

METHODISTS on a *Mission* in HONDURAS

In 1994 The General Board of Global Ministries of the United Methodist Church launched The Honduras Initiative. Today, the United Methodist Church in Honduras has 12 vital congregations and many others under development. Knowing that God continues to ask each of us to move beyond our comfort zones and to walk our faith journey alongside Christian brothers and sisters in other cultures, The Illinois Great Rivers Conference launched a mission partnership with the United Methodist Church in Honduras in August 2012.

As many of you know, Wesley is a proud supporter of this partnership. We have sent a construction team every year since 2013 and have also sent medical teams to aid in this effort. While in Tegucigalpa last summer, the team members spoke with Thomas Brooks, the director of the Conference Headquarters, and learned that fewer teams have been involved in recent years and they were concerned about raising the funds needed to complete the construction of the church and headquarters. That discussion led the team to consider new ways of raising money to ensure the project stayed on course. One of our Wesley team members came up with an idea to reach out to his vocal quartet and present a fundraising concert to support the effort with the hope of raising six or seven thousand dollars. The concert was then set for Sunday, November 18, 2018, and Wesley's own "Missions Call" quartet began rehearsals in preparation for the big event. This energetic concert had toes tapping and the sanctuary was filled with the soulful sounds of Southern Gospel.

After sharing about the construction project and showing pictures of the various Wesley teams in action, as well as a video prepared by the team in Honduras, the results far exceeded the goal. Because of the support of their members, friends, and sponsors, over \$17,000 was raised that evening to continue the construction effort in Honduras! Wesley would like to send a big THANK YOU to everyone who gave financially, donated their time and talents, or attended this exciting event.

While the concert was hugely successful, the story doesn't end there. After sharing our good news with a few posts and videos on social media, one of the members of the quartet was contacted by a member of the United Methodist Church of the Resurrection in Kansas, who also regularly sends construction teams to Tegucigalpa. Sheree Reece, the Caribbean and Latin American Program Director at Adam Hamilton's church, was inspired by the results of the concert and requested a portion of their Christmas Eve offering be allocated towards a matching contribution for the project. She wrote, "Every year the entire UM Church

of the Resurrection Christmas Eve offering goes towards initiatives outside the walls of our church, both in Kansas City and around the world. This year, part of the offering will go towards matching donations for the Honduras Mission Headquarters building in Tegucigalpa. We are excited to match the incredible amount of money raised through the concert held at Wesley United Methodist Church." So, in the end, what started as a casual late night discussion in Honduras brainstorming ideas to raise more money, ended up adding over \$34,000 to the construction fund. Our God is an amazing provider!

The next construction trip for Wesley to Honduras is set for June 15-23, 2019, and its construction team could not be more excited to return. If you would like to learn more about this mission, make a donation or volunteer to help, please contact Keith Smith at 309.242.4318 or email at keithsmith19671@gmail.com. We can't wait to see the amazing ways in which God works through us to help others in the coming year.





A Note from Our Pastor

All You Need Is Love! This month brings a significant conversation to the United Methodist Church: LGBTQ inclusion in the life of the denomination. From February 23-26 a Special Called Session of the General Conference will gather in St. Louis to take on legislation that was referred in 2016 to a group of 32 United Methodists named by the Council of Bishops: The Commission on a Way Forward.

In some ways, this General Conference Session brings with it some amount of stress and anxiety. What will happen to our denomination? What will happen to lesbian and gay United Methodists? What will happen to the local church? The decisions made in St. Louis this month could impact our stated theology, our structure, our shared mission, maybe even the name of the denomination!

But in other ways, we know that the discussions and decisions occurring at General Conference don't change anything at all about who we are and who God is – because the Church of Jesus Christ is about Love. We serve a Lord who loved this world long before the UMC existed, and will be loving us long after all of us have gone on to the other side. We can't change the love of God by a vote!

Wesley Church is a strong, vibrant and welcoming congregation which has been loving the Bloomington-Normal community for 75 years. We love and respect God and one another. We celebrate our many blessings, and we work through our struggles together. And we are committed to our mission of "Making and Nurturing Disciples for Jesus Christ." That's not up for a vote.

