

WELCOME

HOME

120 Years Is Big!

Join the Homecoming!

This year our church celebrates 120 years of ministry serving God and neighbor in the West Nashville community. When I told some children about the church's 120th birthday, "Wow!" was their enthusiastic response. "Wow" is right; 120 years is big. It is a blessing. It is a time to celebrate!

On the first weekend of October we will welcome home many people who were a part of the West Nashville UMC family in years past along with current members and, we hope, new visitors as well. We invite all to join in the celebration.

In addition to the 120th anniversary of the church, we celebrate the 2nd anniversary of our Hispanic ministry. How much has changed in two years! As we celebrate these two milestones, we celebrate the past, present, and future of our church family.

Additionally, in this very special weekend in WNUMC's history, we will celebrate Hispanic Heritage Month and World Communion Sunday. We have so much to celebrate!

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Go make of all disciples

(Third in a Series)

Jesus said . . . , "I am the way, and the truth, and the life; no one comes to God, but by me." (John 14:6, An Inclusive-Language Lectionary)

Picture this in your mind's eye. You have died and are approaching the gates of heaven. You cannot wait to be face to face with Jesus. Talking with the people around you, however, you become confused. They are not all Christians. You meet Jews, Hindus, and Muslims. Good heavens! Here is one who claims he was an atheist. Does he not look chagrined? You keep looking, and Jesus turns no one away. Finally, face to face with Jesus, you cannot contain yourself. You ask Jesus, "How can all these people who never confessed you as savior be allowed into your salvation, Jesus?"

Jesus says, "Why, child, it's easy. I—not you—am the way, the truth and the life."

This is the last of a series of articles based on Matthew 28:19a, NRSV, "*Go therefore and make disciples of all nations.*" The first articles emphasized two things: First, God's goal is the salvation of the world. Any other goal is too small for God. Secondly, God makes disciples. God calls and expects us to be God's tools, but God makes disciples.

The second article focused on one issue. To whom is Jesus talking when he says, "Go into the world and make disciples"? Jesus is speaking to the family of faith, the body of Christ.

This last article focuses on the gospel—the good news—we bring to the world. We take the gospel of Jesus Christ—the good news—into all nations. God became flesh and walked among us. Through Jesus Christ, God reconciled all flesh to

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West Nashville
United Methodist
Church

Witness

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God. That is the gospel. God uses that good news to make disciples.

We run into a problem, however. We sometimes forget that when we spread the gospel, we are the laborers in the field, not the boss. When we start acting like the boss, the gospel—the good news—becomes bad news.

How do we make the gospel bad news? We start acting as if we are making the decisions about God's salvation. How many times in your life have you heard the gospel given as bad news? Some preacher tells people exactly what they must do to "get right with God" as if he or she were the gatekeeper, the decision-maker. "You are in." "You are out." These people offer what I call "bus accident salvation." Get right with God before you are run over by a bus and are lost forever. That is not only bad news; it also does not make sense!

Can a bus accident (or any form of death) get between you and God's desire for your salvation? Picture that with me. God is looking down on brother John. God says, "Gee, I so want to be at the center of John's life. I wish John loved me with all his heart, soul and—oops, there goes that darn

bus. Can't do anything more with John." Such a view belittles God.

We shout on Easter Sunday that God has defeated death—and then declare that death stymies God. Death does not stymie God. God wants you saved; and a bus, a terrorist bomb, falling comets, or even invading aliens cannot stop God! God is bigger than that.

We also make the gospel bad news when we start acting like the gatekeepers, telling people that we have looked over their qualifications and they just do not fit into God's plan.

Christians witnessing to non-Christians often use this passage from John that way. We say, "Look here. It says Jesus is the way, the truth and the life. If you are Jewish, Muslim, or another religion, you cannot be part of God's salvation. It says so here!"

That is not *our* job! We never get to tell someone he or she is outside of God's salvation. We are not God! God decides who is part of God's salvation.

Do you know what happens when we start to set the boundaries for God, deciding who is in and who is out? The worst part of our nature takes over. Everyone has that ugly tendency to put

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On **Friday, Oct. 2**, join us for a Spanish-language worship service at 7 p.m. Translation will be offered in English. This is a great opportunity to join in solidarity with our brothers and sisters in faith and participate in worship via translation as they do each week. Further, you can experience a taste of the cultural traditions of a Hispanic worship service.

