

THE FLAME

**Semesterly Newsletter From
Wesley at Virginia Tech**

Volume No. 60 | Fall 2024



Wesley This Semester

Wesley has had yet another amazing semester. Between our weekly events like CoGs, Family Dinner, and Worship, and bigger events like Weeks of Welcome and Fall Retreat, we have grown as a faith community. From all of us here at Wesley, we appreciate all of your support. We hope you enjoy updates from around Wesley.

In This Issue

Campus Ministry Update

Updates from the our Student Campus Minister and the rest of the Core Ministry Team, and a few other areas in Wesley.

Stories Of Impact

Features from students involved and around Wesley. This section looks into how Wesley has impacted our students this semester.

Development Update

A look into progress we have made with our development goals as well as information about giving.

Alumni Announcements

Events happening in the lives of our alumni and their families.

A Word From Bret

Insight from our Campus Minister, Bret Gresham, on what has been happening at Wesley this semester.

A Note from Your Board Chair

Greetings from your Wesley Foundation Board!

We want you to know that your board has been focusing on two things. First, we recognize that a vibrant and spirit-filled student ministry is continuing at Wesley. That can clearly be seen in all of the articles in this newsletter. We want to do everything that we can to support those ministries at Wesley, on campus and in the community.

Second, it is no surprise that the infrastructure and living arrangements at Wesley are overdue for an upgrade. We are going to do our best to make that happen. If things go according to plan, we will raise funds in 2025 through a capital campaign with the intent of completing the renovation in 2026. This project will be a long-lasting legacy that students can enjoy for years to come.

I hope that the semester ends well for the students and that everyone has a holiday season filled with hope, peace, joy and love!

-Fred Gibson, Class of 1978, Wesley at VT Board Chair



Hello from Wesley's Student Campus Minister

Wesley has been busy over this past semester! Fall semester has felt like a blur, with a ton of Wesley activities every week. Core Ministry Team (CMT) has been hard at work throughout the year, planning and executing events. Every CMT member has been incredibly dedicated, proactive, and intentional through all things. The work that they put into each of their ministry areas and their leadership within Wesley has made my job incredibly easy! Each of the ministers will give a brief overview entailing all that has been going on over the past few months.

We have had the pleasure of sharing this community with new students throughout the year. It has been a blessing to see all students grow in community, friendship, and faith over the past semester. The community has been thriving and that is due to the support of donors, the work of staff, and the awesome students that have grown into leadership roles. It has truly been a fantastic few months with a group of awesome students. Wesley is looking forward to a strong finish to the fall semester and an awesome spring semester!

-By Nathan Michaelson, Student Campus Minister



Stories of Impact: Freshman Spotlight



Hello all! My name is Amanda Todd, and I'm a freshman currently majoring in Exercise and Health Sciences. I'm from the small county of Surry, Virginia which is located on the James River right across from Williamsburg! In my free time I love to hike, read, and be outside. Back home, I go to Wakefield United Methodist Church. Both my parents were Hokies, so ever since I was little, I knew Virginia Tech was the place I would call home.

These first couple of months in Blacksburg have been great, and Wesley is a big part of why that is. I saw the Wesley table at GobblerFest and grabbed an information card, but never really had another thought about it. It wasn't until a few weeks later when my mom convinced me to go to a Wednesday worship service.

As soon as I walked in the door I was greeted by so many people who wanted to get to know me. It was something I hadn't experienced at college yet, and it made me feel really happy and excited.

I've stayed at Wesley because of the people and the strong sense of community that makes me and many others feel welcome and loved.

Since joining the Wesley community I have joined the Self-Care CoG, Freshman Affinity CoG (FAC), the Wesley Board as the Freshman representative, and the Youth Retreat planning team. I spend a great deal of time at Wesley whether it be at CoG meetings, family dinner, Wednesday worship, or just hanging out in the building doing homework. My favorite things so far at Wesley have definitely been Hot Dog Hand-Out where we ran around downtown and gave out 400 hotdogs and family dinners.

I've made so many memories, connections, and friends at Wesley in just the past couple months and I can't wait to make more and see what the future has in store!

