



Wesley Window

December 2025

Volume 906 Issue 12

MISSION OF THE MONTH

Local Missions

"Be still before the Lord and wait patiently for him."

Psalm 37:7

IMPORTANT DATES

December 6

Festival of Choirs

December 9

WCCDC Polar Express & Christmas Program

December 12

Interactive Movie Night

December 13

UWF Christmas Brunch

December 14

Music Sunday and Cookie Walk

December 15

Choral Society Christmas Concert

December 21

Praise Kids Christmas Program

December 24

Christmas Eve

December 25

Christmas Day!

December 31

New Years Eve





Pastoral Letter

Pastor Don Long, Jr.
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On a warm and rainy evening in August of 1952 in a tiny lopsided plank-and-nail auditorium, described by some as “a cross between a barn and a country church,” pianist David Tudor sat down to perform what was provisionally entitled: “Four Pieces.”

He starts a stopwatch, sits down in front of the piano, closes the lid and begins a performance of composer John Cage’s artistic piece, ‘4’33” in which he never plays a note. After 30 seconds of silence, Tudor resets the stopwatch and times another two minutes, 23 seconds of silence, then another one minute, 40 seconds of silence. The now famous 4 minutes and 33 second composition by Cage is considered both a work of art, and a joke.

I recently learned of Cage’s famous and infamous composition while preparing my funeral homily for a 42 year old mother who leaves behind a seven year old daughter and husband, who are deeply grieving what cancer has robbed from them.

Advent—a season of waiting and preparing—comes amid the winter solstice when the world grows a little more quiet. One of my favorite things to do in the winter is hike at night after a freshly fallen snow. The beauty and silence are overwhelming.

I often begin funeral services by quoting God from Psalm 46:10, “Be still, and know that I am God.” Stillness, silence, quiet... can be both satisfying and empty, just like Cage’s composition, silence can be both a gift, and a cruel joke.

As a gift silence quiets an otherwise chaotic life, but it also creates space for racing thoughts, unanswered questions, and the painful awareness of what I cannot control. So how are we, in this season of “silent nights,” supposed to experience the good?

Cage’s silent composition was no joke, and it would have an incalculable, if characteristically quiet, influence on a great deal of music that came after, even to today, and it was inspired by an experience he had with silence. In his famous collection of essays titled “Silence,” Cage wrote about once entering an anechoic chamber at Harvard intended to eliminate all sound, but he heard two sounds, one high and one low. The engineer of duty informed him that the high-pitched sound was that of his nervous system, the low one that of his blood in circulation.

In the silence we can be overwhelmed by the screeching synaptic firing of our own thoughts trying to control, direct, answer, and solve life’s greatest challenges. Or, we can focus on the deep circulation of grace flowing from God’s heart which is Emmanuel—God with us.

I may not always be able to make sense of life, but I can always sense the beauty of God’s love in life by, in the silence, focusing on whatever is true, whatever is noble, whatever is right, whatever is pure, whatever is lovely, whatever is admirable—if anything is excellent or praiseworthy (Philippians 4:8).

Grace and Peace,


Pastor Don



Office Updates

Tim Rice Joins the Wesley UMC Team!

Over the past year, I've felt a strong and unmistakable call to shift from working for myself to working for God. I have always believed that we are at our very best when we serve others, and I can't imagine a better place to offer my gifts than Wesley. Pastor Don's message in the On My Way series deeply moved me—especially his reflection on making his way to the river and leaving a stone behind as a symbol of removing what stands in the way of doing what God is asking of us. That image stayed with me, and ultimately inspired me to make this change.

Wesley has been such a blessing to me and my family since Kim and I first walked through the doors in 2012. This community has encouraged, supported, and shaped us in countless ways, and joining the staff feels like a natural and joy-filled next step. I'm grateful for the opportunity, and I look forward to stepping into this new season with purpose, passion, and a heart ready to serve. I'm excited for the good work we'll do together and the ways God will continue to move through this place.



Spotlight on Anita Bigsby: Where Faith, Joy, and Chickens Meet 🐔



Anita Bigsby has been a cherished member of the Wesley staff for four years. A lifelong resident of Roseville, IL, Anita comes from a big family with four sisters and two brothers. She cherishes the time spent with her mom, who also lives nearby, and fondly remembers a sister who passed away from cancer.