On **Saturday, Oct. 3**, from 3 to 6 p.m., we will have a cultural celebration with music, dance, food, and fun for the

whole family. The event will include several styles of music in both languages. Come and try some delicious food, toe-tapping music and great fellowship!

On **Sunday, Oct. 4**, our regular 10:30 a.m. bilingual worship service will be a special celebration of World Communion Sunday. We will celebrate how WNUMC lives into the spirit of World Communion Sunday throughout the year as we worship side by side with brothers and sisters in Christ from many

different countries. The children, the next generation of our church, will bless us with their singing during this worship celebration.

After worship, our love feast will feature food from many countries. We invite you to bring a dish representative of the country of your ancestors. Together, we will celebrate our collective heritage as the body of Christ!

Invite your friends, neighbors, family and WNUMC friends and join in the fun with us!

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another person down. We like to feel we are better than someone else is. We want to say, "I'm in, and you are out." Go to any schoolyard, and see it played out. Go to any place adults gather, and unfortunately you will see it there too. It is like an ugly infection within us. If we give it free reign, it takes over. Loose in the church, it lets us take glee in preparing the lists of people God does not like. Once that starts to happen, the good news disappears. We offer nothing God can use to make disciples. But, with God's help, we can control it.

So, how do we witness to people of other faith traditions? How do we witness to people with no faith traditions? We share the good news as we know it, as we have experienced it and as we believe it, and we leave the rest to God. We share that we believe God reconciled all humankind to God through Jesus Christ, that God wants us to live in God's reign every day and that God will save the world through Jesus Christ. We leave the rest to God.

Do I believe salvation is through Jesus Christ? Yes! Is Christ the way, the truth, and the life? Yes.

Will all humankind come to salvation through Jesus Christ?

That is God's goal. God will not be denied. How will that be accomplished? How will non-Christians experience salvation? I do not know. That is God's job. My job, our job, the church's job, is to spread the gospel and to listen and watch for the word of God wherever God is acting.

God works in and through the lives of Christians, Jews, Muslims, Hindus, people of all religions and people of no religions. God works in and through the lives of humanity. Remember where I started in the first article: *God loves the world*. Throughout Scripture is the testimony that God always seeks the salvation of *all* humankind. We can learn something of God from all people.

I have seen God's spirit in the eyes of people from all occupations and faith traditions. I have sat with

We turn the good news into bad news when we start playing God by declaring who is in and who is outside of God's salvation.

Jews, Muslims, and others and shared my understanding and experiences of God. I loved Vanderbilt Divinity School in that regard. I was able to talk about the big things, the God things, with people from all faith traditions. I shared with them, and they shared with me. I came to believe that these people have experienced God's touch in their lives just as I have. I have even talked with people who claimed to be atheists who, I believed, were under serious conviction by God. God was touching their lives, and they, in their own way, were drawing closer to God all the time.

Are all faith traditions equal? I do not think they are. I am who I am. I was raised as a Christian, and, after falling away from the church during my adult life, I chose Christianity and reaffirmed that faith. However, I will not say that my "Christian" understanding and experience of God is superior to that of my friends of other faith traditions. I

believe, deep in my heart, that God reconciled humankind to the world through Jesus Christ. I want to share that good news. I believe God can use that good news to touch the life of another.

"Well, pastor," you may ask, "if God ultimately will bring salvation to

humankind, why should I make any faith commitment?" I am glad you asked. For me, it is the difference between being blind and being able to see. Between being deaf and being able to hear. Between trying to survive where there is no air to breathe and being able to take a deep breath on a spring day. I have tried living my life by ignoring God, by telling myself there is no God. I spent 15 years of my adult life living like that, and it did not work. When I turned back to God and reaffirmed my faith, it was as if night had become day. I have no desire to go back to the dark, back to the silence, back to that airless place where I could not breathe.

It does matter how we live, my friends. God cares. Just as our sins hurt others and us, our sins hurt God. When we cut ourselves off from others, we cut

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ourselves off from God. The goal of Christianity is not a heavenly reward. The goal of Christianity, the goal of God, is a world living in God's reign in the here and now and in the hereafter. We pray, "Your will be done, on earth as it is in heaven."