-By Amanda Todd, VT Freshman



How Can You Help?



Are you inspired by the students and ministries you see at Wesley? We are!

To support Wesley's ministry through giving, you can scan the QR code to the left for a link to our online giving page. You can also mail checks to: Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech, PO Box 458, Blacksburg, VA 24063.

Thank you for your support and prayers! With your help, we will continue our mission to "Love Out Loud on the Virginia Tech campus."



Fall Retreat

Wesley had the awesome opportunity to travel to Camp Dickenson for Fall Retreat this year. Initially, this was planned for a weekend in September, but a certain hurricane and record rainfall prevented us from attending on the planned weekend. With some flexibility on the part of students and some extra planning, we were able to go on October 18-20.

We had a great group of about 32 students attend the retreat. The theme of the weekend was "Building Presence." We discussed intentionality with God, neighbors, and ourselves through certain scriptures taken from Moses's life. These included Moses encountering Christ through the burning bush, taking time to rest on the mountaintop, and working with those closest to him while fighting the Amalekites.

Over the weekend, we had the opportunity to hear from Bret, Paige, and Core Ministry Team members. Students were given a reflection and prayer time on Saturday to practice presence with God in whatever form suited them.

During our free time, Wesley students were also given the opportunity to aid Camp Dickenson and the local community with cleanup from Hurricane Helene. Wesley students were hard at work clearing branches, covering the pool, and cleaning the nearby trailer park. We, of course, also spent some time having fun. Students spent free time playing card games, attempting to fish, singing songs and roasting s'mores around a campfire, and hanging out with friends. Overall, it was an incredible and powerful weekend.

-By Nathan Michaelson, Student Campus Minister





Fellowship

This semester has been filled with exciting fellowship opportunities, and I'm thrilled to share the many ways our community has connected and grown together.

We kicked off the semester in September by taking advantage of the beautiful weather with a hike to Cascade Falls, followed by a sunset hike to Bald Knob. Our fall intramurals also got off to a great start, with students competing in 4v4 sand volleyball and 8v8 kickball. It was wonderful to see the competitive spirit and teamwork on display!

In October, we hosted our annual Halloween party, complete with fun costumes, games, and a screening of *It's the Great Pumpkin, Charlie Brown*. The students had a blast celebrating and sharing in the joy of the season. In November, we continued our tradition of fellowship with a trip to Sinkland Farms for a pumpkin patch outing. Students enjoyed hayrides, a corn maze, and a chance to soak in the fall atmosphere. We also launched a new round of intramurals, featuring 3v3 battleship and indoor 6v6 volleyball.

December brings even more opportunities to connect! We will wrap up the semester with our last family dinner, featuring our annual White Elephant gift exchange. This will be followed by an ice-skating trip, offering students another chance to enjoy fellowship in a festive setting.

After our Prayer Vigil Worship, we'll keep up the tradition of a Reading Day Cracker Barrel Breakfast—a wonderful time to relax, connect, and fuel up for the final stretch of exams.

This semester has also included 11 family dinners, where students had the chance to engage with local churches and youth groups. In addition, we hosted three themed family dinners: Halloween, Bikers vs. Surfers, and Pajama night.

Our lobby has also seen some exciting changes, including new Halloween and Christmas decorations. Each week, the fellowship team has been updating the lobby with interactive activities like polls, riddles, and conversation prompts to help spark new friendships and conversations.

Looking ahead to the spring semester, I'm excited about the continued growth of our fellowship community. There are many more fun events to look forward to, including four square tournaments, movie nights, and much more!

Thanks for the ways your support makes all this great fellowship possible!

-By Ben Boles, Fellowship Minister



Outreach

Hello! I'm Riley Kaufman, and I'm honored to serve as the Outreach Minister for Wesley this year. It's been such a joy to watch our incredible Outreach Team in action, and I'm excited to share all the amazing things we've been up to!

From move-in day through the second week of classes, we kicked off our "Weeks of Welcome" with 14 unique events that brought so many new faces into our vibrant community. We brought back some of our favorite events like the Kickoff Cookout, Game Night, and Tie-Dye, and added exciting new experiences that quickly became favorites—such as the First Day Coffee Handout, a Hiking Trip, and more!