Pastor Justin and I wish to encourage you during this season of anticipation to remember that the "United" in "United Methodist" comes not from "uniform opinion," but from the great love of Jesus Christ which spreads its mighty wings over conservatives, liberals and everyone in between. It is his love for us that brings us together, and our love for each other that keeps us committed to our mission. If you'd like to discuss the upcoming conference or the question of LGBTQ inclusion, just let us know. Our doors are always open, and we would value the conversation.

Please pray for the Special Session and for all those who attend, lead and vote. I would especially appreciate your prayers for me as I attend and join my fellow delegates in discerning the will of God for the UMC.

– *Pastor Sara Isbell*

Note: during February, the sermon series will come not from the lectionary, but from the book of Ephesians. We'll be reading together Paul's words about the unity of the church, and celebrating our relationship with Christ and with each other.

If you'd like to read ahead, our sermon texts will be taken from each chapter as follows:

- Feb. 3 – Ephesians 1 (Pastor Sara)
- Feb. 10 – Ephesians 2 (Pastor Sara)
- Feb. 17 – Ephesians 4 (Pastor Sara)
- Feb. 24 – Ephesians 3 (Pastor Justin)

CALENDAR *A Look Ahead*

JANUARY

- 26 Wesley Musical Retreat
in the choir room 9-11 am
- 27 Wesley Leadership Retreat
Wesley West 12:00-5:30 pm
- 28 GEMS Meeting
Wesley UMC 7:00-8:45 pm
- 29 Wesley's Bright Beginnings
Open House 6:00-7:00 pm

FEBRUARY

- 3 SURGE Souper Bowl Collection
after services in the Sanctuary
- 3 Prayer Team Meeting
in the Garden Room 2:30 pm
- 4 LOL Circle Lunch
Aroma's Indian Restaurant
- 6 Anchored Service Night
at Wesley West 7-8 pm
- 7 Hope Circle Meeting
in the Lounge 6:30 pm
- 8 Family Fun Night
at Wesley from 6-8 pm
- 9 Scout Spaghetti Supper
in Wesley Hall from 5-7 pm
- 10 Scout Sunday
in the Sanctuary
- 13 Disciple Bible Study Fast Track
Informational Meeting
- 16 SURGE Feed My Starving
*Children Packing Session
Chicago Suburbs*
- 16 Paper Distribution Event
at Wesley West 9:30-11:30 am
- 20 "The Grand Sweep"
Bible in a Year Potluck
- 20 Wesley New Member Class
- 23-26 General Conference
*in St. Louis (prayers requested
for Pastor Sara)*
- 26 UMW Fellowship Speaker
in the Garden Room 9:30 am
- 26 Loads of Love
The Wash House 4:30-7:30 pm
- 28 GEMS Meeting
at Wesley 7-8:30pm

MARCH

- 6 Ash Wednesday Service
in the Sanctuary 7-8 pm
- 13 Disciple Bible Study Fast Track
with Pastor Sara
- 16 Paper Distribution Event
Wesley West 9:30-11:30 am



Feed My Starving Children PACKING SESSION

On Saturday, February 16, SURGE will be going to serve at "Feed My Starving Children" in the Chicago Suburbs as well as enjoying some time at Sky High Trampoline Park! We will meet at 8:00 that morning at Wesley, and return to the church later that evening around 9:30 pm. Our day will start with a little fun at the trampoline park, then we will spend the rest of our day packing food for kids in need from various countries around the world. Please bring \$20-25 for lunch and dinner, as well as extra money if you wish to purchase anything at the the "Feed My Starving Children" gift shop. A \$5 fee will also be collected for Sky High Trampoline Park.

Parents must fill out a waiver prior to our departure through the Sky High website. Registration forms for this event can be found at the SURGE board or by contacting Frank Newburn at fnewburn@wesley-umc.com. Hurry! The deadline to register is Wednesday, February 13. Bring a friend, all are welcome!



