularly welcomed and encouraged.

Church, you can help our young people feel like they belong by offering a smile, asking their name, and engaging them in conversation. Help make Wesley Freedom the place where young people really feel like they belong!



All-In Sunday School

**By Sherry Perrine,
Director of Children and Family Ministries**

On March 31, our Elementary Students enjoyed a large group Sunday School gathering planned and presented by our Middle School and High School students. The youth spent several weeks creating the lessons, activities, games, and crafts that were focused on the theme of *Prayer*. It was a great morning filled with laughter, learning, music, and reflection. Each class rotated through six stations where they engaged in creating a prayer chain, a cross, a Bible with scripture, ran a Lord's Prayer Relay, and played two games. The Youth did an amazing job!

LENTEN EVENTS

Shrove Tuesday Pancake Dinner

Sherry Perrine, Director of Children & Family Ministries

Our Shrove Tuesday Pancake Supper was held on March 5 and was hosted by a great team of intergenerational servants. Our goal was to offer a family friendly meal where people could gather for fellowship and good food. The team provided top notch hospitality and a quality meal. The generations worked together with each age group learning from the other. It was a relaxed evening that allowed families and friends to visit while children engaged in crafts and quiet corner activities. This evening of celebration provided resources for families to use during the season of Lent.

'I GOT A PRETTY GOOD JOB SERVING PANCAKES. JESUS USED TO SERVE OTHERS AND I ENJOYED HELPING OUT AND SERVING OTHERS LIKE JESUS USED TO. I LIKED BEING LIKE JESUS BECAUSE HE USED TO HEAL PEOPLE AND I LIKE TO HELP OTHERS. I ALSO LIKED HELPING OUT BECAUSE PEOPLE SAID "THANK YOU" AND THEY WERE NICE TO ME.'

-DANIEL (AGE 7)



Tessa and Tyghe

The Pancake Supper at Wesley Freedom United Methodist Church was a terrific experience for our family. Since joining the church within the past year, we have felt so welcomed in a place that is both faith-filled and family-friendly. The Pancake Supper was just another example of the uplifting atmosphere Wesley Freedom has to offer. It was great to be able to share a meal with staff like Sherry Perrine and Sharon Feldman, who have taken a genuine interest in our family's involvement in the community, and to mingle with some fellow parishioners that have been gracious to us since day one, like Karen Stebner and her family. On top of the superb meal, the activities that were available to kids were great; for instance, aided by some friendly helpers, our two-year-old loved making his own crown of regal rubber silicone and jewels! Most of all, our family appreciated the event as an ideal way to lead into the Lenten season. Through its celebratory atmosphere of Shrove Tuesday,

the Pancake Supper helped us channel tenets of community, simplicity, and neighborly love, worthwhile reminders heading into the sobering benchmark of Ash Wednesday. In short, the Pancake Supper was a microcosm of what we have come to cherish the most about the Wesley Freedom community: an authentic atmosphere where we can joyfully practice our faith among other followers of Christ. We are blessed and glad that God has led us to Wesley Freedom United Methodist Church! -The McKenzie Family: Tim, Tessa, and Tyghe

Sharing the Story through Shepherd's Staff Now That's A Truck Load!

"Thank you to our wonderful friends at Wesley Freedom for a donation of over 100 Easter Baskets"

-Brenda Meadows, Shepherd's Staff



Celebrating Lent through Worship



Attending all services during Holy Week gave us a better understanding of the events that led to Easter Sunday. Easter is more than just one Sunday. It is about Jesus' journey, which entails the somber times to his resurrection. Holy week is what makes Easter Sunday so joyous and meaningful.

-The Rolfes' Family



Beautiful hues of purple and green filled our Sanctuary this Lenten Season with our new lighting.

Photos captured by Brenda Bowman

Small Group Study Is Where It's At!

Sharon Feldman, Director of Community Life

Joining a small group is where you will make life long friends, receive support, learn what it means to study scripture in community, and share life. Whether you join a Life Group, a Connect Group, or a Fellowship Group - it is a great way to grow as a Disciple of Jesus Christ who shares the story of God's Grace.

"We were discussing Luke and reading selected verses that Rev. Bill had chosen. It was not a traditional Bible study - there was no pre-written guide. Rather, it was read each day/week, and we could bring questions to group and share our answers and understandings. Everyone brought something to the table for discussion. This study removed some veils that we each have and allowed a peek into who the people really are and where they come from." - Joanna Compton

"The Lenten study in our group has certainly made the Lenten season more impactful for me spiritually. I really like that the readings are tied with the sermon. It gives me a chance to digest the content and then later in the day discuss it with our small group. It has also helped me recognize some things in my own prayer life such as asking for forgiveness on a more regular basis. Overall, I feel more centered about Lent and heading toward Easter."

