

Rolling Away the Façades

In the 1940's, T. S. Eliot wrote a poem titled East Coker. East Coker was a community in England connected to Eliot's family and home to the church that houses his ashes. The poem gives hope that England would persevere through the dark days of WW II. It describes a time of disorder in the world as a result of humankind's attempt to seek its own way instead of seeking God. Leaders are described as materialistic and unable to understand reality. (Sounds a lot like 2013). The only way for humankind to find salvation is through pursuing God. Here's a piece from the poem:

I said to my soul, be still, and let the dark come upon you
 Which shall be the darkness of God. As, in a theatre,
 The lights are extinguished, for the scene to be changed
 With a hollow rumble of wings, with a movement of darkness on darkness,
 And we know that the hills and the trees, the distant panorama
 And the bold imposing façade are all being rolled away. (T.S. Eliot, East Coker)

We get comfortable with the façades. The pretty backdrop of our lives, the familiar stories that prop up our faith – the habits that keep us so distracted that we forget that there is anything more than the busy life we skim through. We hurry toward Christmas, letting the familiarity of the stories lull us into a contentment. We speak of the return of the light or of the light breaking into the darkness, but often those words are just clichés we use to pretend that there is some meaning to our experience – that the busyness and the trappings of the season are for a purpose, even if we can't fully articulate what it is.

Even the anticipation and expectation of Advent can become a façade for casting judgment on those who aren't "spiritual" and who get caught up in all the commercialism. Advent often is not about experiencing God in the waiting, but making sure we use the right color candle in the Advent wreath and observe the rituals properly.

We are so comfortable with our façades that we miss that there is a deeper story to tell, a mystery to encounter behind the traditions we've grown accustomed to. If we will only settle down, let the lights go out, and wait for the grand façade to be rolled away then perhaps there will be space for the true life-changing drama to begin. But turning off the lights is scary. Sometimes the artificial light distracts us and only allows us to see the façades that we find safe and comforting. Darkness is unsettling; we don't know what it might hold, what might be moving within the shadows. We would rather embrace the familiar even if that means that we never encounter where God might be moving for fear of having the "worlds" we've built challenged.

Yet, when the darkness surrounds us so does possibility. The potential for God to move us toward the mystery enters in with that expectant darkness. The Spirit can hover over the darkness and formlessness of our lives and breathe new creation into us and new ways of being in this world. But that is only when we allow the artificial lights to be extinguished. When we stop simply reciting the expectations of the season, the words we know by heart, and sit in that darkness. Then, when God has removed the façade, and the true light of Christ opens the new scene, then we can find the meaning we've been searching for. We must sit in that darkness so that we can anticipate the actual advent of God's Light appearing mysteriously and wonderfully in our midst.

Pastor Don



Christmas Eve Service Times

We will celebrate the coming of the Messiah on Christmas Eve with three services:

6:00pm Family Christmas Eve Service

(childcare available for children 4 and under)

8:00pm Contemporary Christmas Eve Service

(childcare available for children 4 and under)

10:00pm Traditional Christmas Eve service

(no childcare available)

Don't forget to invite your family and friends to join you. Invite them to your home afterwards to continue this time of celebration of our Lord's birth.

Family Advent Celebration

Sunday, December 8, from 6:00pm-8:00pm

For the whole church family! Begin with a candlelit dinner, followed by an activity time and family worship planned by the youth and children's advisory teams.

Bread, beverage, dessert, table settings provided. Please bring a dish to share:

Last name begins with A-L: Bring a side dish

Last name begins with M-Z: Bring a main dish

Please sign up at the Information Center in the upper lobby or at www.wadsumc.org (sign up link)



Angel Choir and Worship Dancers

Children of all ages are invited to participate in singing and/or learning a worship dance for the Christmas season. Singers will sing a song for the Christmas play on Sunday, December 22 at 7:00pm and singers and dancers will participate in the 6:00pm Christmas Eve worship service. Practices are on Wednesdays from 6:30-7:30 pm (singers from 6:30-7; dancers from 7-7:30) in the lower lobby on December 4, 11 and 18.

UMW's Christmas Party

All women of the church are invited to the Christmas Party on Thursday, December 5, at 6:30pm in Fellowship Hall. You are asked to bring a side dish to share. And a new pair of pajamas (newborn-size 18) for the Pajama Project.

Tween Time

This special group for 5th-6th graders meet bimonthly for fellowship, devotions and for loving Overlook Elementary School (our service area for this year).

Upcoming events:

Sunday, December 15, 6:00-9:00pm *Live Nativity* at Camp Wanake. Eat dinner before you come but a snack will be provided. Dress for the weather. Bring school supplies to help restock Overlook's supplies for children in need for after the first of the year.

Looking ahead: Roller skating on Sunday, February 16 from Noon-4:30 pm

6th Graders Invited

Our 6th grades are invited to see what youth group is like by attending a Winterjam Retreat at Christ United Methodist Church on January 17-19 with the 7th-8th graders. Cost will be \$45 and will include fun at a rec center, meals, worship, speakers, games, and entertainment.



