

Summer 2020

Sharing ^{the} Story

Wesley Freedom: Generosity in Action Magazine



The water that I will give will become a spring of water gushing up to eternal life.

- John 4:14



A Refreshing Summer

Senior Pastor, Rev. Dr. Jennifer Smith

Jesus answered her, "If you knew the gift of God and who it is that asks you for a drink, you would have asked him and he would have given you living water." John 4:10

We could go on dehydrated. We could let the pandemic divide and discourage us. We could let the call to greater racial justice fall on deaf ears. We would be justified to just set our empty glass on the counter and go to bed hoping to wake up in 2021. This would be reasonable if we didn't know Jesus.

Jesus had a way of running into people just when they were about to lose hope. In John 4, Jesus came across a woman at a well. From what we are told her life is complicated. Jesus offers her water that bubbles up to eternal life. Jesus invites her to receive a reservoir of divine love and grace which would transform her life and give her new purpose.

This summer the sun is hot and life is dehydrating but we know the One who can refresh our souls. Jesus is the source of living water and right now we all need more than a sip.

This summer I invite you to welcome the living water of Jesus to flow into your life. We will continue to bring worship into your homes and will also be sharing engaging outdoor worship. We pray that one of these can be a source of continual connection and refreshment.

We pray that as you receive God's outpouring of grace, that you will become particularly refreshing for the people in your home, your work place, and your church family. Everyone is hurting in some way. As Jesus followers, we can be those who pour out kindness, grace, love, and hope.

In my short time here, I have already discovered that Wesley Freedom is a refreshing community which continually attends to the spiritual, relational, and physical needs of members, friends, and community members. In this challenging season, the needs are great, but with the help of our Lord we can rise to the challenge of filling bellies, connecting with the lonely, fostering spiritual healing, and promoting peace and justice in our Eldersburg community.

Without Jesus, we might be a bitter pill. With Jesus we can be a glass of cold water.

Be refreshed. Be refreshing. See you soon on-line or outside! Pastor Jenny



Discipleship

Connecting through Small Groups

Associate Pastor Ian Collier



As we have all found out over the past few months, while solitude has its time and place, extended isolation can wear on us emotionally, physically, and even spiritually. In the preface to *Hymns and Sacred Poems* (1739), Methodist founder John Wesley famously wrote that “The gospel of Christ knows of no religion but social; no holiness but social holiness.” This means that it is in the DNA of Methodism that discipleship is not something we can do alone – true Christianity is something that can only be done with other Christians! For this reason Methodism in Britain and America began as a network of small groups within the Church of England, and we remain a small group driven denomination today!



Chapters Bible Study meets via Zoom on Sunday Mornings at 8:30 am.

During the height of the pandemic, when the most caring thing we could do for each other was not to gather in large crowds for fellowship, Wesley Freedom members were able to stay connected with each other and continue their discipleship journey through our small groups. For Gloria Stankiewicz, who leads the Bible and Breakfast women’s group on Tuesday mornings, “Once COVID-19 hit, and everything was shut down, I think we all went into survival mode... My heart was hurting, and I needed something to uplift my spirits.” Along with twelve other small groups, Bible and Breakfast rose to the challenge and began to meet by video chat. Some groups, like Stankiewicz’s, discuss a Christian book or study during their time together. Others, like the ADAM men’s group, focus on the Bible. “[In ADAM] I found a diverse group of men who simply got together once a week to read the Bible and then talk about it. They don’t chit chat over it, but they actually talk,” said ADAM member Billy Moffitt.

This summer will be a season of new group creation! Already in the past three months, two new pastor-led online groups have been brought into being, and we will be working this summer to bring anyone who is interested in joining together with other Christians into new small groups – both in person and online. So if you have never been in a group before, this is the time to do it! Pastor Ian will make sure all groups have the tools they need to have good conversation and fellowship. For Stankiewicz, “Being able to meet as a group online...has truly lightened my heart.” If you are interested in joining or starting a small group at Wesley Freedom, contact Pastor Ian and take the next step on your journey of discipleship.



Lynn Clarke engages with Friday Friends Small Group

Worship Ministries

Summer Opportunities for Worship

Dan Eschliman, Director

This summer, we are excited to offer a variety of worship options. All services- online and in person- will include the same scriptures, the same sermon, and much of the same music.

Outdoor Worship

We gather in the north parking lot, between the main building and the cemetery, at 8:30am, 10:00am and 6:00pm. All are invited to please [sign up in advance](#) at wesleyfreedom.org, register your attendance, and [bring your own chairs](#).

Online Worship

We will continue to be available every week on Facebook, YouTube, the church's website (wesleyfreedom.org) and the Wesley Freedom app.



