

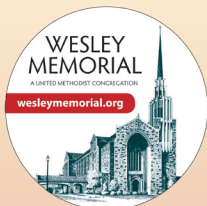


the GIFT

“...more than we had hoped.”
(11 Corinthians 8:5, NLT)

WESLEY MEMORIAL UMC

GENEROSITY 2022-2023



Connecting people to Jesus, one another, and the world.

1225 Chestnut Drive • High Point, NC 27262 • 336.884.2204 • www.wesleymemorial.org

Paul believed that Christians are called to imitate Jesus Christ, the One whose nature is to give. Even though those churches were just beginning and enduring misunderstanding and persecution from their neighbors (Acts 16, 17), Paul believed that one of the first things that he could do for their own benefit was to nurture a spirit of generosity, so he had a project for them. They were doing more than he expected! You can feel the joy in Paul as he told the Corinthians of the Macedonians' faith:

"Now I want you to know, dear brothers and sisters, what God in his kindness has done through the churches in Macedonia. They are being tested by many troubles, and they are very poor. But they are also filled with abundant joy, which has overflowed in rich generosity. For I can testify that they gave not only what they could afford, but far more. And they did it of their own free will. They begged us again and again for the privilege of sharing in the gift for the believers in Jerusalem. They even did more than we had hoped, for their first action was to give themselves to the Lord and to us, just as God wanted them to do. So we have urged Titus, who encouraged your giving in the first place, to return to you and encourage you to finish this ministry of giving." (11 Corinthians 8:1-6, New Living Translation)

Paul is commending these new Christians because of their generosity and sending Titus to support them. They were new in the Faith, but they were getting it! They were displaying Christ to the world and winning others through their extravagant generosity. Many of the new Christians in these new churches had very little resources (8:2), but Paul commended them for sharing. Paul was overjoyed because he knew that a spirit of unbounded generosity was essential for them to find full fellowship with the generous God of all grace.

Paul had an audacious project for those new Christians, and they were responding with enthusiasm. He was helping them collect money to be shared with the Jerusalem church. The Apostle knew that this project would unify the church,

His pastor's heart was overflowing with gratitude!

The Apostle Paul had planted churches throughout the region of Macedonia (modern Greece) in places like Thessalonica and Philippi. He was helping those new Christians find fullness of life in Jesus Christ and that was happening! They were showing the world a new way to live.

change the world, and bless the givers. Those early Christians were showing the world the joy of following Christ.

Friends, I want to encourage you to meditate on our Corinthians passage as we encourage each other to follow our awesome God in out-loving and out-giving the world around us. People of fear hoard. People of faith share. Together, let's bear witness to our love for Jesus Christ. Our Christian witness is the most important thing that we can give to our friends and family. Like those early churches, let's give more than others expect. May our hearts overcome anything that keeps us from finding the "abundant joy which has overflowed in rich generosity."

Pastor Jeff



*FROM THE OPENING PAGES OF SCRIPTURE it is clear
God cares for human beings. The creation story in Genesis shows us
God's good purpose and intention for us and all creation.
Breathing into us the breath of life, the Holy One gives us the gift
of our lives and the freedom to choose how we will use our days.
We know the story of Adam and Eve and their choice to break
their connection with God. It caused a great loss for them and to the
Holy One who loved them.
That's where God's love proved more
than we could ever hope.*

the GIFT OF GOD TO US: Jesus and the Church

God did not give up on us. Instead, the Loving One was relentless in trying to restore us to life-giving relationship with him.

That gift came to full expression in Jesus. For God so loved the world he gave the gift of Jesus. In him and through him we have the experience of forgiveness for sin, the healing of our brokenness and the fulfillment of God's dream for our lives.

Christ's redemptive death on the cross and death-defeating resurrection proclaims that God's love and good intention for us is

boundless and available for all who are willing to receive it.

The second gift we have is the church. At Pentecost the church was born with the coming of the Holy Spirit and now finds expression for us as our Wesley Memorial faith family. It is our community of love, growth and care for this life's journey.

We are the body of Christ receiving and revealing the Holy One's grace and hope for all people through Jesus Christ.