It was truly inspiring to see our community come together to welcome both new and returning students to Blacksburg. Watching our mission to "love out loud" come to life was incredibly rewarding after months of planning, and through these events, we've welcomed so many new people into our ministry. Our community is better for it, and we are thrilled to continue building these connections.

After the Weeks of Welcome, our team jumped right into our regular programming. We've been so excited to see our social media and graphics presence gain amazing traction!

Our creative team has been engaging our community with fun, interactive reels and posts, bringing our mission and events to life in a way that resonates with students, alumni, and families alike. Their creativity and hard work have played a huge role in spreading the word about our ministry and events, and thanks to their efforts, we've connected with even more people online who are eager to be a part of our community. We also gave our website a fresh update to make it even easier for everyone to stay connected with us.

You may have also seen our "Love Out Loud" crewnecks featuring our new design! We were thrilled to see students, alumni, and families excited to wear our mission with pride and represent our community.

To close out the semester, we hosted a Mindfulness Night, where students could enjoy cookies and calming activities as finals approached. The following week, we held our Wishbowl Table on campus, handing out hot chocolate and encouraging notes, while also collecting wishes from the Virginia Tech community to pray over during our 24-hour prayer vigil.

We are so grateful for the chance to serve our community this semester, and we can't wait to bring even more creative ideas to life in the spring!

-By Riley Kaufman, Outreach Minister



Stories of Impact: Resident Spotlight

Hello everyone! My name is Dori Mitchell, and I am a current Junior studying Biochemistry and Animal & Poultry Sciences- basically I'm a science and barn girl! I'm from Suffolk, VA, and I grew up going to Oakland Christian UCC. Since my start as a freshman, I have been a part of the horse and sheep volunteer programs at VT's Plantation Rd barns, a peer mentor for freshman in my majors, a member of the Pre-Vet club, and a pretty-well rounded, active Hokie.

This is now my 5th semester being an active student happily a part of the Wesley community, and I am currently on our Missions and Worship Teams as well as being the leader of our Youth Retreat Planning Team (as we prepare to host a winter youth treat for churches in the Valley Ridge District). I am a daughter of a VT Wesley couple, and although I wasn't raised Methodist, it has always been in my genes to pursue Wesley once I got to VT. Now I'm fulfilling "living into" my Wesley destiny as a resident!

If you ask pretty much anyone, the answer to "why did you become a part of Wesley?" (no matter how they first got there), they will say they stayed for the loving and supportive community.

As a resident, this means I get to be a part of and engage with this community almost anytime I want to- if I need a good laugh, a hug, someone to empathize with about a struggle in the day, advise or help, or just good-hearted people to be present with! As a very extroverted person, this is exactly what I need most days, and I love having my people there for me whenever I need them.

Being a resident, I also have the opportunity to be there for others too in a very accessible way! When else in my life will I be able to say I communicated with my roommates through the cinderblocks, shared my living room with dozens of people, got my prescription Kelly hugs everyday, and could holler from the kitchen to lobby just like one big happy family? It's pretty cool :)

This environment has really been a positive one in supporting my daily extroverted needs as well as provided me an opportunity to be there for others, so I am so grateful to be one of the smiling faces of Wesley everyday!

-By Dori Mitchell, Wesley Resident

How can you help?



You can help bring Wesley's residential spaces into the future by making a gift to the Annual Fund! Here are a few ways to give:

Make a stock gift

Set up a recurring donation to the Annual Fund

As a Qualified Charitable Distribution of your IRA Required Minimum Distribution

For more information scan the QR code to the left, or contact Paige at development@vtwesley.com or Bret at campusminister@vtwesley.com.



Stories of Impact: Senior Spotlight

Hello! I'm Jacob Henshaw and I'm a senior at Virginia Tech, majoring in Marketing Management and minoring in both Advertising and Popular Culture. I have been a member of Wesley since my freshman year, but my story is not that simple. I attended Wesley my freshman year, but I wasn't truly involved until after the spring break mission trip in 2022. Since then, I've gotten more plugged into the community, and constantly remind myself to enjoy every day as a student. I've also strived to prevent others from making the same mistakes as me; Wesley is an amazing place and fosters lasting friendships. I just wish I had realized this sooner.