At home, Anita shares her life with three very spoiled pets—her cats Leona and Gracie, and her dog Rocco—as well as eight hens. Her love for her chickens is clear; in her spare time, she enjoys playing with them and even trying to teach them to walk on a leash. “Chickens are very smart birds,” she says. She's observed that when her brother mows the lawn, her hens line up at the front of the pen, eagerly anticipating fresh cut grass!

Anita reflects warmly on her unexpected journey at Wesley: “I never dreamed I would be working in a church, but it has been the biggest blessing I could ever ask for. I have met so many wonderful people that have touched my life in so many ways.” When she faced a serious illness two years ago, she didn't know what the future held, but she found comfort and support in her

Wesley family. “Wesley wrapped their arms around me and helped me through the most difficult time I have ever had. Family is definitely what Wesley is all about.”

Sundays are Anita's favorite day of the week, when she gets to visit with many people and join in praising God. We are truly blessed to have Anita as part of the Wesley staff, sharing her warmth, dedication, and love with all of us.

Serve God by Serving Others — Join a Sunday Team!



If you have been thinking about getting involved in an amazing way at Wesley, here's an idea - volunteer to be an usher during services, downstairs greeter before services, or welcome folks inside the Atrium doors. You don't have to make a long term commitment if your schedule doesn't permit it. You can choose to volunteer only during the winter or summer months if that works best for you. However, you might find that you enjoy offering hospitality and helping with various tasks so much that, before you know it, you'll want to keep volunteering all year round. If you are feeling extra generous with your time and would like to help out in a new way at Wesley, please make a note on the volunteer sign up page on the website or app and feel free to contact me for additional details. - Michele Long, Volunteer Coordinator

sign up here

Announcements

🎄 Angel Tree Tags Still Available

Thank you to everyone who has already selected a tag from our Angel Tree! Of the 100 children we were assigned this year, only a few tags remain. If you haven't had a chance to participate yet, please consider choosing one of the remaining tags and helping us meet this much-needed need in our community. Our Youth Group has already completed their shopping, so we are relying on the congregation to help ensure every remaining child is covered. Thank you for your continued generosity and compassion!



"It is the season of the heart..." 🎄

Get ready to be part of the movie! Join us on **Friday, December 12 at 6:30pm** in the Atrium for a special Interactive Movie Night featuring "The Muppet Christmas Carol."

Each participant will receive a movie interaction bag filled with fun items to use at specific moments throughout the film—helping you laugh louder, cheer bigger, and join the Muppets in bringing this beloved Christmas classic to life!

This event is open to everyone and free to attend, so bring your family, friends, and neighbors for a joyful, hands-on holiday experience you won't forget.

Inviting all women of Wesley Church to the annual **United Women of Faith Christmas Brunch on Saturday, December 13**. The brunch will be held at The Old Dairy, beginning at 10:00am. No cooking or cleaning involved this year, but it is self-pay. Please join us for coffee, breakfast, or lunch.

Note: This is a location change from what is in the membership book.

🍪👤 Cookie Walk Coming Up!

Mark your calendars for the annual Cookie Walk on **Sunday, December 14!** By purchasing delicious homemade cookies, you'll not only save yourself the time and hassle of holiday baking but also make a meaningful difference. All proceeds from the Cookie Walk will go directly to the Wesley UMC Good Samaritan Fund, which provides financial assistance to local residents who are struggling to cover essential expenses, such as rent, utilities, or gas.

So skip the stress, fill your cookie tins with an amazing variety of treats, and join us in making an impact this holiday season! **Cookie donations are warmly welcomed and greatly appreciated**—together, we can make this event a sweet success! Interested in helping out? Contact Brenda Smith!



Lights of Love



DECEMBER 1



5 PM CEREMONY

SOUP & SWEETS BAR

VIP SEATING AVAILABLE

THIS HOLIDAY SEASON, HONOR SOMEONE SPECIAL WITH A LIGHTS OF LOVE TREE.

• PURCHASE A CHRISTMAS TREE, PART OF OUR WESLEY FAMILY OR BEYOND,

WHEREVER THEIR STORY WAS WRITTEN.

• WE WILL DEDICATE & DISPLAY IT THROUGHOUT DECEMBER.

YOUR TREE WILL SHINE BRIGHTLY WITH WHITE LIGHTS, SYMBOLIZING LOVE, HOPE AND CHERISHED MEMORIES. WE WELCOME YOU TO EVEN ADD YOUR OWN TOUCH TO MAKE IT UNIQUELY YOURS. AND IF YOU'D LIKE, YOUR TREE CAN BE PLACED IN A SPECIAL AREA, IF STILL AVAILABLE.