We give God the tools to make disciples by spreading the gospel and living the gospel. The gospel is that God became flesh and walked among us. God has reconciled the world to God through Jesus Christ. God will bring salvation to humankind through Jesus Christ.

God calls the body of Christ to bring the gospel to the world. God will use the gospel to make disciples of all nations.

—The Rev. Dennis Meaker

Colossians Bible Study

For the next few weeks, the adult and youth Sunday school class will walk through the world of the early Christian community known as the Colossians, the church at Colossae. This was one of many missionary outpost churches led by the apostle Paul, who was imprisoned when this letter was written to the Christian community at Colossae. We will explore this text—one of the earliest Christian texts—in our New Testament and discover the good news of this ancient gospel for us today. Please come and join us!

Work Day a Great Success



Mitzi, was it wet out, Hon? At least Bill and David look cheerful!

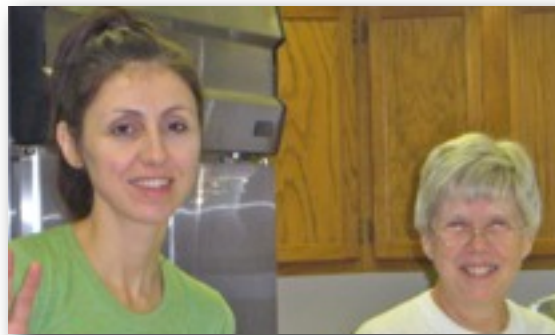
Check the results! New landscaping, super clean kitchen, repairs, new light bulbs, new wiring, and more! Good things happen when the community is working together!



Tom, do you always get the ladder? Did you see the new projector arrangement Sunday in worship? Whoa! Fewer tables and cables! More picture. Thanks David



Blasa and Crys and Beth polished that kitchen!



Sherry and Crys smile for the camera! Thanks for a cleaner Memorial Hall and kitchen!



Thanks Nat for the chicken!

Wash your hands before you eat

Is that what your parents taught you? With the current scare about the upcoming flu season, people have expressed increased concern about the risk of spreading infections through Communion. According to the General Board of Discipleship, this very old controversy has been the subject of research studies over the years. Studies have shown no increased risk of infection among Christians through the celebration of the sacrament, even in traditions that use a shared cup.

Additionally, the use of intinction (the method we employ that involves dipping the bread in the cup) is more sanitary than using the disposable plastic cups common in many churches. If you are interested, you will find it articles indexed under Lord's Supper/Holy Communion at <http://www.gbod.org/worship>. If you lack access to the Internet, I will provide copies.

Nevertheless, common courtesy and concern about the real threat posed by the flu dictates that we use reasonable precautions. As some of you may have noticed, those serving Communion now wash their hands with a disinfectant immediately before the sacrament begins.

Communion, the central sacrament of Christianity, is Christ's gift to the church. It has bound the church together over the centuries. Each Sunday, we join as one around Christ's table. I hope this precaution will remove any worries and allow everyone to contemplate the meaning of this shared worship experience.

—The Rev. Dennis Meaker

Prayers, presence, witness, gifts, and service

Being the church is more than attending Sunday worship or a Wednesday-night program. As United Methodists, we pledge to commit our prayers, our presence, our witness, our gifts, and our service to the church and through the church, to the wider world. We commit ourselves to the ministry of the body of Christ.

On **Oct. 18**, we will begin a 28-day period of devotion, prayer, and reflection about our lives as disciples. We will consider each of the membership commitments in both daily devotion and in our Sunday worship. Commitment Sunday is **November 8**. On that day, you will be asked to return a card reflecting your commitment of prayers, presence, witness, gifts, and service to the church. It will be a day of celebration and renewal.

September attendance and offerings

Averages: Worship - 64, Sunday school 20

August giving: \$7,459; Year-to-date giving: \$55,347

Energy!

Energy continues to be a great opportunity for food, fellowship, and further discipleship. Join us for a community meal (6 p.m., followed by classes for all ages at 7). In addition to a Bible lesson, craft and activities, the children practice new songs. We were blessed to have the children sing one of those songs during worship Sept. 13. The children will next sing in worship **Oct. 4**, so be sure to bring your children to Energy to participate in this preparation!

