



# Ashland Place UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

## January 16, 2025 E-News

A mid-week word from Pastor Darren...

Dear Church Family,

In last night's Wednesday Night Bible Study, we concluded our reading of Paul Chilcote's *Recapturing the Wesley's Vision* with a discussion on what it might mean to serve others with the love of God in the here and now. Specifically, what does it take for God's love to "become flesh and dwell among us" not only in the person of Jesus, but in our lives, our actions, and our collective witness?

This well-loved lyric from Charles Wesley presents the challenge in another way: *to serve the present age, my calling to fulfill; O may it all my powers engage to do my Master's will!*

Having finished that introduction of Wesleyan faith, we have decided for our next study to pursue a deeper understanding of what we suspect to be a universal theme for any age: the "pursuit of happiness."

To test this theory, I posted the following questions on my personal Facebook account this morning and have already received a number of thoughtful responses over the last few hours. For the sake of further research, I'll ask the same of you.

1. What is your version of "the good life"?
2. Would you say that you are actively or intentionally engaged in the "pursuit of

...happiness”?

3. Why or why not?

4. If yes, then how?

In his preaching, John Wesley claimed that “doing all which religion requires will not lessen, but immensely increase, our happiness.” I wonder how many of us would honestly agree with that, much less those outside of the church?

And yet, our different versions of “the good life” do not diminish our pursuits. Everyone is searching for something, no matter who they are or what their priorities may be.

As we look at the upcoming holiday on our calendars, I am reminded that in his famous “Letter From a Birmingham Jail,” Dr. Martin Luther King proclaimed that

“Injustice anywhere is a threat to justice everywhere. We are caught in an inescapable network of mutuality, tied in a single garment of destiny. Whatever affects one directly, affects all indirectly.”

If we believe that to be true (and I must admit that I do), then it would seem that your pursuit of happiness and mine, as well as the pursuits and aspirations of the stranger on the street, are related to one another.

Thus, an honest question for ourselves might be whether we see this interdependency of inevitable community as a blessing or a curse. What if your pursuit of happiness becomes a threat to mine? The age old “neighbor” question between Jesus and the well-schooled lawyer suddenly comes to mind (Lk. 10:25-29).

Beginning next Wednesday, we are going to begin a deeper dive into this exploration of our understanding of “the good life” and the relationship between the Bible and the “pursuit of happiness.” We will be starting in Genesis and moving on from there.

Admittedly, there is no shortage of conversation partners in this discussion, from Aristotle to the early church fathers and mothers, to more recent publications on ‘positive psychology’ and a variety of college curriculums. I am excited about this initiative and expect that we will be engaging in this topic for months to come.

Personally, I also expect to learn a great deal along the way.

What do you think of this discussion? Of these questions? I would love to have you join us for these Wednesday night sessions, or to hear from you at some other time through the week.

This Sunday we will be focusing on John 2:1-11 in our worship services. What happens when the wine runs out? What about the “good life” then? *Come and see!*

Grace to You,

Darren

Please note...

The church office will be closed on Monday, January 20 in observance of MLK Day.

### **A New Sermon Series Begins Sunday, January 26**

#### **"A Time to Shine: The Witness and Wisdom of Esther"**

What would you do if you were Queen for a day? How would you make the most of the opportunity? Join us for this heroic tale from the Hebrew Scriptures, filled with high stakes and dark comedy.

