

# THE CORNERSTONE

2023 Spring Newsletter

Wesley Foundation at Purdue



# A LETTER FROM PASTOR GLEN

**My dear Wesley friends,**

I was honored to give the opening invocation and closing benediction at one of Purdue's nine graduation ceremonies this May. Several students I knew received diplomas at that commencement including two, Ian and Emma, who have been very active at Wesley. I was able to shake hands with them both as they walked across the stage at Elliott Hall of Music.

Earlier before the ceremony I watched all the graduates filing around the Engineering Fountain and up the steps of Hovde Hall. I was able to greet in turn both of our active students, Ian and Emma, as they entered the building. I then walked with each of them across the bridge walkway to the Hall of Music. At that moment it felt like a very spiritual act to walk with them across the bridge to the place of their graduation.

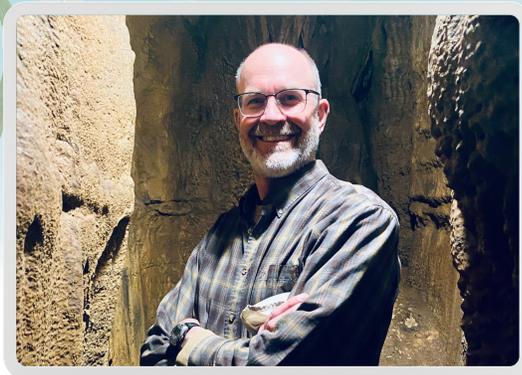
Later I reflected that Wesley is a bridge for students. This vital ministry helps get them from childhood to full adulthood. It is a place to grow spiritually, emotionally, relationally to be more the person God calls them to be. Sometimes we bridge students from positive childhood experiences in a local church. However, sometimes our students come to Purdue with much more negative spiritual experiences in their childhood churches. Regardless Wesley is an important bridge to positive adult spirituality in Christ.

It has been a great spring semester at Wesley Foundation at Purdue. I hope the articles in this newsletter gives you a good taste of the tremendous impact we have in the lives of students. I am even more excited for the increased impact we will have next semester. In addition to our full program staff (Jasmin, Pastor Mack, and me) returning, we will add two more dynamic part-time staff to our ministry.

First, we are pleased to welcome back Rev. Wellington Chiomadzi as a half-time associate pastor but with a new mandate! He served with us at Wesley from 2019 to 2021 – helping to start our Global Connections Ministry. Starting July 1st he will take the lead in reaching out to not only international students, but also families and non-students in the community to start a fresh expression of ministry. Stay tune for the Spirit's revealing of what exactly this new faith community will look like.

Second, Rev. Janelle Ohlemiller will join our staff as a pastor of small groups and counseling. In an age with so many students who struggle with mental health issues, Janelle's presence even for 5 hours a week will have a tremendous impact as she is a certified therapist with a Master's Degree in Counseling.

The continuing and increasing impact of our ministry is only possible due to your support. Thank you for partnering with us to create community on campus that changes lives.



**Grace and Peace,  
Pastor Glen**

# Spring Retreat



Hi! I'm Christina Sowinski, an incoming sophomore at Purdue. During my first year of college, Wesley Foundation provided a space for me to make friendships and serve the community around us. In February, I had the chance to attend a Spring Retreat at Saint Andrew UMC. We left in the morning and spent the late morning and afternoon building a gaga pit for the youth. Gaga ball is a game similar to dodgeball, but it's played on the ground in a pit. It's very popular among camps and youth groups, and Saint Andrew UMC wanted to bless their youth with a place to play this game.

We spent the evening eating lasagna, watching Purdue basketball, and playing sardines throughout the church. In the morning, we attended their two Sunday services and let them know what we were doing at Purdue and in the community. Saint Andrew UMC were wonderful hosts, and I'm so glad they gave us the chance to show how much we appreciate them!