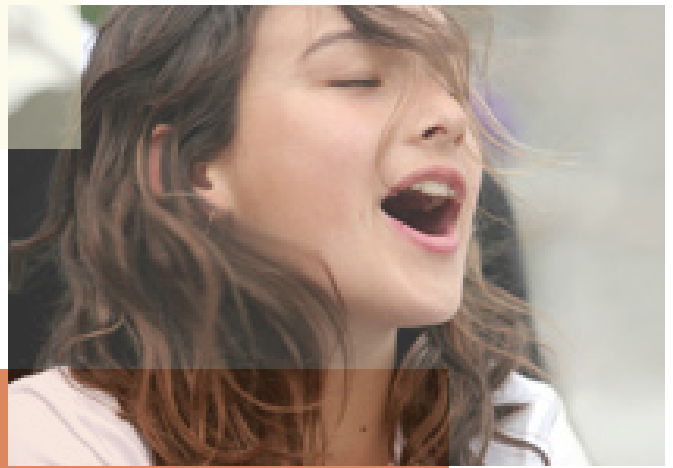
So...how shall we respond?

the GIFT WE GIVE to

God

THE
APOSTLE

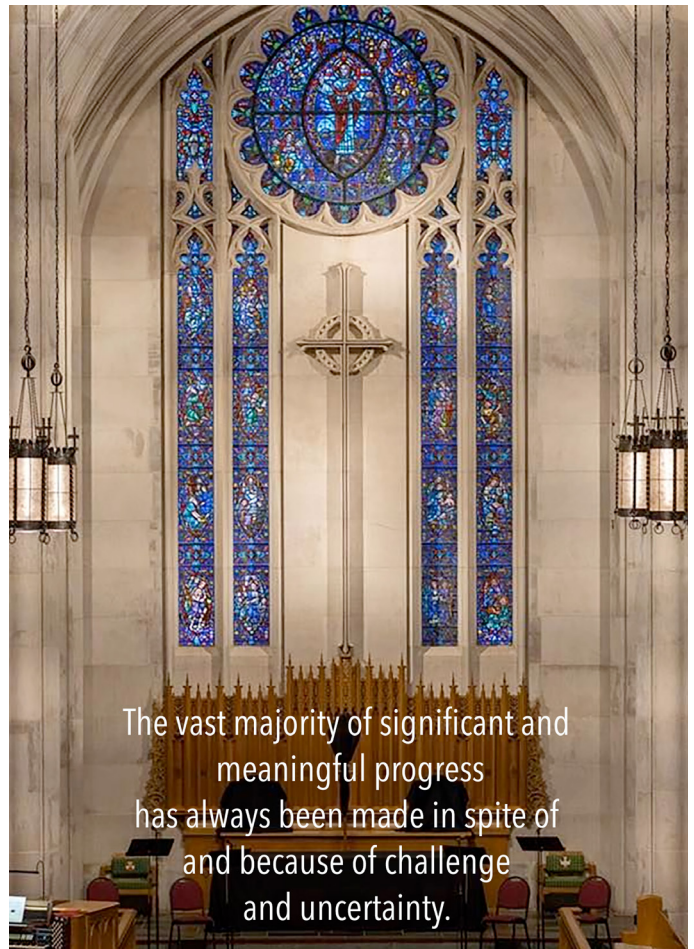
PAUL IS WRITING to the Corinthian church about the generosity of the people in the church at Macedonia. What was so impressive and moving about their generosity was that it came at a time of uncertainty, financial challenges and unrest. Yet Paul says they wanted to share their resources for God's work.



With their great hearts they did even more than Paul or anyone else could have expected or hoped. What fueled that great generosity? Paul says they gave themselves first to the Lord. It's a simple phrase with a profound meaning and direction. The Macedonians were realists. They acknowledged that their times were not the best of times but they made a choice to renew their trust in God. They gave themselves to God's purpose and direction for God's work through the church. It was an act of faithfulness and spiritual maturity. They chose to serve, grow and give as an intentional way of living their lives as followers of Jesus.

It gave them confidence and motivation to give themselves to God's work. Through their generous support of the ministry beyond their personal wants and agendas, they did just what God wanted them to do.

The Macedonian Church was a wonderful example for Paul and the Corinthian church of how God wants all churches to generously live.



We are still called to serve, grow and give as a way of life in Christ. We live in imperfect times of economic ups and downs, uncertain times within our denomination and certainly challenging times in our world. We acknowledge those realities. Challenge and uncertainty are a part of our journey as human beings. The writer of Ecclesiastes in chapter 11:4 (TLB) says "If you wait for perfect conditions you will never get anything done."