WHAT BETTER WAY TO REMEMBER THOSE YOU LOVE WHILE SUPPORTING SOMETHING MEANINGFUL? THIS YEAR'S PROCEEDS WILL BENEFIT OUR ASSISTED LIVING PROJECT WITH THIS PROJECT ON THE HORIZON, WESLEY VILLAGE IS ADDING THE PIECE OF THE PUZZLE WE'VE BEEN MISSING. ASSISTED LIVING WILL COMPLETE THE FULL CONTINUUM OF CARE WE'RE PROUD TO OFFER—ALLOWING RESIDENTS TO STAY WITHIN THE WESLEY COMMUNITY AS THEIR NEEDS CHANGE. IT'S A MUCH-NEEDED SERVICE IN OUR CITY, OUR COUNTY, AND THE SURROUNDING COMMUNITIES, WHERE MANY FAMILIES ARE SEEKING QUALITY CARE OPTIONS FOR THEIR LOVED ONES CLOSE TO HOME.

CALL 309.833.2123 VISIT FACEBOOK OR

WWW.WESLEYVILLAGEMACOMB.COM

FOR SO MUCH MORE INFO:

Shine a light for someone you love

SCAN ME



Announcements

Environmental Talk by Mary Gillingham



Several weeks ago, I attended a WUMC Youth Group gathering to invite the youth to participate in a project launching in early 2026. The project involves recycling #5 prescription bottles and sending them to Matthew 25 Ministries in Ohio. A collection tub will be available in the Sanctuary next to the container for plastic lid recycling. You may remove the label if you wish. The youth will collect the bottles, remove the labels and adhesive residue, and then wash and dry them. This project is part of a larger effort involving several churches in McDonough County and is being coordinated by the Faith-Based Creation Care Committee (FBCC).



The WIU Wesley Foundation has had a full and exciting fall! After saying goodbye to 16 graduates in May, we've welcomed many new students and continue to serve 30-40 people each week through our Sunday and Tuesday dinners. These meals—and our small food pantry—remain a vital support for students facing food insecurity, and we're grateful for Wesley Church's ongoing help with cooking, serving, and supplying items.



Alongside meals, our weekly worship service and Tuesday sing-along offer students a place to grow spiritually, with music led by Nicolo and other talented students. We've also celebrated several new babies in our campus-ministry family and are thankful for those from Wesley who are supporting these young families.

Our intern, Doug Mang'anda, recently hosted a successful Vaccination Education Baby Shower through a grant-funded project, drawing nearly 50 participants and generous donations from Wesley members. We also continue to provide household items to students, especially international students arriving mid-year.

Thank you, Wesley Church, for your faithful partnership, leadership, and financial support—you make this ministry possible!

Praise Kids Christmas Program December 21 — "In a Manger"

Mark your calendars for one of the most joyful Sundays of the year! On **Sunday, December 21**, our Praise Kids will lead us in worship with their Christmas program, "In a Manger," lovingly written by Becky Long. **We will have one combined service at 10:00am so the whole church family can come together to celebrate.** Our kids have been practicing with enthusiasm, excitement, and plenty of Christmas giggles, and they can't wait to share the story of Jesus' birth through music, drama, and sweet moments only kids can create. Join us for this special morning of joy, wonder, and holiday spirit as we celebrate the season and cheer on our amazing Praise Kids!