Souper Bowl Sunday

As many know, Sunday February 3rd is the Super Bowl. What you may not be aware of is it is also the Souper Bowl of Caring day across the country. Since 1990 more than \$143 million has been raised for local charities across the country through the Souper Bowl of Caring. The Youth of Wesley will be collecting money to support the important ministry of Safe Harbor, a local Salvation Army homeless shelter that also provides services for people with low income in the Bloomington/Normal area. We will be outside the sanctuary doors after both services on February 3rd to collect loose change and monetary donations with the goal of raising over \$1000 for Safe Harbor. Thank you in advance for your support which allows us to be the hands and feet of Christ in our own community.



Fill the SILLS:

In January our 8th graders focus on service to others, and what it means to live in this world with the heart of a servant. We use Biblical study on servanthood and group discussion to explore how the students can impact their community, and active service projects to put into action what we have learned. Again this year our 8th graders will be serving 5th graders at Irving School by collecting personal hygiene products for them. These products are put into health kits and given out to the 5th graders during their health class. Some of these students may not have access to basic hygiene products. We are collecting for 60 students. **WE CAN ONLY USE FULL SIZED PRODUCTS (no sample or travel sizes), and SINGLE/INDIVIDUAL PACKAGED items only.** Items needed are: Shampoo, Conditioner, Tooth Paste, Tooth Brush, Soap Bars, and Deodorant. *Please help us "Fill the Sills" by leaving your donation in our "Fill the Sills" box in the hallway across from the Garden Room. Thank you for helping us serve others!*

Volunteer HELP NEEDED



Wesley is in need of a few volunteers to join our video presentation team on Sunday mornings to help keep our services running smoothly!

If you are able to help, please contact the church office at 309.827.8046 or email Steve Brown for more details at wesleypresentations@gmail.com.

Just One Collection Was Just Right!

Our December Just One Collection was a call for school supplies to support local students as they hit mid-year and are often running low. *Wesley has again generously answered the call!* The items collected were greatly appreciated by Fox Creek, Sarah Raymond, Oakdale and Sheridan schools, as well as Bloomington Day Care Center. **THANK YOU** for your support of this wonderful ministry!





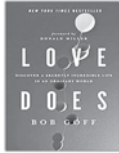
Gather your friends and family for a night of fun! Join us on Friday, February 8 from 6-8 pm at Wesley for Family Fun Night!

Activities include a photo scavenger hunt, refreshments, and tons of fun! All are welcome, bring a friend!

February Focus:

Preschool: Our preschool love bugs will be learning that JESUS LOVES THEM!
Elementary: Concentrating on SERVICE with bible stories from the Gospels.
For more information please contact Kathi Pritts at kpritts@wesley-umc.com.

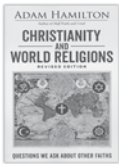
February Adult Education at Wesley



Sundays from 10:15-11:00 am
"LOVE DOES" by Bob Goeff
In the Lounge with Kathi Pritts
"Do You Believe?" (starts February 10)



Sundays from 10:15-11:00 am
"JOURNEY THROUGH THE BIBLE" (Romans)
In the Conference Room with Richard Johnson



Wednesdays from 6:15-7:15 pm
"CHRISTIANITY AND WORLD RELIGIONS" by Adam Hamilton
In the Conference Room with Stephanie Hoy - newcomers welcome!

"Grand Sweep" Celebration
To celebrate the end of our "Grand Sweep Bible in a Year" adult education class, we invite all participants to join us for a potluck on Wednesday, February 20 from 5:45-6:45 pm. Bring a dish to share and enjoy food and fellowship!



www.wesleysbrightbeginnings.com



If you have a preschool aged child from 1 (by September 1, 2019) to 4 years old, please join us for an OPEN HOUSE on Tuesday, January 29, from 6:00-7:00 pm. This is a terrific opportunity to meet our staff and tour our classrooms as we prepare for the 2019-2010 school year!

For more details about our play-based preschool, please contact Julie Loy, program director, at 309.827.8046 or wesleysbrightbeginnings@gmail.com.

Disciple Bible Study:
Fast Track

A new session of "Making Disciples Through Bible Study" will begin on Wednesday, March 13, led by Pastor Sara. The "Fast Track" curriculum is 12 weeks for the Old Testament; 12 weeks for the New Testament. We hope to complete the Old Testament around the end of May and pick up with the New Testament in the fall. If you are interested in joining us, please contact Pastor Sara at sisbell@wesley-umc.com or join us for an informational meeting on Wednesday, February 13.