Outdoor Worship began on July 12.

Blessed through Serving

God is Certain Sarah Gibson

Over the last several months of "Stay at Home" orders, I have had the blessing of contributing to a couple of online worship services. As a busy mom of 4, who was suddenly now in charge of their online schooling, and having zero time for myself, the opportunity to participate was a much needed break in our new normal. It gave me a reason to remove myself for a brief window of time and catch my breath. I was able to reflect and refocus my thoughts to Jesus and all He has done for me. I was reminded that even though times are uncertain and unstable, God is certain and stable and that never changes. This became something I clung to. Prior to COVID19, being a part of the worship team was one of the few things in which I was involved that provided support and community for me. Even though I was a relatively new member of the team and just finding my groove, the inability to be together for rehearsals was felt deeply. I am so thankful to have had the chance to be outside of my family bubble, even if virtually, and see and connect with some of the other musicians. It made a lonely time feel not quite so lonely, and helped me remember I have more to offer than "just mom."



Unexpected Witness

Megan Napor



Matthew 18:20 says: "For where two or three gather in my name, there am I with them" and for weeks we have gathered in our home as a family of four and worshipped virtually with our brothers and sisters of Wesley Freedom and beyond. When Mrs. Sherry invited us to help with the Children's Message for Psalm 23, it was a Godwink moment. Never heard of a Godwink? It's a coincidence that can only be explained as some kind of divine intervention. We hadn't told Mrs. Sherry we'd help, but we were already considering it. The fact that the topic of the Children's message was Psalm 23 - my all-time favorite verse - only solidified the fact that God was saying, "This is your time to say 'yes'."

Max was given the task of finding the verse in the Bible. We read and reread the verses and talked about what they meant and how we'd video each part. While we were walking around our neighborhood creating each clip, we'd pass friends who inquired about what we were doing. After all, Quint was dressed like Jesus and we were carrying props. We told them we were making a video for church and invited them to watch along on Sunday. Over and over, we encountered people asking what we were up to. We were witnessing on the spot!

The morning of the church service, we received a number of messages thanking us for our interpretation of Psalm 23. The reach of our one minute, seven second rendition traveled beyond the confines of Wesley Freedom and the borders of Maryland. Our children were shocked when another church asked to share it with their small group. Another church in Virginia used it for their online Sunday School.

God works in amazing and mysterious ways. All we had to do was say "yes" and he provided the rest.

Safe Community Guidelines

In order to keep all who are on campus as safe as possible, our Re-Entering Well Task Force has developed the following guidelines for everyone on campus.

- Consider staying home if you are an at-risk individual.
- Take your temperature at home prior to arrival at church. If it is registering out of your normal range (or if it is above 100.4 degrees Fahrenheit), please stay home. If you have fever or feel ill, stay home and worship with us online.
- Wear a mask from the moment you arrive on campus until you leave campus.
- Maintain 6 feet of physical distance from all those that do not live in your home.
- Refrain from all physical contact including handshakes, hugs, etc. Air hugs are great!!
- Utilize hand sanitizer every time you enter our building and wash your hands with soap and water before leaving the restroom.
- Ensure that children 5th grade and younger are always accompanied by an adult who is mindful of their physical distancing and hand/face hygiene.
- Only one person (or family) in each bathroom at one time.
- To facilitate social distancing, park in the open parking spaces (every other space is closed).
- All groups meeting on campus must take attendance.

We know that each family has developed their own guidelines for their family based on their needs. While on our property, we appreciate everyone's cooperation following these precautions to keep our community safe. Please know these guidelines may be stricter than mandated. Our priority is your health.

Children & Family Ministries

Celebrating Special Life Moments Sherry Perrine, Director

In the midst of the isolation, we found a way to celebrate the Class of 2020 with a tailgate brunch. Each graduate and family were greeted at the North Entrance and drove around the Freedom Youth Center where they received gifts and congratulations from our youth ministry leaders. As they entered the entrance to the portico, they received more gifts and were greeted by Pastor Tony. They picked up their breakfast and beverages and lined the upper parking lot and enjoyed social distance fellowship. Each graduate had an opportunity to share some thoughts along with some of the youth leaders. Pastor Tony had each family surround and place hands on the graduate and closed this special time with prayer.

Congratulations Class of 2020!



Audrey and Greg Sutherland, sit with their daughter, Morgan who received special recognition for her many years serving in Children and Family Ministries.



James Jackson Pickwell and his mom, Jenny, pass out gifts to the graduates.

Grace Vincent received special recognition as one who served with Children and Family Ministries throughout her four years of High School.