December Calendar

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1:00pm: Staff Meeting 5:00pm: Women's Bible Study 7:00pm: Lights of Love Kickoff 7:00pm: Choral Society Practice Nicolo Echague's Birthday!		Noon: Prayer 3:00pm: Nurture 5:00pm: Praise Kids 6:00pm: Men's Bible Study 6:30pm: Wesley Ringers Practice 7:00pm: Praise Band Practice	7:00pm: Choir Practice	7:00am: Men's Coffee, Hy-Vee Noon: Church Office Closed 5:30pm: WCCDC Christmas Party	2:00pm: Festival of Choirs 7:30pm: Festival of Choirs
8:30am: Worship 9:30am: Coffee Fellowship 9:45am: Sunday School 11am: Worship 6:00pm: Youth Group	1:00pm: Staff Meeting 5:00pm: Women's Bible Study	5:00pm: WCCDC Polar Express and Christmas Program	9:30am: Fellheimer Trust Noon: Prayer 5:00pm: Praise Kids 6:30pm: Wesley Ringers Practice 7:00pm: Praise Band Practice	6:00pm: Prairie Quilters Christmas Party 6:00pm: Church Council 7:00pm: Choir Practice	7:00am: Men's Coffee, Hy-Vee Noon: Church Office Closed 6:30pm: Interactive Movie Night "The Muppet Christmas Carol"	
Cookie Walk 8:30am: Music Sunday 9:30am: Coffee Fellowship 9:45am: Sunday School 11am: Music Sunday 4:00pm: All Church Caroling	10:00am: Sit & Sew 3:00pm: Social Concerns 4:00pm: Missions 5:00pm: Women's Bible Study 7:00pm: McDonough Choral Society Winter Concert	5:30pm: Finance Committee Anita Bigsby's Birthday!	Noon: Prayer 6:00pm: Men's Bible Study 5:00pm: Praise Kids Practice 5:00pm: WHC 6:30pm: Wesley Ringers Practice 7:00pm: Praise Band Practice	5:00pm: WCCDC Board Meeting 7:00pm: Habitat for Humanity 7:00pm: Choir Practice	7:00am: Men's Coffee, Hy-Vee Noon: Church Office Closed Newsletter Deadlie	
9:30am: Coffee Fellowship 10:00am: Praise Kids Christmas Program "In A Manger"	1:00pm: Staff Mtg 5:30pm: Staff Parish 7:00pm: Board of Trustees 7:00pm: Choral Society Practice		Church Office Closed 4:00pm: Christmas Eve Family Service 7:00pm: Christmas Eve Traditional Service 11:00pm: Christmas Eve Candlelight Service		7:00am: Men's Coffee, Hy-Vee Noon: Church Office Closed	
8:30am: Worship 9:30am: Coffee Fellowship 9:45am: Sunday School 11:00am: Worship	1:00pm: Staff Mtg 7:00pm: Choral Society Practice	11:30am: XYZ Lunch, The Old Dairy	Noon: Prayer Noon: Church Office Closed	Church Office Closed 		
			New Years Eve	1		

Hope

Love

Joy

Peace



December Worship Volunteer Schedule

DATE	TIME	USHERS	GREETERS (Downstairs)	WELCOME (Upstairs)
Dec 7	8:30am	Dennis Danowski & Beth Shryock	Michele Long	Marilyn Hopper
Dec 7	11:00am	Michele Long & Kyong Taite	Param & Abha Singh	Sharon Evans
Dec 14	8:30am	Lois Bigham & Marlin France	Merritt Family	Marilyn & Lindy Woods
Dec 14	11:00am	Marcia Moulden & Dana Walker	Jon & JoAnn(Hairston) Jones	Louise Reynolds
Dec 21	10:00am	Dennis Danowski & Michele Long	Marti Dallmeyer	Genie Marshall
Dec 24	4:00pm	Bill Cupples & Wayne Steward	Marti Dallmeyer	Ginny Kessler
Dec 24	7:00pm	Gina & Sally Anderson	Param & Abha Singh	Dave & Marilyn Eck
Dec 24	11:00pm	Michele Long		Dana Walker
Dec 28	8:30am	Rick Iverson & Jerry Lieber	Kessiena Erebi	Laurie Black
Dec 28	11:00am	Michele Long & Dale Hample	Ben & Kim Lampitt	Jan Armstrong

Mission of the Month: Local Missions

Wesley United Methodist Church is blessed to partner with several organizations that serve our neighbors here in McDonough County. Our Local Missions include the Salvation Army, Loaves & Fishes, McDonough County Habitat for Humanity, Samaritan Well, Genesis Garden, and the Good Food Pantry. Each of these ministries meets vital needs in our community—offering meals, shelter, housing support, emergency assistance, and access to healthy food. Through your generosity and involvement, Wesley helps strengthen these partners as they carry out their important work. When you support Local Missions, you are directly impacting individuals and families right here at home and helping us live out our call to love and serve our neighbors in Christ's name.

You can support the Wesley UMC Mission Trip this month by giving online (see QR code) and selecting "Mission of the Month," or by writing a check to Wesley UMC with "December Mission of the Month" in the memo line.



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Sunday Services

Contemporary Worship: 8:30 am
Coffee Fellowship: 9:30 am
Sunday School: 9:45 am
Traditional Worship: 11:00 am

Office Hours

Monday-Thursday 8:00am-4:00pm
Friday: 8:00am-NOON
Closed daily NOON-1:00pm
Closed on national holidays

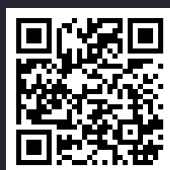
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