New Member Class

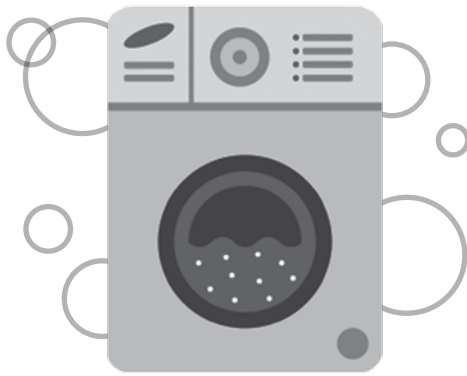
Mark your calendar for the next new member class to begin on Wednesday, February 20. New members will be received during services on Sunday, March 17. More details to come!

Prayers of Comfort

Our thoughts and prayers are with the families of the following members and friends of Wesley who have passed:
Ruthmarian Parsons - November 23, 2018
Iva Gaddis - November 30, 2018
Charles Crabtree - December 5, 2018
Marie Williams - January 3, 2019
Thomas F. Sams Sr. - January 8, 2019
Norma Kline - January 16, 2019
Don Clay - January 17, 2019

**Thankful Hearts
ADVENT OFFERING**

Because of the incredible generosity of our Wesley members and friends, our December Advent Offering collected over \$9,000 to support local social agencies and help those in need! THANK YOU for your generous spirit in this season of giving and supporting this important mission. God is SO good!



LOADS OF LOVE

Join us for the next Loads of Love event on Tuesday, February 26, from 4:30-7:30 pm at the Wash House in Bloomington (609 N. Clinton Street) as we lend a hand and a few quarters! *If you would like to help, contact Gary Thompson at gary.thompson.sp6d@statefarm.com.*



DISTRIBUTION MINISTRY

We are in great need of diaper wipes, Band-Aids, and feminine hygiene items (please leave your donation in the box across from the Garden Room). Our next distribution will be on Saturday, February 16 from 9:30-11:30 am at Wesley West. *We always need help! To volunteer, please contact Karen Daudelin at 309.838.5723.*

Scouting News & Events



Girls are Joining the Pack!

There is an exciting new opportunity for girls age 11-17 to earn Eagle Scout. We currently have an all-male troop, 918. We are planning to start an additional all-female troop. This new all-female troop will provide opportunities for camping, hiking, rock climbing, swimming and a lot of other outdoor activities. The goal of the program is to prepare young people to make ethical and moral choices over their lifetimes by instilling in them the values of the Scout Oath and Law. *To sign-up or request more information contact Glenn Harbin at glenn@bsaeagle.com or 309.287.4267.*

Annual Spaghetti Supper

Mark your calendars for the Boy Scout Troop 918 Annual Spaghetti Supper set for Saturday, February 9, from 5-7 pm in Wesley Hall. Tickets will be sold between services in the Garden Room on January 27 and February 3 (Adults \$9 in advance/\$10 at the door, Kids \$7 in advance/\$8 at the door). *Bring your family and big appetite to this tasty event!*



Scout Sunday February 10, 2019

If you're a scout or a leader (past or present) we invite you to join us for Scout Sunday on February 10! All scouting groups are welcome, Brownies, Girl Scouts, Cub Scouts, Boy Scouts, and Venture groups. We will wear our full class A uniforms. *If you would like to participate, please contact Jim Robinson at jrobinson@wesley-umc.com.*



YOUNG ADULT MINISTRY

Who We Are:

Anchored is a group of twenty & thirty-somethings who come together weekly to share life and faith. Weekly gatherings are a time to worship, to be in mission within our community, to explore faith, to relax, and enjoy time with others who are at a similar point in life.

Where and When:

We gather Wednesday evenings from 7:00-8:30 pm, at Wesley West (across the street from the church). Anchored is starting fresh and heading in new directions of service. Come with us on this journey of redefining this important program. Drop anchor and hang with us! *For more details, contact Matt Sherrill at mattdms87@gmail.com or Pastor Justin Iverson at jiverson@wesley-umc.com.*

What's Happening:

January through February, Anchored will be studying Making Sense of the Bible by Adam Hamilton. Each week, we will watch a 10-15 minute video clip that recaps a section of the book, followed by discussion of the topics covered. We have copies of the book available for members if they would like to read through the section ahead of time each week; however it's not necessary to be able to participate in the discussion. FEBRUARY 6TH - *Service Night 7-8 pm* We will be making tie-blankets to donate to those in need.