During my time, I've had the opportunity to serve in multiple forms of community leadership. I was the Student Campus Minister during the 2023-24 school year, and got to work with an awesome core ministry team.

I have led my own small group, or CoG (community of grace), since my sophomore year and have loved every minute of it. This year I've had the honor of serving as the Worship and Band Leader, and working with an excellent group of student musicians to provide a fulfilling worship experience every Wednesday night. Most recently, I have started my second year on the Discernment Team. It's incredibly rewarding to work with other students to discern our Core Ministry Team for the following year.

My time at Wesley has been a blast so far, and while I'm admittedly sad it's coming to an end, I am eager to see what my last semester has to offer.

-By Jacob Henshaw, VT Senior

Stories of Impact: Alumni Spotlight

My name is Audrey Lux, and I'm a Wesley alumna, class of '23. When Bret asked if I could write about my recent journey hiking the Appalachian Trail (AT), I was happy to oblige. For you see, during my time at Wesley, my ability to walk up a flight of stairs, let alone climb mountains, was in question. After experiencing nerve damage to my legs after an unfortunate event, I was worried I might never hike again.

It was at this low point in my life when I discovered Wesley and began expanding my horizons to what is possible through faith and fellowship. As I limped my way through senior year, I met friends at Wesley who helped encourage me at every step. After graduating from VT and completing physical therapy, I ran into the same question all students confront sooner or later: now what? I decided to pursue my life-long goal of attempting to hike the entire 2,000-mile AT. With renewed strength and thankfulness in my legs, I packed my one bag and bought a one-way train ticket to Harpers Ferry, WV.

I began hiking south across Virginia from the Potomac River on the road to Damascus, VA. Along the way, I met strangers from all walks of life, literally shouted God's praise from the mountaintops, and earnestly sought to listen to God's call for me while immersed in their creation. I only ended up hiking 500 miles in 50 days, but that was enough to feel closer to God in my spiritual journey. I know there are still plenty of mountains in the distance left to climb.

-By Audrey Lux, Wesley '23





Missions

Missions team has been super busy organizing ways for Wesley students to Love Out Loud this semester. We started out with a collaboration with Outreach team during our Weeks of Welcome, collecting donations outside of Kroger for 209 Marketplace.

In September, our team had the opportunity to cook family dinner that was “school lunch” inspired. The dinner was a great way of telling new (and old) students about the different Missions events Wesley offers as well as being an opportunity for students to complete the Safe Sanctuary training necessary to work with our Fun143 kids.

Also at the beginning of September, we had 14 students participate in a Missions Day to prepare our 209 office and Fun143 trailer to be used throughout the semester. Wesley joined forces with the Protectors of the Watershed Club to pick up trash along Lusters Gate Road in Christiansburg. Our students enjoyed being able to help clean up our environment while meeting some new friends along the way!

We are also still in our semester-long Annual Cake Mix Collection for the Montgomery County Christmas Store. Starting in July, we have been encouraging family, friends, and other community members to donate monetarily to this collection.

We also had a Bake Sale to get the Blacksburg community involved in this mission. I'd like to thank everyone who donated, as well as the communities at BUMC and Edges for their continued support of this mission.

At the beginning of December, we will use the donations we have gotten to buy 1000 cake mixes for the Montgomery County Christmas Store. These will be given to families in Montgomery County to allow them to have dessert at their holiday meals when they likely wouldn't have been able to otherwise.

November began with another Hotdog Handout. Wesley was able to cook 400 hotdogs to be handed out in Downtown Blacksburg. Believe it or not, we were able to hand out every hotdog in 30 minutes! The day after that, we were able to join forces with the youth group from First United Methodist Church in Salem to go Angel Tree shopping for a family in need.

I'm so proud of this community. Their love for others shines through in everything they do both in Wesley and in their interactions outside of Wesley. Shout out to Missions team for yet another amazing semester and I can't wait to see what we do in the Spring!