Our calling remains powerful and unchanged. We are the church of Jesus Christ who has given us the mission to transform the world by making disciples, growing them spiritually and forming a life-giving community of care. We have a mission to serve the needs within our faith community and the larger world revealing and demonstrating God's heart.

the GIFT WE GIVE
to

ONE ANOTHER

and the world

In their faithful trust in God, the Macedonians believed God called them to live faithfully honoring God's directives regardless of the uncertainty. That meant ordering life with priorities and practices that would shape, sustain and grow them as God's community.

Children and youth would need to be nurtured and taught how to live as a part of God's covenant people. Resources would need to be shared so the needs of the many could be provided. Care was to be available to young and old as all were to be valued.

Wesley Memorial is an expression of our spiritual ancestors from Macedonia. There are still children to be nurtured and taught in the way of life God has for them. Our students need a welcome embrace, openness for them to ask their questions and to find a loving response from God's scripture to guide them in these crucial years of life choices.

Our adults of all ages still need a community where they can grow and mature in faith. They need to find ways to express and engage their Christian walk that honors God and becomes a source of help and hope to all God brings across their path.

The world still desperately needs the invitation of Jesus Christ. Sin and brokenness are real. Jesus offers, to all who will receive, forgiveness and grace that lead to new life.

There is still human suffering to be engaged. There are still hurting people who are hungry, ill clothed, poorly housed, broken and hopeless, who need a redeeming hand to ease the burden and join with them toward a sustainable and God-blessed future. There is still the need for the experience of transforming worship that gives new vision to weary eyes and strength to exhausted souls.

That's who God calls Wesley Memorial to be and to do. That's what happens when we give ourselves first to God and then to one another.

HOW CAN I SERVE and GROW?

Outreach/Invitation Team

Help organize outreach events and connect the church with our immediate community.

Adult Ministries

Teach an Adult Sunday School Class, short term

or long term on Sunday mornings. **Facilitate a Journey or Unity Group** by leading the group for a spiritual study and discussions. Facilitate a Short Study Group by teaching a short-time study.

Senior Adult Ministries

Golden Helping Hands: provides hands-on service opportunities for older adults age 60+, who can be a "ready resource" for many short-term needs of the church. **Alzheimer's/Dementia "Autumn Lights":** This annual event in September seeks to raise awareness and funding to support caregivers of families afflicted with Alzheimer's-Dementia diseases in Guilford County. **Sharing Our Stories:** Persons are needed to be a part of small visiting teams to collect the faith journey stories of our senior adults. **Senior Adult Fun and Fellowship:** If you have a heart for event planning, come help us schedule the next adventures!

Children's Ministries

Sunday School Teachers serve on a rotating schedule to lead large group lessons and/or small group games and discussion. **Volunteer Leaders** serve at events such as Wednesday Night Games and Gospel, Kids Night Out, and special services.

Student Ministries

Greeters allow all ministry event participants to be welcomed, feel noticed and included. **Setup/Clean-up Crews** aid in setting and cleaning up equipment needed for events. **Food & Resource Providers** provide food and resources to leaders for events. **Sports Ministry Supervisors** help in the gym and sports ministry activities. **Event Volunteers** keep structure, sustain mission, and ensure things run smoothly. **On-site Technology volunteers** aid in sound, presentation, and other areas. **Social Media** volunteers help promote our Student Ministries. **Transportation Volunteers** assist in transportation to off-site trips

There are many different areas in which to serve at Wesley Memorial. We've provided some descriptions below that might help you prayerfully consider the place where God is calling you.

and activities. **Worship:** Help lead worship, playing an instrument, singing, or running sound or tech.

Wesley Memorial School

Teacher Hospitality volunteers treat the teachers with a luncheon, breakfast, or monthly snack. **Substitute Teachers** go on the list of Safe-Sanctuary trained leaders who we call on to assist in a classroom when a teacher needs to be out. We have two teachers in each classroom. **Special Experiences:** Have a talent or interest to share with the classes or help with events? Let us know! **Prayer Partners** will receive a class list to pray for during the school year. We covet all prayers for the WMS community.

9:45 Contemporary Worship

Praise Team: Help lead in song, vocals, or instrument. **Greeters** connect Sunday morning guests with the life of Wesley Memorial. The **Audio Visual Team** operates cameras, lights, and presentation software. **Doughnut Team:** pickup and tray doughnuts for Sunday Contemporary worship.