Sunday School

Every Sunday, we offer Sunday school from 9:30 to 10:15 a.m.:

- Spanish-language class for adults, Gothard Room. They are studying stewardship.
- Media class for youth and adults, Memorial Hall. The class is participating in a study of Colossians led by Sherry Woolsey.
- Childcare for ages 3 and younger in the nursery.
- Younger children meet in the classroom next to the nursery.
- Older children meet in the room behind the choir room.

Prayer Concerns

- Joan Berg, Barbara Dunlap-Berg's mother
- Diane Luton Blum, sympathy for the loss of her sister, Beth Luton
- Tom Brucker's mother
- Mary Ellen Carney, Helen Dozier's daughter
- Gloria Cardona, mother of Myriam Cortes
- Albert E. Curtis, Mabel Jackson's friend
- Danny and Angela Flanagan – many members of their extended families are in ill health.
- The family of Louise Gafford
- Cole Gerdes' grandfather
- Marty Gilbert and Conrad Jones
- Julia Hedgepath, sympathy for the loss of her sister, Pam Stout
- Mabel Allene Jackson
- Dorothy Lish
- Mary McKnight, recovering from a stroke
- Sean Michael Mevis
- Helen Sellers
- Our community

Joys

We give thanks to Julia Hedgepath for the gift of the beautiful cross, displayed in the offset area of the sanctuary.

It is a joy to receive the ministry of our new acolytes.

It is a joy to see pictures of church families popping up on the bulletin board. Take time to learn names and faces. If your photo is not there, give a photo to Angela Flanagan.

Megan Cobb reports with joy that she now has a teaching position at Margaret Allen Middle School, Nashville.

We share in joy with Andrea Bachus as she starts her new job.

It is a joy to have Mary McWright back in worship with us.

Thanks to all who participated in the Christmas Boxes for the Children of Honduras.

We give thanks for the ministry of Cherie Velazco White, mother of Jose Velazco, our Sunday morning volunteer translator, who spoke in worship Sept. 7.

Alex Weller passed her nursing boards.

Youth News

Sunday Morning Sunday School – Youth and adult class in Memorial Hall.

Sunday Night Youth Group – WNUMC youth are still included in the Sunday night program and special youth events at Blakemore UMC. Sunday night youth meetings are from 5:30 to 7:30 and include supper, recreation, study and fellowship.

Wednesday Night Energy - Youth are invited to be part of the new Wednesday night Energy. There is a specific class for youth of all ages each Wednesday night.

Transportation to Church

Do you need a ride to church or know someone who does? Nat Roache has offered to provide transportation. Contact the church office, 297-3216, if you or someone you know needs help getting to Sunday worship.

Childcare Helpers

Childcare for children under age 7 is provided during worship. October childcare helpers during worship are:

Oct 4 Need a volunteer

Oct 11 Arthur Bachus

Oct 18 Amy Lipschutz

Oct 25 Rebecca Rutledge

Our caregiver for children is Alicia Hickman. She is a wonderful caregiver. However, some Sundays there are more children than she can manage. The additional help keeps our children safe. If you wish to volunteer for a ministry that gives great joy, contact Angela Flanagan. She will be glad to put you into the childcare rotation.

Community Meeting

Our next community meeting is in October with the date to be announced. A few representatives from the Gang Specialist group will be speaking about how to interpret graffiti, the types of gangs forming in the metro Nashville area and safety issues in the West Nashville area. Please check the website for the date. www.westnashvilleumc.org

October Calendar Notes

Sundays:

Sunday School, 9:30 a.m.

Worship, 10:30 a.m.

Youth, 5:30 p.m., Blakemore UMC

Mondays:

Basic Computer Class, 5:30 – 6 p.m., Cockrill Elementary

ESL, 6-7 p.m., Cockrill Elementary, childcare provided

Beginner's Spanish Class, 6-7 p.m., Cockrill Elementary. The classes are geared for persons wishing to learn basic conversational Spanish, no prior knowledge is needed. Childcare provided. If you wish to join the class, please contact Angela Flanagan at angela.m.flanagan@vanderbilt.edu

Wednesdays:

Wednesday Night Energy, 6-8:15 p.m.

Thursdays:

Church Supper, 5:30 p.m.

Tuesdays, Fridays:

AA, Memorial Hall, 8 p.m.