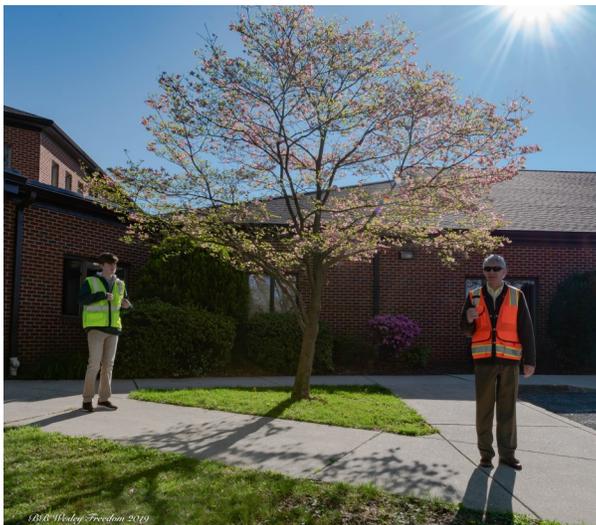
- Matt Cline



Thirsty Disciples Life Group, making cookies with their children.

What a wonderful way to serve on Easter!

Rising to Welcome and Receive Our Guests



Jeff Wilhelm and Jackson Reed direct our visitors as they arrive on campus

Millie, our bus driver, transports our Worship attendees who parked at Eldersburg Elementary School.



"It was good for my family to show how serving others and putting others before yourself can make you feel good / happy, just like how Jesus put others before himself, served them, and ultimately sacrificed himself for the betterment of all." - Dan (Adult)



Michele Olson serves Communion at 6:30 am Worship

"Holy Week was such a blessing for me this year. It was the first year I intentionally went to each service as a way to walk with Jesus through his final days. It was powerful and beautiful. Serving on Easter Sunday was a way for me to give back to the church for all it has given to me. I received more care and felt more a part of the community that day than I could have ever expected. It truly was a blessing."
- Stephanie Otterson

PHOTOS BY
BRENDA BOWMAN



Brenton Skolaski and Brittney Skolaski teach Sunday School at 9:30 am

MISSIONS

Take Me Home Country Roads...

Sharon Feldman, Director of Community Life



For the third year, the adult mission team will be headed to West Virginia. The cost is \$300 which includes the cost of the work camp and meals. If you have ever considered taking part in a mission trip, please pray about joining us.

You may be thinking, what could I possibly contribute to a work team that would be working on roofs, installing drywall, painting, using power tools, and more. That was me. When I had to list my skills all I could really list was painting and clean-up. But the most amazing thing happened - I was given a chance to experience all sorts of projects and people took the time to teach me. One of my most memorable moments was when a team of women, who had very little experience with building decks, was given the opportunity to build one. With some instructions by our project manager and a few do-overs we accomplished something we never thought we could.

If you would like more information or to discuss where you would be able to serve please contact Tim Boyer at tjzboyer@comcast.net or me, Sharon Feldman, at sfeldman@wesleyfreedom.org.

Adult Mission Trip

Lewisburg (Greenbrier County), West Virginia

June 23-29, 2019



You pray for the hungry. Then you feed them. This is how prayer works.

-Pope Francis

Rise Against Hunger is an international hunger relief organization that distributes food and life-changing aid to the world's most vulnerable, mobilizing the necessary resources to reach their goal of ending hunger by 2030.

On Saturday, April 13, Wesley Freedom UMC worked to help Rise Against Hunger achieve their vision of hunger relief and ending hunger. Over 80 adults and children filled bags with soy protein, dehydrated veggies and rice, while others measured, sealed and packed 20,000 meals in a little over two hours.

Daisy Troop #1504 from Eldersburg volunteered to work on their *Making the World a Better Place* merit badge.

"Every time I see a commercial on TV or read about hunger it breaks my heart and I'm compelled to do something about it. As I prayed, this is what Jesus told me to do."

- Betty Evans, Rise Against Hunger Event Organizer

"It was a good way to give back before going off to college." - Leah Pruitt, Volunteer and Liberty High School Intern working at Wesley Freedom



SAVE THE DATE On September 15, 2018, Wesley Freedom will host a meal packing event.

Registration will be open soon! Watch the bulletin and website for more information!



Shepherd's Staff Satellite Office Opening September 9, 2019

Shepherd's Staff is a non-profit organization, located in Westminster that relies solely on donations from organizations throughout Carroll County. Wesley Freedom UMC is one of those organizations that supports their efforts with monetary donations, school supply collections, supporting their school backpack program, donations of Spiritual Easter baskets, and much more. Shepherd's Staff is a resource for those who need assistance providing help with utilities, housing, clothing, personal care items, shower space, and laundry facilities for the homeless plus much more.