-By Ella Fitzgerald, Missions Minister

How Can You Help?

Do you love all the mission work that Wesley students are doing?

You can help directly support Wesley's missions by becoming a Wesley 23 donor! By joining Wesley 23 you commit to making a monthly contribution of \$23 or more to Wesley at Virginia Tech. \$7 of your monthly contribution goes toward our Missions Fund, \$7 goes toward our Building Fund, \$7 goes toward our General Program Fund, and \$2 goes toward building our Reserves. Wesley 23 donors also receive a special monthly email from Bret highlighting Wesley news, students, and prayer requests for the ministry.



To find out more about becoming part of Wesley 23, scan the QR code to the right!

Fun 143

Over the last semester, we have had a remarkable growth period with kiddos. This semester, we are up to 6 kids on a weekly basis each Tuesday and Thursday. At the beginning of the semester, we had a Mission Day at the trailer. During this time, Wesley students involved with the program and others wanting to support this ministry came together to create a space where the middle and high school students felt like they belonged. Afterwards, it was so rewarding to see their faces light up when they saw the new space!

Overall, since students do not get sent home with much homework anymore, we have pivoted this semester to provide them with worksheets as well as personalized materials to help them grow in their math, reading, and writing skills.



Each week we continue to share a meal with each other, grow closer, share highs and low, and work on sharing positive mentoring experiences with the children. Looking ahead, we plan to continue our outreach to the local community, take the kids on a couple outings to give them a variety of experiences, and continue being positive role models to all the students.

I am pleased to say FUN143 is on the right track to helping more kids succeed this year! Throughout my three years working with this program now, our group has blossomed so much, and I am extremely excited for the upcoming semester.

-By Emma Anderson



209 Marketplace

Hello, my name is Josh Hansell, and I am currently a senior studying Materials Science and Engineering. I joined the Wesley community last fall after my brother first invited me to Wesley's Welcome Week cookout, and I've been an active member since. Last spring, I agreed to join the Missions team at Wesley and lead the team responsible for Wesley's in-house food pantry, 209 Marketplace. 209 Marketplace serves to help Virginia Tech students with food insecurities. Since then, I have worked to increase the quantity and variety of food in the pantry by broadening our donor list and increasing tabling events.

This semester we have been seeing an increasing number of pantry users, from approximately 14 per week to 20 a week, meaning that food has been leaving the shelves a lot faster than in the past. In efforts to supply more food to those in need and to enlarge 209 Marketplace's storage supply, the Missions team at Wesley has led two tabling events outside of Kroger to get pantry donations.

Seek Christian Community at Virginia Tech has also agreed to table outside Kroger for us once a month to further increase our donation supply. Additionally, Blacksburg United Methodist Church provides weekly donations of milk and eggs along with monthly donations of canned and boxed goods under their "Us + One" mission. For each donor, I make sure they have an updated list of the items of top priority at the time to ensure the pantry can meet the demands for each month's "hot items".

I have thoroughly enjoyed being able to help those in need and alongside the 209 Marketplace leadership team and Wesley's Mission's team. I am grateful that I have been able to expand 209 Marketplace's inventory to support the growing numbers of pantry users. In the future, I hope to expand advertising for the pantry in efforts to reduce the amount of food insecure students on campus.

-By Josh Hansell



Worship

This semester has been wonderful for worship! We have had worship each Wednesday night with a variety of themes and sermon series. One of the crowd favorites was a four week series based on the Disney movie, Inside Out 2. Each week focused on a different emotion featured in the movie and how it relates to everyday life and our faith as a whole. One of our most recent sermon series, entitled Melt Me Mold Me, discussed how we as people are shaped by the other people in our lives, the events we live through, and our own thoughts and feelings.

Throughout the semester we have had opportunities to incorporate student testimonies, new songs, and outside-of-the-box ideas, all of which have come together for a total of 15 successful worships!

Special shoutout to our worship team which consists of 8 students (plus Bret) for planning and carrying out all of our worships this year! The team met for the first time in June and has met almost every Wednesday since the beginning of the semester to discuss the worship that just happened and prepare for the next week. Worship wouldn't happen without them!