MARCH 6TH - *Ash Wednesday* Anchored will not be meeting, but please attend the Ash Wednesday Service in the sanctuary if you are able.

.....2019.....

PAPER DISTRIBUTION EVENT DATES

at WESLEY WEST
from 9:30-11:30 am:

- Saturday, January 19
- Saturday, February 16
- Saturday, March 16
- Saturday, April 20
- Saturday, May 18
- Saturday, June 15
- Saturday, July 20
- Saturday, August 17
- Saturday, September 21
- Saturday, October 19
- Saturday, November 16
- Saturday, December 21

A Special Prayer Request:



Illinois Great Rivers Conference of The United Methodist Church

We join with United Methodists all around the world in praying for the Special Session of General Conference to be held in St. Louis, Missouri, February 23-26. Please lift our delegates, bishops, agencies, and all the wonderful volunteers. May God guide and direct this Special Session and strengthen our witness to the world.

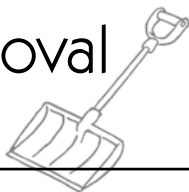
OUR ILLINOIS GREAT RIVERS DELEGATION INCLUDES:

CLERGY: Sylvester Weatherall, Andy Adams, Sara Isbell, Chris Ritter, Robert Phillips, (Alternates: Randy Robinson and Roger Ross)

LAY: Rhonda Whitaker, Bunny Wolfe, Kimberly Woods, Steve Schonert, Larry Weber (Alternates: Marian McCray and Anish Hermon)

Please Note: Over 400 of our delegates will be traveling to St. Louis from warmer climates unaccustomed to February winters. New or gently-used coats, hats, gloves, etc., are being collected at the Midwest Mission Distribution Center in Chatham IL in preparation to welcome these sisters and brothers. If you'd like to make a donation, talk to Pastor Sara.

Snow Removal Ministry



If you are looking for a ministry that directly benefits the members of Wesley, consider helping with the Snow Removal Ministry! This hard working group of volunteers ensures the safety of our church staff and congregation, by leading the snow removal effort and keeping our sidewalks and parking lots safe. If you can help, please contact Dave Koth, via email at davekoth@comcast.net or by calling 309.663.6770 for more details.

Snow Days



In the event of inclement weather, Wesley follows the guidelines of School District 87 for closings, cancellations and delays. Please visit our facebook page [@wesleyumcbloomington](https://www.facebook.com/wesleyumcbloomington) or check the WJBC cancellations page at www.wjbc.com/wjbc-cancellations/

THE Power OF Prayer

We have started a Prayer Team here at Wesley to regularly pray for our congregation, our community, and the world. Please join us for our next meeting on Sunday, February 3, at 2:30 pm in the Garden Room. We plan to gather together regularly to pray, learn more about prayer, and help our Wesley congregation explore new opportunities for prayer.

Calling ALL Singers!



The Wesley Music Department will be presenting a Musical on Palm Sunday, April 14th, 2019, at the 9:00 a.m. worship service. Rehearsals will begin in January, and we will host a retreat to get a jump start on the work from 9-11 a.m. on January 26th in the choir room. If you would like to join us for this special presentation, please contact Adria Schumann via email at aschumann@wesley-umc.com.



Each month, we carefully choose to support a local agency or non-profit business with our JUST ONE Collection who is making a difference in our community by providing services to those in need. This month, our February JUST ONE Collection will be accepting donations to help fund a new bike purchase for Wesley's own beloved ministry Healing Rides.