8:30 and 11:00 Traditional Worship

Singing or Handbell Choirs: Provide musical leadership in worship. **Altar Guild** volunteers prepare Holy Communion for the congregation. **Sound and Audio** (live stream) volunteers enhance the worship experience through technology. **Ushers and Greeters** create a welcoming and comfortable environment for worship. **Sunday Morning Van Drivers** provide transportation for members to and from some communities for worship.

Hospitality and Administration

Marthas and Stephens serve drinks and desserts for church meals, wipe tables and trays, and call volunteers to remind them of dates and time. **Wednesday Night Clean-up:** collect and put away food, wipe surfaces, wash/dry dishes, take out trash. **Bereavement Reception:** Help or lead a team to serve refreshments at bereavement receptions. **Reception/Greeters** answer the phone and greet visitors. **Counters** count money and prepare bank deposit.

HOW CAN I SERVE and GROW?

Congregational Care

Care Ambassadors: network of caring individuals intentionally providing support and strengthening relational connections within our church family.

Congregational Care Team: ministers to R.E.A.C.H. members, who for a wide variety of reasons are unable to attend church services and activities on a long-term or short-term basis. **Prayer Shawl Ministry:** ministers through knitting shawls, praying for those who will be receiving them, and delivering them to individuals. **Pillow Ministry:** provides a ministry of comfort by sewing, stuffing, and delivering pillows prayerfully to individuals facing health struggles. **Stephen Ministry:** providing one-on-one care for individuals in the community and Wesley Memorial Church, through the Wholeness and Healing Service, "Journey Through Grief" book mailings, Stephen Minister care relationships, and Vespers healing prayer. **Funerals:** support and care provided through bereavement meals, ushers, and memorial acknowledgments. **Caring Card Ministry:** meets monthly to send cards to those on our Prayer List.

Prayer Ministries

Prayer Chain

Mission

AA: a fellowship of men and women who meet every Thursday to share their experience, strength and hope with one another to recover from alcoholism. **AIAnon:** a fellowship of people who have been affected by someone else's drinking to support one another and bring positive change to their individual situations. **Alzheimer's Autumn Lights Prayer Vigil:** annual gathering for prayer and financial support of those impacted by Alzheimers/Dementia. **A Simple Gesture:** individual households supplying and delivering canned food to multiple food banks in Guilford County. **Community Clinic of High Point:** volunteer to help provide quality acute care and chronic disease management for eligible adults, aged 18-64, who reside in Archdale, High Point, Jamestown, and Trinity and do not qualify for any form of government or private insurance. **Community Garden:** till, plant, tend, and harvest the Wesley Memorial Church garden to provide fresh produce for the Open Door. **Compassion International:** prayerfully, relationally,

and financially support an international child with food, medical care, and education. **Cover The City:** collecting and donating blankets to those in need in High Point during the winter. **CROP Walk:** annual fundraiser walk to help to support families who are struggling with hunger in our community and around the world. **Crossnore Children's Home:** provide support for children who have experienced abuse or other trauma. **Fairview Elementary School:** partnering with the school throughout the year to provide supplies, backpacks with food for children in need, and support for the teachers. **Feeding Lisa's Kids:** packaging and delivering food, on the first Wednesday of every month, directly to children in High Point facing food insecurity. **Henderson Settlement:** annual trip to Frakes, KY to partner with in ministry the people of Appalachia. **High Point Jail Ministry:** develop relationships and engage in Christian discipleship with inmates in the High Point jail. **Macedonia Center:** mentoring kids, teaching life skills, and providing loving support for families in the High Point community. **Open Door Ministries:** serve meals at The Father's Table, assist with the assembly of food boxes for the pantry, and provide needed supplies for the shelter. **Prison Fellowship Angel Tree:** share the love of God with incarcerated parents and their children through the purchase and delivery of personal Christmas gifts. **Rise Against Hunger:** packing meals annually to send to people internationally facing food scarcity. **Ervin UMAR Home:** supporting the promotion of community inclusion, independence and growth for adults with intellectual and developmental disabilities through residential, employment and cultural enrichment opportunities. **Ward Street:** providing food and support of the community outreach at Ward Street Community Resources. **Wesley Memorial School Rainbow Scholarships:** provide financial support for families. **World Relief Organization:** provides support for refugees in our High Point Community. **Hinton Rural Life Center:** outreach to under-resourced rural communities.