Each week we average over thirty people attending worship, with our largest week having 53! We hope to continue our success into next semester and continue to grow our community! Here's to a great fall semester of worship and an even better semester in the spring!

-By Nate Birchfield, Worship Minister



Discipleship

Our small groups, also known as our Communities of Grace, have been at full speed this semester. Whether someone is looking for a bible study, a space to play games, meet new people, or just a time to be silly with one another, there is an option for everyone!

In addition to our "CoGs" we also have our Friends in Grace program, where two students are intentionally paired together depending on what they're looking for. This could be anything from having someone to grow in faith with or simply a friend to check in with over lunch.

Over the past few weeks, Discipleship team has been planning our Prayer Vigil worship service that'll be happening on the last day of classes, December 11, followed by our 24 hours of prayer. This is designed for students to have time and the space to sit in prayer and reflection, however that may look, as we head into exam week.

We will also be tabling with outreach for Wish Bowl where we hand out affirmations to students to brighten their day and give them an opportunity to write a wish that will be available for our students to pray over.

-By Olivia Turner, Discipleship Minister



Development

The Wesley Foundation at Virginia Tech set some ambitious ministry goals this year, and we're so grateful for the ways you have helped us meet them! From the largest Fall Retreat in years to incredible numbers of new-student engagements, fall 2024 at Wesley has been an amazing semester. To finish out 2024, we hope to raise \$35,000 in end-of-year giving. This money will be used to further the ministry of Wesley by supporting all of the behind-the-scenes needs that allow staff to create the welcoming, home-like space that Wesley offers to students 24 hours a day, 7 days a week. When you give to Wesley at VT, your gift positively impacts students' faith in ways that last for a lifetime. There are so many ways to support Wesley through your prayers, gifts, or time. How are you called to be part of this student ministry?

YOU CAN SUPPORT WESLEY BY FOLLOWING US ON SOCIAL MEDIA

USE THE CORRESPONDING QR CODES TO CONNECT WITH US!!



Finance Report

As of 10/31/2024
Total Receipts to Date: \$93,567.35
Total Receipts Budgeted: \$141,631.64
Total Disbursements to Date: \$109,747.51
Total Disbursements Budgeted: \$141,631.64
Net Overall Budget: (\$16,180.16)

How will you help?

To help Wesley meet our 2024 end-of-year giving goal of \$35,000, will you give:



- \$250
- \$100
- \$50
- Other?

Donors: May 1, 2024 - November 30, 2024

Thank you for your generosity!

Abby Youmans and Daniel Fry
Adam and Erica Coates
Amanda Wagner
Amy Emerson and Bill Bancroft
Amy Shank
Andrew and Olivia Bowers
Anna Bosco
Anne Robinson
Bob and Teri Byers-Koleas
Bret and Erin Gresham
Brian and Kelly Walters Henshaw
Caroline Harvey
Carson Smith
Charles Given
Chris and Haley Givens
Chris and Holly Calabro
Chris Anderson
Chris Chamberlain
Christopher and Minoka Yonts
Cody and Jessica McCurry
Davey and Lizi Winyall
David and Faye Crist
Dr. Diana Love
Drew and Catherine E F Ensz
Duane and Tammy Owens
Schoenhardt
Elizabeth Young
Eric and Kelly Wiseman
Ginger Meier and Gary Cope
Jacob and Tara Montague
Jason and Katie Boggs Forsyth
Jason and Maggie Brooks
Jeff Brooks
Jessica Dodson
Jim and Loretta Gresham
Jonas Collins

Kaitlyn Gallagher
Kevin Mosteller
Lauren Lowe
Lauren Wright
Leonard and Laura Bell
Lloyd and Sherri Robinson
Luke Williams
Margaret Brown
Matt and Kelly Hudson Beeken
Michelle Hettmann
Pamela and Anthony Sourber Perfetto
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Stephen and Mandy Garrett Lloyd
Steve and Lorna Vink Parkins
Thomas and Lori Givens
Tom and Amy McGregor Barnes
Tom and Cindy Martin
Tom and Peggy Weaver
William Andy and Rachel Lowe
William T. and Ida Berger Powell
Zach and Caitlyn Ewen
Roger E. Beck
Christopher B. Kaufman
James L. Gresham
Sara Q. Tyndall
Richard W. Shaw
Melissa Rhyne