Healing Rides is a FREE community service provided by Wesley Church and several community partners. We provide rides on the most beautiful part of The Constitution Trail through specially designed cycles, operated by highly trained volunteers. Our first bikes have survived for 4 seasons, and have served over 400 guests! With advancements in technology, we have discovered a new bike that is sturdier and will better meet the needs of our riders as well as enable us to safely traverse the many bridges on the trail. Quality bikes are key to this ministry, and while we are grateful that the purchase of our first bike has been fully covered, we need to add another to our fleet in order for our ministry to continue to grow. We currently have \$3295.00 in our fund, but unfortunately a brand new bike will cost us \$8389 (which leaves us in need of \$5,095, and we are hoping for a bit more for repairs). Our season is from June 1 to September 30, seven days a week between 1 and 3 pm and we would LOVE to have a new bike to kick off our 2019 riding season!

Donations of any size are welcome! Visit www.wesley-umc.com/donations/give and note "Healing Rides" as your ministry. You may also deliver your donation to the church office, or drop it in the offering plate on Sunday mornings. For more details visit www.healingrides.com or contact Barbara Brown at 309.531.8768 or email healingrides@gmail.com.

Thank you, thank you, thank you for all of your support of Wesley's ministries during this past year. The impact your donations have had on our church, our community and the world are amazing! We have fed the hungry, provided paper products and other goods to financially burdened residents, welcomed visitors to our worship services, consoled the ill and grieving, rejoiced with new parents, educated children and adults of all ages, fellowshipped with each

other, and provided financial assistance to more agencies and organizations than can be listed here. Every time there is a need, you have helped to make a difference. For that, we are grateful. As we enter a new year, there is no doubt this compassion and dedication will continue. The operating budget for 2019 is funded mostly by commitments from you, but also includes using some of our reserve funds, and by eliminating some items that were originally included

in the budget. Our financial budget for 2019 is tight, but we have faith that our congregation will meet our needs, and that the funds we receive will be used wisely to continue our mission to make and nurture disciples for Christ.

General fund receipts (as of 12/31/18)	\$1,284,978
General fund expenses (as of 12/31/18)	\$1,324,275
Shortfall	\$39,297

UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

The United Methodist Church

Faith Circle has gone inactive, but we invite current members to join our LOL circle for outreach, lunch and fellowship (see below for details).

Sweet Snowmen Success

THANK YOU to those who ordered Hershey Bar Snowmen from Wesley's UMW this past fall! Your support helped us raise approximately \$1440 for our UMW missions and we sold 1,200 sweet snowmen! *Whew!* We hope your family and friends enjoyed their snowman treat as much as we enjoyed creating them! Our eyes were wide as we watched the orders pour in and wondered how we would create so many, but we did! A huge thank you to all of the snowman elves, but especially to Charlie and

Elaine Stokes, who graciously allowed the snowman factory to invade their home for a few weeks *(and Charlie didn't even sneak a single candy bar)*! We are already planning for next year and are in need of shirt-sized buttons (any color but white) as well as a few more elves to work in the factory. *Please contact Tricia DePew (depewtj@yahoo.com) or Elaine Stokes (estokes65@gmail.com) to join the fun!*



GEMS Growing Each Mom Spiritually



GEMS will meet at Wesley from 7:00-8:30 in the evening on Monday, January 28. We will start a new study, "The Bad Girls of the Bible". Childcare is available for \$3 per child. For more details, please contact Liz Tomera at 847.924.1194 or email her at tomeras@comcast.net.

LOL Ladies Outreach and Lunch

The LOL Circle will meet for lunch and fellowship at Aroma's Indian Restaurant on February 4th. Our February service project will be for the Wesley Paper Distribution Ministry on Saturday, February 16th. *If you would like to join our Circle please email Elaine at estokes65@gmail.com for more detailed information.*

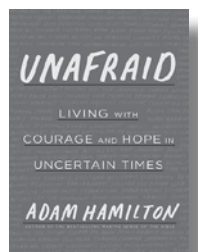
A Hand Up, Not a Handout

Join us on Tuesday, February 26 at 9:30 am in the Garden Room as we welcome fellowship speaker Lindsey Jarboe. We will be discussing how God's love is put into action building homes and hope in our community through the Habitat for Humanity and Women Build programs.

Hope Circle

Join us Thursday, February 7, at 6:30 pm in the Lounge at Wesley UMC for refreshments and continued study of Adam Hamilton's book "UNAFRAID".

Newcomers are always welcome!