Christina Sowinski  
Current Wesley Student



# Alabama Spring Break Trip



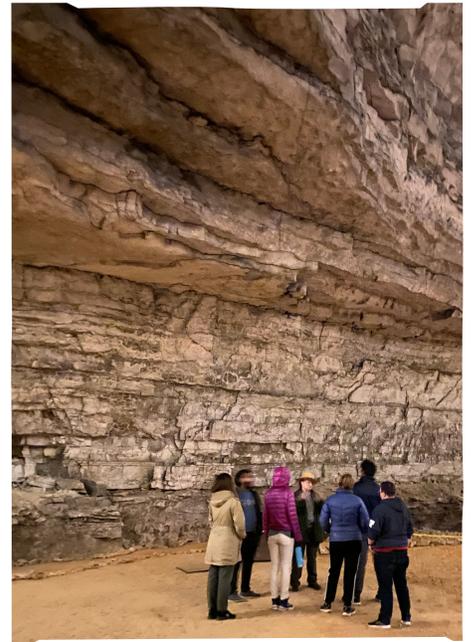
This year for Spring Break Wesley Foundation partnered with The Baptist Found. They decided to take us on an Immersion Trip to Alabama where we visited Birmingham, Montgomery, and Selma. On the first day we went to a Sunday service at Bethel Baptist Church. We got to see the church where they held gatherings to further civil rights. It was bombed three times but it still stands. Afterwards we were on our way to Montgomery. We got to visit the EJI (Equal Justice Initiative) Museum. They had several impactful exhibits. When you first walk in you are made to feel like you're in the ocean, and as you look down there's cast moldings of slaves at the bottom of the sea. We got to see the brutality of slavery and how little their life was worth to the people who bought and sold them. It was a hard exhibit to walk through. As we made our way towards the middle, we encountered holograms of slaves behind bars asking and reaching out for help. It was an emotional and heartbreaking experience. After EJI we went to the National Memorial for Peace and Justice. This was dedicated to the victims of lynchings and racial terror. As you move across the memorial you notice the placards are hanging from the ceiling. It brought up a lot of mixed emotions and realization of the journey of people that had no choice. We ended our day with walking on the Selma bridge. It was quite disheartening to see such a historical sight and the surrounding area be in horrible condition including that the bridge itself was named after a KKK leader and a confederate general. There was a lot to take away from this trip, it was eyeopening, thought provoking, and inspiring for change. We had plenty of deep conversations and even in the midst of heartache we got to have some joyful moments with each other. On our last day we had the chance to go explore Mammoth Cave! It was incredibly large and had cool rock formations. Overall this spring break is one to remember.

Mahira Morris  
Current Wesley Student



Students Mahira & Snezhanna  
along with Pastor Mack at  
The National Memorial for Peace & Justice

Rev. Thomas L. Wilder giving us a special tour of the Historic Bethel Baptist Church



Students getting more informed at Mammoth Cave

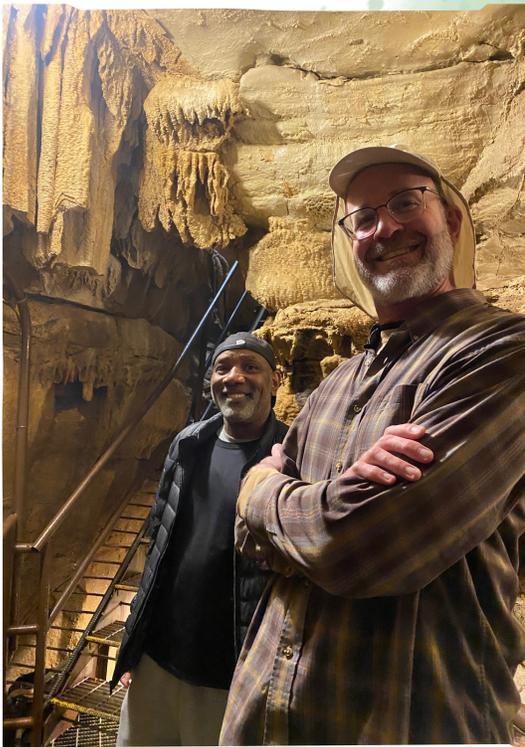
Group photo at the bottom of Crystal Cave



Pastor Rodney & Pastor Glen



Group photo by the Selma Bridge



THE NATIONAL MEMORIAL FOR PEACE AND JUSTICE



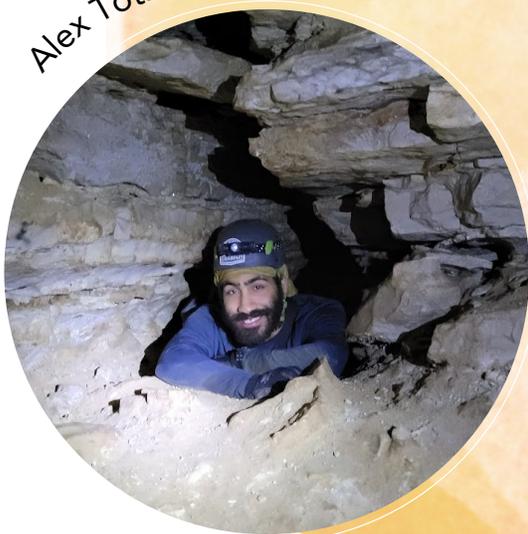
The National Memorial for Peace & Justice

# Caving with Wesley



I started caving in November 2022 after being introduced to it by Jenni Fifer, a Wesley alum and friend. I instantly fell in love with it. It was a unique experience unlike any other. As we crawled through the cave it gave me a sense of going through an ancient civilisation. We really wanted to share this experience with our other Wesley friends. Early spring semester is when we started to plan and get the word out! Everyone in Wesley including our grad students knew about it. We were excited to see this come through! As the day came we had 9 Wesley friends join us, two grad students, Pastor Glen, and six undergrad. We were excited to see what was to come! Students climbed down and got into the cave, our exploration had begun. We saw a ton of salamanders, rock formations, and waterfalls. It was quite a sight to see. Sadly due to the rainy season the deep pools down below kept us from continuing our exploration. It was time to head back, we ended our trip by meeting up with other alums in Bloomington for dinner. Thank you to Jenni Fifer and Wesley Foundation for making this trip possible. We can't wait for the next one!

