



## Wesley United Methodist Church

Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.

The people of The United Methodist Church®

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**The Church at the Heart of the City**

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Dear Members and Friends,

Grace and peace to you in the name of our Lord, Jesus Christ! I pray that you and your loved ones are well, and that you are enjoying this holiday season. Indeed, it has been such a blessing for me to journey with you these past several weeks, learning together through our Advent fellowship study, and sharing in some of Wesley UMC's Advent traditions. Through it all, I have seen the light (and love) of Christ shining brightly in our midst.

It is from that love (i.e. the love of Christ) that we gain our identity and our purpose, as individuals and in community. For we are called to live out of God's perfect love, to strive for what Rev. John Wesley called "Christian perfection", in all that we say and do. And so, as we move into the new year, we will be exploring more deeply what that means for us here at Wesley UMC.

We will begin this new season of our journey together on **Sunday, January 7<sup>th</sup> at 9:00 am** with a special service of baptismal remembrance and covenant renewal, taking time to remind ourselves of the promises made at our baptisms and the covenant we share with one another. In the weeks following, we will dig into the questions every baptismal candidate (or their sponsors) answers as well as the commitments that are made by the congregation as a whole. We will celebrate **Human Relations Sunday** on **January 14** and welcome a **guest speaker**, Rev. Kerri Parker of the Wisconsin Council of Churches, on **January 28** to share with us about our relations with ecumenical siblings.

Along with these themes in worship, there will be opportunities to hear from church leadership as they update us on our visioning and strategic goals for 2024. They have all been hard at work, taking in your questions and feedback, and looking for ways that we can be working together to continue growing more deeply in faith and in our outreach to those in the wider community. We are excited to be able to share these things with you as we move into the new year.

I invite you, even now, to pray with me for our congregation and for the communities we live in. Pray that we may be inspired once again by the joy of Christmas, that we may be open to seeing the ways God is already working in our world and hearing God's call in our lives. I also encourage you to consider where God may be calling you to share your prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness in the coming year to help bring the light and love of Christ to all.

Blessings,  
*Pastor Doug*