Annual Christmas Cookie Walk

Delicious homemade cookies will be available to purchase on Saturday, December 14, at 9:00am in our Fellowship Hall. These cookies sell out fast at \$7 per pound.

How can you help our United Methodist Women with this fun raiser for mission projects?

Well:

1. Volunteer to bake cookies to donate for the sale. They would like special holiday cookies including gluten free.
2. Help with the set up on Friday evening, December 13. There are tables to set up, boxes to form, and cookies to display.
3. Come early and buy cookies for yourself or gifts.

How does a cookie walk work? You come in and are given a box with a plastic glove. You then pick up the cookies you want from strolling up and down the aisles of tables. When you are finished filling your box or boxes, they are weighed and you pay \$7 per pound. All money raised supports the UMW Mission Projects.

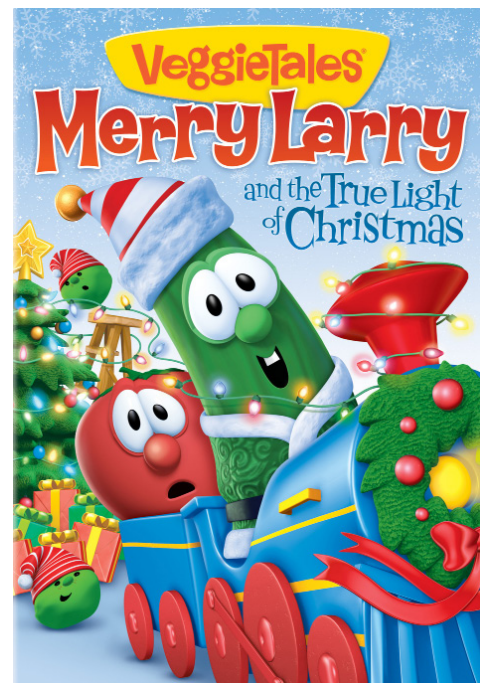


Christmas Drama

A Christmas drama, *The Ten O' Clock News*, will be presented by the Drama Disciples at 7:00pm Sunday, December 22, 2013.

The drama tells the story of the birth of Christ from the perspective of a Bethlehem newscast. The news 'anchors', Peter and Lea of Jordan, follow the unfolding of the events through 'live' reports by their news correspondents. The lively, enthusiastic shepherds and the bantering between the innkeeper and his hard-to-please guest provide a generous sprinkling of humor. The newscast is true-to-life with a Chief Meteorologist, Mark, John's Son, a sportscast, and the ever-present commercials.

Please come and enjoy this production.



One Day Christmas Vacation Bible School

Merry Larry and the True Light of Christmas: A Veggie Tales Movie!

Friday, December 27, 9:30am-Noon

For Children ages 4-6th grade

We will watch the movie, make a craft, play games, have a snack and tell the story of Jesus' birth. Sign up at www.wadsumc.org (sign up link) or in the upper lobby at the table.

Adult and teen helpers are also needed for ahead of time prep work and for the day itself. Sign up to help online or in the upper lobby.



SERMON-BASED Compass groups will be highly intentional in nature and will seek to guide individuals along the path of discipleship. This new small group option

will be directly connected to the sermons preached each Sunday morning. In part, it will be an opportunity for groups to discuss in greater detail the sermon and to learn practical steps to apply that God-given message to daily living. Our goal is to take people from INFORMATION to TRANSFORMATION.

DISCIPLINE The other component of the new COMPASS GROUPS will be instructing, teaching and implementing the Wadsworth UMC discipleship process into church life, work life and home life. Our aim is that COMPASS GROUPS will be intentionally focused on making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world. These groups should provide a community atmosphere where one can grow into a full disciple of Jesus as they CONNECT, GROW & SERVE.

PRACTICAL We also will aim to keep these Compass Groups as practical as possible with each group meeting weekly for 60-75 minutes. Groups may meet in living rooms, coffee shops or at the church. We hope to create groups around areas of common interest, such as a Stay-at-home mom's group, a women's group, men's group, empty nester group, family group, etc.

Compass Groups will run in short 6-8 week cycles. We'd ask that if you sign up that you'd commit to participating for the entirety of that cycle. Our first cycle will begin the week of January 12th, 2014 and will run for 8 weeks until the beginning of Lent. If you are interested in being in a group, please contact Director of Discipleship, TIM BECK (tim@wadsumc.org). Also, look for more info in the bulletin soon.

Intruder Training

Apex Shooting and Tactics LLC is an Ohio based, veteran owned business that offers firearm and tactical training for Law Enforcement, Military and Civilians. In January, Apex Shooting and Tactics will introduce UMC to "The Sheepdog Initiative". The Sheepdog Initiative is a training program designed for organizations to increase their members odds in surviving an active killer incident. Plan to attend one of the training sessions: Sunday, January 19 (1-4 pm); Monday, January 20 (6:30-9:30 pm), Tuesday, January 21 (6:30-9:30 pm) or Sunday, January 26 (1-4 pm).