Alex Toth



Alex Toth  
Current Wesley Student



# Confirmation Sunday

Confirmation Sunday was a very special day for me. It was made so special by all the people that showed up for me and the people that worked so hard to put the Sunday together so that everything was just right. I felt included and appreciated by everyone. It was a Sunday to remember and add to my precious memories that occurred at the Wesley Foundation.

Rebecca Pritchett  
Wesley Alum



It was a pleasure to lead three of my friends, and peers in a Confirmation experience. Confirmation is a process typically undergone by youth who wish to take on United Methodist Church (UMC) membership vows. However, as the three in my class did not grow up in the UMC, this was a time to really dive into what being Methodist is all about and explore their faith.

I was honored to see them learn about our Wesleyan heritage, explore deeper their own thoughts and perspectives on God, and then make commitments to God and the United Methodist Church. Seeing such fine young people make such a choice brings me, and all those who attended the service, such joy and is truly life-giving! I am so proud of each one of them.

Janeé LaFuze  
Wesley Alum



**Students Megan S. and David S. and alum Rebecca P. getting confirmed**



**A huge thank you to Saint Andrew UMC and Janée LaFuze for supporting our students and ministry**

# Fridays and Sundays at Wesley

Over this past year and especially this semester, Wesley has become like family to me. And part of what contributed to that was Friday fellowships. A designated time every week for a free meal (and which college student doesn't love a free meal?) but most importantly fun activities ranging from camp crafts to trampoline parks. These activities were great opportunities for me to get to know people, and also helped me remember not to restrict myself to my studies, but to be the goofy, silly, and carefree college kid I am at heart.

In a similar vein, I love Sunday services because they don't feel impersonal and stifling the way a lot of churches do. The atmosphere is very relaxed, and happy, and we have time to intermingle and interact with each other. Sermons feel joyful and uplifting, instead of hateful and self-righteous. I leave the sanctuary feeling positive, and get to carry that energy into our fellowship over a meal. Overall, Sunday services help Wesley feel more like a community, which is something I've grown to appreciate and will miss dearly when I graduate.

Astrid A.  
Current Wesley Student



# Reunion Weekend

Join Wesley Staff, Alums, and students for a fun weekend reunion! This will be a great time to reconnect with Wesley friends! Please feel free to come to any or all events happening. Check out the itinerary below to see what we'll be up to!

## **Friday, July 7** **Midnight Pancakes!**

Join us for **pizza at 8pm**. Set up starts at around 8:45pm; we'll be setting up tables, pancake stations, and more. From **10pm-Midnight** there'll be hundreds of new summer students in line for pancakes. We would love to see you there.

## **Saturday, July 8** **Scavenger hunt | Fellowship Lunch | Service Project | Aldersgate Cookout**

**10am** We will be having an adventurous **Campus Scavenger Hunt!** Come and see what's new on campus.

**Noon** There'll be a yummy fellowship lunch provided by Wesley.

**1-3pm** Spruce Up Wesley! This will be a cleaning up service project. Many hands make light work.

**3pm** Silver Dipper run. Come and join us for a free mini scoop of ice cream!

**5pm - 8pm Cookout at Aldersgate!** Join us for some delicious food and lawn games! Meet cool students and hang out!

## **Sunday, July 9 (Optional)** **Worship | Service Project | Disc Golf**

**10am** We will be going to Grace UMC for their Sunday service. We will be welcoming the new Pastor. Afterwards there will be a reception and lunch.

**12:30-2:30pm** Join us for our Service Project. We'll be partnering with Grace UMC and helping with spreading mulch and removing invasive species.

**2:30pm** There'll be an **optional** game of Disc Golf at Murdock Park!

# Stay Connected

This summer we will be having different opportunities via Zoom for you to get involved, catch up, and support The Wesley Foundation

On July 30th and August 6th at 4:30pm we will be having Wesley Zoom reunions. See what's new at Wesley, catch up with Pastor Glen and fellow Alums.



\*\*Our Zoom Meeting Link will be sent out a week prior via email. If you're interested in joining our Zoom Meetings please email [Development@wesleyfoundation.org](mailto:Development@wesleyfoundation.org)  
We can't wait to hear from you!

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