Lynn H. Everett
Amy W. Emerson
Jeffrey P. Orzolek
John B. Davis
Adam C. Cook
Jonathan N. Reynolds
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Ryan Markwood
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William C. Bancroft
Heather L. Eggleston
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Amy T. Newcome
Debra L. Stoudt
Julie A. Kent
Cheryl C. Miller
Charles D. Phlegar
Anne R. Ellis
David V. Heinbuch
Amy S. Shank
Mara L. Gibson
Elizabeth A. Young
Patricia A. Stephenson

209 Marketplace Donors:

David and Lynn Everett
Discipleship Women's Ministry
Gummer Tillman Sunday School Class
at BUMC
James and Jeanette Rakes
Omega Psi Epsilon Sigma Alpha
Virginia Tech Woman's Club
Zach and Caitlyn Ewen

love out loud



A United Methodist Campus Ministry

Alumni Announcements

Birth Announcement

Benjamin James Forsyth was born to Katie and Jason Forsyth on November 26, 2024 at 4:15pm weighing 6lbs 8oz. Both mom and baby are doing well!



New Job

Britannia Vondrasek ('12/'13 BS and '20 PhD) started a job as a professor in the Aerospace Engineering department at the United States Naval Academy in Annapolis, MD. "I'm excited to be back closer to Hokie territory and would love to meet up with any Wesley alumni who are in the Baltimore/DC area," says Britannia.

Weddings

Michelle West (VT '12) married Matthew James on Nov 9 2024. They are Matthew & Michelle West-James and live in Louisville KY.

Abby Youmans and Daniel Fry married in June, 2024.

Katelyn Lydens and Stephen Rossie married in October, 2024.

A Word from Your Campus Minister: The Fall "Bretter"

Recently I preached an Advent Sermon from Zephaniah 3: 14-20 (go read it!) and it struck me how appropriate our hope is in the One who comes to bring light in the midst of darkness! This minor prophet dares to proclaim hope in the midst of a dark time; bursting into songs of joy when the world was a total mess. This, friends, is our call as people who anticipate and prepare to follow a child that was born in a simple manger bed; the light of the world that brings joy and hope to a world that so desperately needs it. Zephaniah assures the people of God that the Divine will always be with them no matter the circumstance. And now we are able to understand this truth even further as we prepare for the birth of Emmanuel, God with us, this Advent Season.

It is this truth that is witnessed in our students at Wesley. This is true now, it was true in our past, and will be true for years to come. Wesley at Virginia Tech is a manifestation of God's presence on the campus at Virginia Tech, in the communities around us, and throughout the world!



I find so much hope and joy in this ministry and the students that have led and continue to lead it now. This world can be a mess, but our students "Love Out Loud" in ways that bring light into the darkness that surrounds us. I am constantly inspired by our students and their willingness to use their gifts to serve God each and every day. Being a college student with classes, relationships, and the stresses of what is next in their lives is difficult in and of itself and, yet, they still enthusiastically embody being the body of Christ through worship, mission, discipleship, outreach, and fellowship. This is why I have the hope and joy that the prophet Zephaniah was talking about in this Advent Season.

Over my 16 years of ministry at Wesley (watch out, Glenn, I am catching up!), nothing has been more evident than this ministry's ability to bring that hope and joy into every aspect of life. We have alumni that are guiding faith communities as laity and clergy, leading companies, schools, and industries with the skills they learned at Wesley, and bringing love and hope to their communities in ways that share the Good News of Jesus Christ. We have students that are leading not only ministries at Wesley, but their peers throughout the University. Wesley at Virginia Tech continues "to be an affirming, grace-filled community that develops and sends out disciples rooted in faith." The living out of this vision brings hope to a Church that needs it so much and I am beyond grateful to be a part of it with you and our students!

-Rev. Bret Gresham, Campus Minister

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