Wesley United Methodist Church

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WESLEY

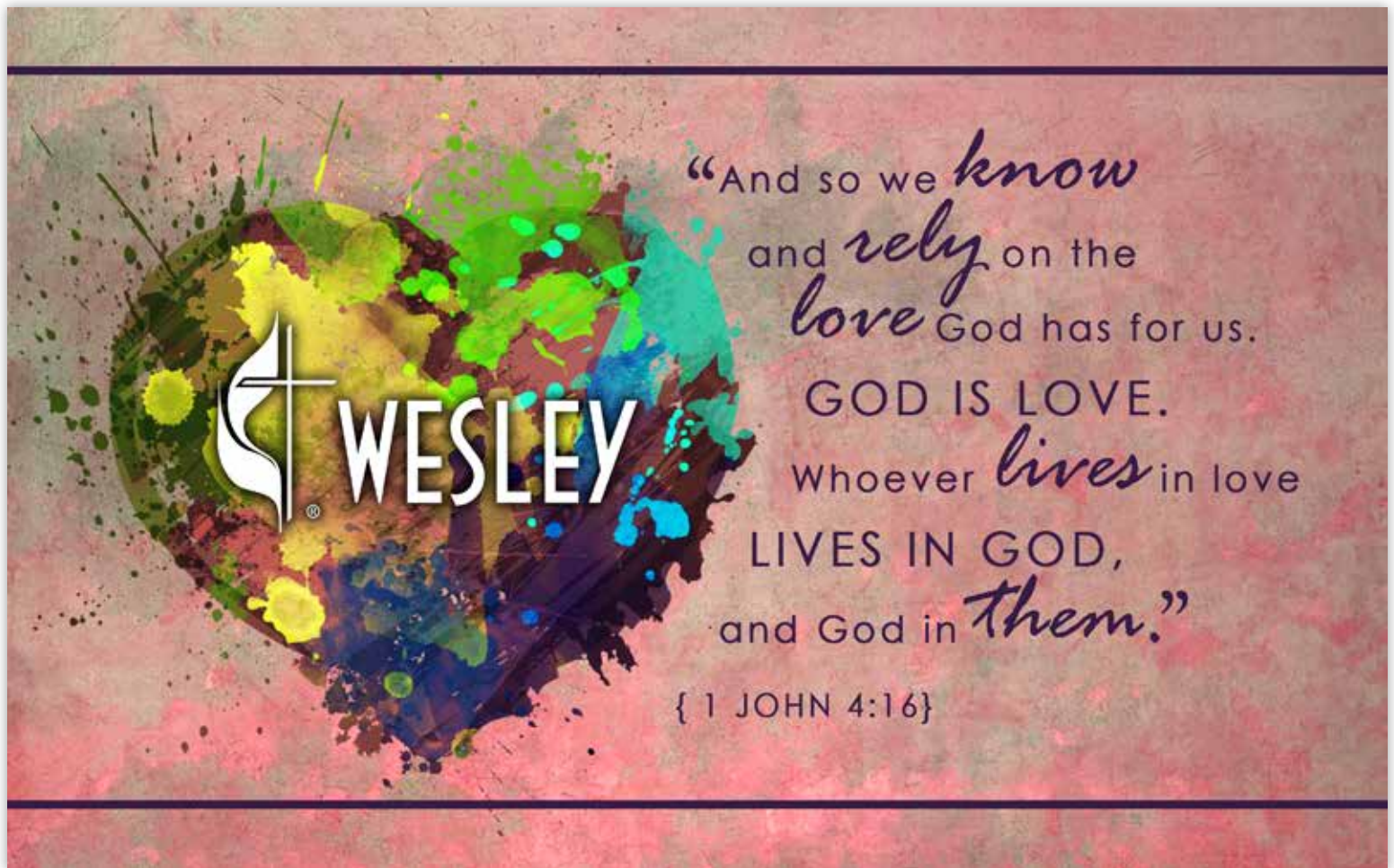
UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

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www.wesley-umc.com

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“And so we *know*
and *rely* on the
love God has for us.
GOD IS LOVE.
Whoever *lives* in love
LIVES IN GOD,
and God in *them.*”

{ 1 JOHN 4:16 }