"Where is God?" you ask. *Come and see!*

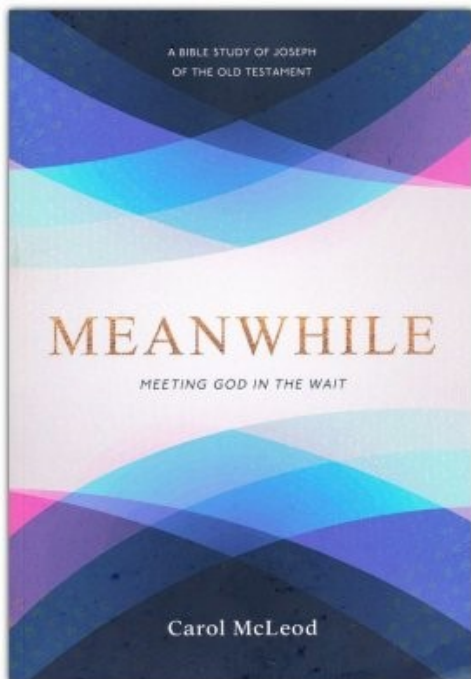


MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR

# MAINTENANCE DIRECTOR NEEDED

**APUMC is looking for a full-time  
maintenance director.  
Please help us spread the word!**

**CONTACT DARREN FOR MORE INFORMATION**



## **Monday Morning Women's Bible Study**

“Conversations at the Table” started back last week, but it's not too late to join us on Monday mornings at 10 am in the Fellowship Hall. The eight-week bible study will focus on the life of Joseph, engaging the book “Meanwhile” by Carol McLeod. The cost of the book is \$15. For more information, please contact Maria Coleman at [mariacoleman12@gmail.com](mailto:mariacoleman12@gmail.com)

**The class WILL meet this Monday  
the 20th on MLK Day.**



**The Joseph Project is in need of dried beans and grits. These are popular items that have been unavailable recently from their usual source. Please place the items on the shelves in the Fellowship Hall hallway.**

# Wednesday Night Supper Menu

Dinner will be served from 5:00-6:00 pm.

\$10 - ages 12 and up  
\$5 - children under age 12  
\$30 - family maximum

NURSERY WILL BE AVAILABLE.

## January 22

**Baked Spaghetti**  
**Salad**  
**Garlic Bread**  
**Desert**  
**Grilled Cheezus Sandwiches**

**There are programs for all ages,  
so make plans to join (or rejoin) us this new year!**

***Choir***  
***Handbells***  
***Children's Activities***  
***Youth Fellowship***  
***Pastor's Class***

**Reservations are not required and takeouts are available.**

[CLICK HERE TO PAY ONLINE](#)



## **AP YOUTH EVENTS**

**Youth events are open to youth in  
grades 7-12.**



**Friends are always welcome!**  
**QUESTIONS?**  
Contact Joseph Griggs at (251)518-8001

**Due to the MLK holiday on Monday, there will be no Youth on Sunday, January 19.**

**CLICK HERE TO SIGN UP TO PROVIDE FOOD FOR OUR YOUTH ON SUNDAY NIGHTS!**



**2025 Sign-up now available!**

**Altar Flowers - Would you like to honor someone, remember a loved one, or celebrate a happy occasion???**

There is a sign-up sheet on the Fellowship Hall Bulletin Board or you may click below for a link to Signup Genius.

Your \$55 donation can be made to APUMC and placed in the offering plate, arranged online ([apumc.com](http://apumc.com)) or delivered to the office. Please include your preferred wording.

**2025 Altar Flower Sign-up**

## **Around the Congregation...**

### **Circle of Concern**

Please hold these persons in your prayers: John Allen, Jean Brown & son James Williams, Victor Brown (Dee Dee Cook's brother), Braxton & Linda Lee Counts, Julie & Steve Dugan, Peggy Emond (David Mayhall's sister), Phillip Fields, Bruce Finley, Marcia Golson, Ruffin Graham, Jim Harter, Diane Holub (Angela Prine's mother), Tee Hope, Barbara Hunt, Andrew Irby, Tyler Mazey, David Richards, Sara Robinson, Tom Root, Mary Davis Rutledge, Lonn Spencer, Peggy Tanner (Cindy Roton's mother), Sherry Thomson, Robert Wheeler (Emily McGough's brother), Kathryn Willingham, and all caregivers (*\*new concern this week*)

Ashland Place United Methodist Church  
|www.apumc.com



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