Currently, if someone stops by the Family Resource Center and is looking for assistance the only thing we can do is give them the address and phone number of Shepherd's Staff and send them on their way. Having a satellite office here at WFUMC will enable us to take a client's information, communicate with Shepherd's Staff directly, and get a person the help they need without them having them travel to Westminster. We will also continue to be a distribution site for their back to school backpack program and Spiritual Easter Basket program.

The office will be open one day a week with the hopes that as word gets out and people become familiar with WFUMC Family Resource Center we can expand the hours.



New Program Launch

Redirect One80 is a new program we are developing to help individuals who have been incarcerated, are recently released, and need to make a 180-degree turn in their life. We know that when men and women are released there are immediate needs that must be met if they are to continue with their recovery. Basic needs like housing, transportation, employment, and education need to be navigated. Learning new life skills, having personal needs met such as clothing for interviews, food, and care of their family are the primary concern.

Our program will provide one-on-one help to individuals to navigate some of the systems in place to meet these needs. Currently the Family Resource Center is considering helping with housing, transportation, and employment specifically, and offering other resources available to meet the other immediate needs.

We need Faith Mentors, those who would be willing to help navigate and walk alongside an individual as they continue their recovery. The Faith Mentor would be a friend, someone who wants to see the individual succeed, become engaged in the life of the church, and make a 180- degree change in their life.

If you would like to know more about becoming a Faith Mentor, please contact Sharon Feldman at 410.795.2777 ext. 12 or email sfeldman@wesleyfreedom.org.

FINANCIALS

Financial Statement Wesley Freedom Budget	YTD 1/1/19 - 3/31/19
<u>Income</u>	
Weekly Contributions	\$236,228
EYLC Contribution	22,500
Other Building Usage	790
Interest	65
Fundraising Activities	50
Total Income	\$259,633
<u>Expenses</u>	
Salaries and Related Costs	\$122,852
Mortgage Interest Payments	28,388
Building Expenses (1)	44,160
Ministry Area Costs (2)	16,610
Administrative Costs (4)	12,457
Conference Payments	29,670
Expenses for Designated Reserve (3)	0
Total Expenses	\$254,137
Net Income	\$5497
Mortgage Principle Payments	\$3243
Net Income for Cash Flow	\$2254

(1) Includes electricity, water, oil & natural gas, insurance, custodial services & maintenance

(2) Includes education, worship, youth council, care of members

(3) For WFUMC contribution to Capital Campaign

(4) Include Stewardship—mailing and other costs

Financial Statement Capital Campaign	YTD 3/31/19
<u>Income</u>	
Capital Campaign Total Income	\$787,605
<u>Expenditures</u>	
Misc. Expenses	\$634
Small Mortgage Payoff	\$194,541

GIVING

Ways to Give

WFUMC Office

“For if the willingness is there, the gift is acceptable according to what one has, not according to what one does not have.” - 2 Corinthians 8:12

God has given us so many good gifts! We return a portion of these gifts back to God through our tithes and offerings. Pray about what you are able to give and then find the ways that work best for you. You can give through our Sunday morning offering, online through our website, www.wesleyfreedom.org, or you can set up an Electronic Fund Transfer with our treasurer. You can also text to give by texting WFUMC to 206-859-9405 and clicking the link in the return text. Wherever God leads, let us always be ready to share.

Why I Give

Mark Gage

I remember our confirmation education and one of the lessons well learned was that all blessings come from God. Everything comes from God, so I was taught that if you give back to God first, you have honored God who gave you everything in the first place. After college, I entered the financial services business where I have remained since and my first boss taught me the value of compounding inflation and said save for your retirement first and if you get used to never having the money, you will never miss it. So, with church and work, I give to God first and retirement too, so I never had the money to begin with so God and my retirement didn't get what was left over but what was needed first. Now it's even easier to accomplish since both are drawn from my accounts automatically. I never have to worry about forgetting to bring a check to church! It's also rewarding to see the fruits from my efforts with all the awesome ministries that I know my income helps enable.

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

May 19, 2019 @ 3pm	Confirmation Service
June 1, 2019 @ 9am – Noon	Bikes for the World: Bring your used bicycles to be refurbished and passed along to developing countries.
June 2, 2019 @ 9:45am	High School Senior Breakfast – If you are a high school senior who would like to attend, contact Sherry Perrine (sperrine@wesleyfreedom.org).
June 16, 2019	Summer Sunday School for children begins
June 23-29, 2019	Adult Mission Trip to Lewisburg (Greenbrier County), West Virginia. If you are interested in joining the team, contact Tim Boyer (tjzboyer@comcast.net).
July 6-13, 2019	High School Mission Trip to Ireland, West Virginia
July 15-19, 2019	Vacation Bible School (Evening Session still open)
July 22-26, 2019	Middle School Mission Trip to Philadelphia, Pennsylvania

Our Mission at Wesley Freedom United Methodist Church:

To make disciples of Jesus Christ who share the story of God's grace.

Our Vision:

To see the lives of people in our community forever changed by God's grace.