Looking Ahead

Outdoor Worship has begun! We are developing ways to support children and their families during worship. We will be providing emails with scripture and activity pages to begin with and as we move through our season, we will provide worship bags and resources to pick up at the beginning of the service. Our hope is to be able to plan some in person small group experiences for children and their families. We are missing you and looking forward to the time we can safely gather.

Early Years Learning Center

Jennifer Pickwell, Assistant Director, EYLC



This school year did not end the way we had envisioned it would with our typical graduation program and refreshments. Early Years Learning Center, however, made the best of this challenging time. We had over 250 preschool and extended day families join us over several days for our drive by end of the year farewell! Families drove under the portico in decorated cars and teaching teams joyfully greeted the family with bubbles, decorations and fun music and lots of happy cheers. The teachers visited briefly with families & gave the child things left at school and any end of the year treats! It was all done with physical distance and masks on all staff. It was different than we had planned but it truly was a lovely celebration!



Meeting the Needs of our Community

Sharon Feldman, Director of the FRC



Our Mission: To be a safe place that connects people to resources for abundant health.

Our Vision: Be a community that treats all persons with dignity and respect

How do you continue to do ministry and meet the needs of those in the community during a pandemic? You have awesome, committed, dedicated servants who look for a way to continue the ministries of the church.



Can't sit at tables for Feed My Sheep?

The solution: we prepackaged lunches and meals and turned Feed My Sheep into a drive-through. We have continued to serve 75-90 guests three days a week since mid-March.



We have partnered with Cold Springs Farms and some great servants willing to pick up and deliver gallons and gallons of milk to organizations in Baltimore, our South Carroll Food Pantry and Calvary UMC Finksburg's pop-up food pantry.



Can't shop at the food pantry?

The solution: we prepackage groceries and figure out the logistics that can accommodate over 100 families, with limited contact, to a drive through and get enough food to feed those in your family.



Can't shop at the Blessings Closet for your much-needed household/personal items?

The solution: leave your shopping list on a voicemail and at Monday's Feed My Sheep pick up your bag of items.



How You Can Help



We have created a **non-contact drop off space** for those in our community who would like to support the Blessings Closet/Food Pantry during this time in which our office has limited hours we are open. You can donate on Mondays between 10 am – 1 pm by dropping off your items in the shopping cart located next to the first handicapped parking space on the top tier of our parking lot (look for the orange cart, orange cone and a sign). Just pull in and drop in the shopping cart.

BLESSINGS CLOSET

- paper towels
- toilet paper
- laundry detergent
- dish soap
- trash bags (kitchen)
- Pinesol
- deodorant
- shampoo
- soap
- toothpaste
- feminine hygiene,
- diapers (all sizes)
- adult diapers for women and men.

TOP TEN ITEMS NEEDED AT THE SOUTH CARROLL FOOD PANTRY

- canned protein (tuna, chicken, peanut butter)
- canned fruit in own juice or light syrup
- low sodium / no salt canned vegetables
- soups (all kinds)
- multigrain cereal
- pasta
- 100% fruit juice (all sizes)
- healthy snacks (raisins dried fruit, cereal bars)

YOUTH MINISTRIES

Taylor Boone, Director

Youth Ministry Continues on ZOOM and Begins In Person Youth Group!!

We are so excited to offer in-person Youth Group! High School Ministry will continue to meet on Sunday nights, 7pm, immediately following 6 pm worship, and Middle School Ministry on Wednesdays. With safety as our priority, masks and social distancing will be required throughout our 45-minute meetings.



Taylor hanging out at the designated Youth spot for 6pm worship. Unfortunately, no table standing permitted during actual worship!

For the 6 pm Worship service, the picnic tables will be the designated youth spot! It will be a place where we can greet youth and sit with you if you are worshipping alone. We hope to see you there!

Email Taylor Boone at tboone@wesleyfreedom.org for information on how to register for in-person and virtual Youth Group!

NOT READY FOR IN-PERSON GATHERINGS?



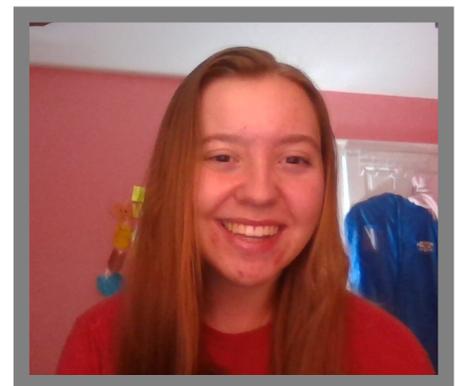
VIRTUAL YOUTH MINISTRY WILL CONTINUE THROUGHOUT THE SUMMER!