Meetings and Events

Friday, **Oct. 2** – Spanish-Language Worship with English Translation, 7 p.m., Sanctuary

Saturday, **Oct. 3** – Cultural Celebration, 3-6 p.m., Memorial Hall

Sunday, **Oct. 4** – West Nashville Homecoming and World Communion Sunday with Love Feast following worship

Sunday, **Oct. 18** – Presentation of Bibles, 10:30 a.m., Sanctuary

Tuesday, **Oct. 20** – Church Council Meeting, 6:30 p.m., Gothard Room

Sunday, **Oct. 25** – Children and Youth Council Meeting Following Worship, Gothard Room

Sunday, **Oct. 25** – Church Ladies Meetin', 6 p.m., Memorial Hall

Saturday, **Oct. 31** – Harvest Celebration, 2 p.m., Memorial Hall (Candy and games; children are encouraged to come in costume.)

October Birthdays

5 Julia Hedgepath	6 Kaitlan Osborn
8 Emmet Lipschutz	11 Sherry Cothran Woolsey
12 Charles McMackin	15 Sheri Tyler Kimble
18 Alicia Wright	19 Allison Horick
22 Megan Cobb	
24 Helen Dozier, Mabel Jackson, Harry McMackin and Felix Salamanca	
25 MaryJane Pierce Norton	
30 Liz Leis and Sam Lipschutz	

Special Prayer Request

We will present a progress report to the Tennessee Conference Congregational Revitalization Committee after submitting our funds request for the third-year funding of our Hispanic ministries program **Oct. 15**. Please pray for this process as we celebrate God's work through this wonderful program and especially that our funds will be renewed for the third year.

Super-special Shut-ins

Although *Mabel Alleen Jackson* endures some health problems, she fondly remembers her active relationship with WNUMC. She has a niece in Virginia who calls her every week and has prayer with her. She appreciates our prayers.

Mable's friend, *Albert Curtis*, is doing well. He continues working with his craft projects. His current creations are miniature windmills.

Unfortunately, *Helen Sellers'* eyes have become a problem. Her physician has given her eye medication. She is praying for everyone she knows in the church. She would appreciate our prayers. (See her poem below.) She also requests prayer for her Sister Louise who has had one surgery and is scheduled for another.

Ed Zinkiewicz reported that his September visit with *Louise Gafford* at NHC Healthcare in Dickson found her alert and sitting outside her room. She wished she could come to church. This was a short-lived respite. Louise died Saturday, Sep. 26. West Nashville visitation will be held at noon on Tuesday, **Sep. 29**; the funeral will be at 1 P.M.

Helen Dozier is doing well. She requests prayer for her daughter, *Mary Ellen Carney*, who had cancer surgery. Mary Ellen is recuperating at home but unable to continue her daily activity.

—Bill and Cherrie Hall

New Community Partner

WNUMC has a new partner, *Good Food for Good People* which started as an organizing effort to provide access and raise awareness about the benefits of farm-fresh produce in our diets. It operates a Veggie Van on Saturdays that sells farm-fresh produce in an under-served neighborhood, manages a food recovery program that collects 10,000 pounds of fresh produce monthly from farmers' markets and distributes it free to agencies and individuals, and organizes new, innovative community markets to help local farmers and their supporters.

Sean Siple, the founder, and his crew already have added much bounty to our weekly meals on Wednesday and Thursday nights by providing fresh produce, breads, desserts, salads and more. Sean also organizes the Richland Park Farmer's Market that has been a huge success; it happens every Saturday in October (before it closes for the winter) from 9 a.m. - 12 p.m.

God and Freedom

God, teach us how to pray
That this America may stay
A refuge for the oppressed and those in
need,
Of love and food, free from greed.

Freedom of the speech and press,
Worship that knows no rest
Until this great land of ours
Is free from all evil powers.

Americas' faith must shine
Stronger than ever at this time,
A symbol for all the world to see,
God created each man equal and to be free.

Upon this faith our country grew great,
Would we dare this foundation to shake.
In God we trust for freedom and our liberty
Until all people are liberated and free.

It would be wise for us to ask
For the light of better understanding to cast
The ray of hope from America into space,
Peace and good will for every race.

May the recipe for our freedom
Be stamped on the heart of each American.
That all the world may know and see,
In God we trust for our liberty!

Ova Helen Anders Sellers
(Mrs. B. C. Sellers)