Dave Ramsey's

Financial Peace University

What would happen if you started telling your money where to go instead of wondering where it went? What would your life look like if you were DEBT FREE! We will be having a 13-week class beginning January 2014

The 9 *Financial Peace University* lessons cover:

- Saving for emergencies, purchases, & building wealth
- Relationships & money-learn how spenders & savers can agree on a budget & teach your kids
- The nuts & bolts of budgeting & how to create a budget
- Debunking myths about money & how to get your debt snowball rolling
- Understanding credit bureaus, collection practices, & credit scores
- The power of marketing on your buying decisions
- The role of insurance in your financial plan
- How to buy only big, BIG bargains
- Understanding investments
- Planning for retirement & college
- Careers and extra job
- Real estate and mortgages-keeping the American dream from becoming a nightmare
- Unleashing the power of generous giving

This class is for everyone from high school to retirement. It is never too early or too late to learn how to manage money God's way.

We Now Have An AED

A special thanks to Keith Geiger for leading CPR classes for 26 people of the church. And to Keith and his son, Kaden, who built a box for the new AED (Automated

External Defibrillator) which is in the upper lobby to help in the event of an emergency.

It has been located on the south wall outside the office.



Sunday School Pamphlet Helper needed

Would you be willing to help out the children's classes from home once a quarter for about 2 hours? The pamphlets that go home to the children and youth come in stacks that need to be separated by age level and date. If you'd be willing to help, please contact Mary Jo at 330.336.6689 or maryjo@wadsumc.org. Thank you!

Family News

Our sympathy to the following families who have recently lost a loved one: Ken McAdoo (*wife, Esther*), Anna Weant (*Andy Tolliver*)

Financial Report

Information through November 24, 2013

	Current YTD	Prior YTD
Income	\$511,371	\$517,617
Expense	\$522,550	\$516,239
Difference	(\$11,179)	\$1,378

Pledged to date:	\$391,644
Pledged received	\$343,977
Difference	(\$47,667)

Acolyte Training

3rd-4th graders are invited to be acolytes: one who carries the light of Christ into and out of the sanctuary during the 11:00am worship service. Children who would like to do this, but have not yet been trained, are invited to attend a training on Friday, December 6 from 6:30pm-7:30pm in the sanctuary. Acolytes serve about every 4-6 weeks with another child and can attend Sunday School or worship with their families.

Shoebox Update

Exciting news! Our church collected 117 shoeboxes and an additional \$294 for shipping expenses (beyond those that went with each box). Praise God! Thank you for caring for children around the world and pray that God will use these boxes of love so that children and families will come to know Him.

Doing some online shopping?

What if you could buy the things you need online and give to your church at the same time? At no cost to you or your church? You're going, "No way!" But this isn't a too-good-to-be-true type of thing. This is the UMCmarket, a shopping portal that pays a commission of 1-9 percent to your church with zero effort on your church's part and no increased costs to you.



The United Methodist Church, in partnership with some of the largest online retailers, have built a shopping tool that provides a cash benefit for your church when you purchase through the UMCmarket -- items you'd probably be buying anyway. The retailer does not markup the price any — you still pay what you'd pay as you did before.

How does it work? Simply create an account at UMCMarket.org and designate the church of your choosing. Then when you're ready to buy, just log into your UMCmarket account and shop at any of the partner retailers and a percentage of the sale is given to the beneficiary you designated in your account settings.



On Saturday morning, January 11, 2014, from 9:00am 'til Noon we will host a TRAINING CAMP for all leaders, teachers and team members. The purpose of the 2014 TRAINING CAMP is to walk through the new DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS of Wadsworth United Methodist Church and to learn how it can and will apply to all aspects of ministry here.

We will take a deeper look at CONENCT – GROW – SERVE and spend time discussing how it aligns with our vision to make disciples of Jesus for the transformation of the world.

You are strongly encouraged to come if you are a:

- Sunday School teacher (Children, youth and/or Adult)
- Small group leader
- Children's Worker or CAT member
- Youth Worker or YAC member

- Discipleship Team member
- On a Committee (Church council, SPR, Finance, etc)
- On a Team (Hospitality, Barnabas, Feed the Souls, Praise Band, Membership, etc)
- Servant or paid Servant

We know how vital it is to be on the same page, especially when it comes to our DISCIPLESHIP PROCESS and so we hope you will make room in your schedule for it.

Our goal is to train and equip every leader, teacher and committee or team member for coordinated ministry and service here at Wadsworth UMC.

Please join us in the Fellowship Hall on Saturday, January 11, 2014 from 9 'til noon. A light continental breakfast and coffee will be provided.