We welcome all youth – no matter your past involvement – to join with us in creating a new and safe place to connect with God and with one another! "



Jack Nelson, MSM

In the midst of so many unknowns, we are committed to staying connected with our youth throughout this time. If you are a youth, or know a youth, who is in need of individualized outreach, please contact me! Our team of Youth Leaders and I are here to offer love and support in any way we can. I am so excited for this upcoming season of new adventures, spiritual growth, and more God sightings than we could ever have imagined.



Lynsie Szalecki, HSM

With love,
Taylor Boone

FINANCIAL HEALTH DURING A GLOBAL PANDEMIC

**Peter Jacobus,
Operations Team Chair**

During early spring, as COVID-19 crossed the seas and began to surface in the U.S., our church began to consider the impacts to our normal church routine. We examined which ministries could continue and which ones were even more critical to those that might be affected by the pandemic. The church sought new means to deliver the message and be present with our congregation. We now look forward to a new type of “Open” on July 12th, with outside services and small group gatherings, while still providing the on-line version for those not ready or able to be present.

Besides our church, the Early Years Learning Center (EYLC) was not able to keep its doors open because of state mandated closures, leaving this large ministry with no income. The church applied for the Paycheck Protection Program and was successful in securing funds which allowed the church and the school to save our dedicated staff from financial hardship.

We have proven to be a responsive community. Without the plates to pass, we offered ways to give electronically and are blessed that so many responded to on-line giving. Many also volunteered to help staff ministries where others more at risk could not attend. Between on-line giving, mailed checks, and the Paycheck Protection Program we are proud to announce the church has been able to meet all our financial obligations.

The church has focused well on growing ministry but larger building maintenance expenses have been deferred for many years. We had planned a stewardship campaign this Spring, but now hopefully in the fall, we can begin to have a conversation around this so our buildings can continue to enable vibrant ministries in a safe, efficient setting.

We have been truly blessed by the faithful giving of our congregation to support our ongoing mission and ministry needs. As we head into the heat of the summer, we pray that your consistent support will continue. If you haven't signed up for on-line recurring gifts, it's not too late – just go to the website www.wesleyfreedom.org and click on “give online”. You can also text to give by texting WFUMC to 206-859-9405 and clicking the link in the return text. We continue to pray for your health and financial well-being and ask you continue to find kind ways to help others less fortunate as we move forward together.

FINANCIAL STATEMENT		YTD
		1/1/20-6/30/20
Weekly Contributions		\$432,240
EYLC Contribution		\$37,500
Other Building Usage		1,065
Interest		33
Fundraising activities		200
	Total Income	\$471,038
EXPENSES		
Salaries & related costs		\$289,239
Mortgage interest payments		27,749
Building expenses (1)		68,742
Ministry area costs (2)		8,620
Administrative costs (4)		17,482
Conference payments		61,275
Designated Reserve		0
	Total Expenses	\$473,108
	Net Income	(\$2,070)
Mortgage principal payments		\$25,137
	Net Income for Cash Flow	(\$27,208)
PPP Grant 2020		90,005
	Net Income Including PPP Grant	\$62,797

(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

If you have any questions, need a detailed report or would like any assistance, contact Cindy Hinson (chinson@wesleyfreedom.org).

EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

Sundays

8:30 am: Outdoor Worship - Registration Required*

8:30 am: Chapters Bible Study: Ephesians via [Zoom](#) (meeting number 390-800-6186)

10:00 am: Outdoor Worship - Registration Required*

6:00 pm: Outdoor Worship - Registration Required*

7:00 pm: High School Ministry outside of the Freedom Youth Center

Online Worship: [WesleyFreedom.org](#); [Facebook](#) (10:00AM Facebook Watch Party); [YouTube](#);

Mondays

10:30 am: [Facebook Devotional](#) with Pastor Ian

6:30 pm: Pastor Ian's Bible Study (Email or call the church office for the Zoom link)

Tuesdays

7:00 pm: Virtual Youth Group on Zoom

Wednesdays

10:30 am: [Facebook Devotional](#) with Pastor Ian

11:00 am: Pastor's Bible Study (Respond to this email, or call the church office for the Zoom link)

7:00 pm: Evening Prayer conference call with Sharon Feldman (Dial 617-793-8008)

7:00 pm: Middle School Ministry outside of the Freedom Youth Center

Thursdays

5:00 pm: Weekly Announcements and Sermon Preview are mailed and posted. Call the church office or [Sign-up Here](#).

*Please go to our [website to register](#) to attend our weekly worship service or call Lynn Clarke (410- 795-0471 if you do not have internet access.



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Picture by Brenda Bowman

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.