

THE CORNERSTONE

2021 Newsletter

Wesley Foundation at Purdue





A LETTER FROM THE DIRECTOR

Dear Wesley Friends,

Some have described this past year as a dumpster fire and in many ways that is true. There has been much heart ache. I attended a funeral this spring for the grandfather of Cole, a Sophomore in nursing at Purdue, who became active at Wesley this year. Sadly, this was not the only Wesley student to lose a loved one to the pandemic. Another student, Alex, an active Junior here at Wesley, had a grandmother who was the enthusiastic apostle and rock of her predominantly African-American church who also passed away. Our prayers go out to all who mourn losses.

Yet Wesley was a refuge for the COVID storm. We faithfully balanced caution with boldness to be open and present for students. I am pleased that with the cooperation of our students, there was no known or suspected transmission of COVID at Wesley. Our doors have been open through the pandemic – providing a crucial home away from home for many, even when they couldn't return home.

We had to modify what we did and how we did it, but new students were also able to find their way to Wesley. And while we had a wonderful freshmen group, there was also a number of older students who joined the spiritual community which is Wesley. Another student, Ian, had become more and more involved with Wesley recreation during the pandemic and finally in his fourth semester at Purdue, started to attend worship and other events at Wesley. He brought his mom to worship in April when she was visiting from their home in Little Rock, Arkansas. She expressed to me in private how much Ian's connection to Wesley means to her son and to her!

There were some changes for me in this time of COVID. For fifteen years I was appointed to serve First UMC quarter-time as a Pastor of Spiritual Formation and Youth. This year I got a different quarter-time appointment – Pastor of

Collaborative Youth Ministry at Grace UMC in Lafayette. While I miss First UMC, I love working at Grace with Pastors Jake and Janelle Ohlemiller. Jake came to faith in Christ at Wesley Foundation at Purdue and served as an intern here. It is great to be working with him again – this time he is the senior pastor!

On a personal note, I want to thank all of you for your continued friendship and support as the Robyne family went through significant transitions in the last three years. In 2019, Lana and I shared with the active students and board our decision to amicably divorce. In our 2020 newsletter Lana shared with all of you about this decision that came after five years and one hundred counseling sessions to try to work through our differences in sexual orientation. Now in 2021, I am pleased to share that Lana is doing well as a Friendly Planet missiologist in DRC (Congo) – please stay in touch with her and join me in supporting her vital work. For my part, this summer brings the great joy of marrying a wonderful person named Marybeth. Many may know her as she coordinates the Freshmen Chemistry program here at Purdue. Marybeth and I continue to be amazed at how wonderfully compatible we are and I look forward to many more of you meeting her.

Your continued support of the ministry at Wesley Foundation is what literally keeps us going. Please continue to invest in us so that we can be a blessing to students at Purdue and all who are touched by our ministry. Stay strong in the faith that love will indeed have the final word, in our lives and in the life of the world.

Grace and Peace,

Glen



MIDNIGHT PANCAKES RETURN



Midnight pancakes have returned to Wesley! We temporarily canceled this tradition in the Fall of 2020 due to safety concerns. Thanks to the nice Spring weather and careful planning, we were able to host midnight pancakes outside and even had the opportunity to use our deck!

Midnight pancakes would not be possible without the hard work from the students at Wesley! Students at Wesley decorated the building and outdoor area. They did an outstanding job welcoming other students to enjoy some delicious pancakes.

Students also helped with making signs, setting up tech for music, setting up tables, cleaning, and of course, serving delicious pancakes!

We had a variety of pancakes and toppings available for all to enjoy. Tables were available on the lawn as well as our beautiful deck. Indoors, students were able to enjoy videogames and additional seating. We also found students dancing outside under the stars! It was such a fun night of games, fellowship, and pancakes. Thank you for creating such great memories at Wesley!

ALL HANDS ON DECK

In 2019, Wesley Foundation and friends came together to improve accessibility to the building. Inspired by Wesley's vision of making doors open to all, we have been eager to begin construction. In the spring of 2020, we were excited to hear that the construction progress had begun. In just a few short months, the deck foundation and railing had been built. We were super excited to see everyone's vision beginning to form!

A new tradition thanks to the deck!

The COVID-19 pandemic not only changed the structures of our events, but in some cases canceled our events. Midnight pancakes was not held last Fall because of COVID-19 concerns and safety was of utmost priority. This Spring, with careful planning, we brought back Midnight pancakes! We decorated the deck with outdoor lights and furnished it with tables and chairs for students to enjoy their pancakes. Another beautiful event we had on the deck was the celebration of our senior graduates! Seniors spent the last Sunday service of the semester sharing their journey at Senior Chapel. Afterwards, Grace UMC held a wonderful cookout for Wesley. In addition to students enjoying their meals on the deck, we began a new tradition at Wesley! Seniors gathered on the steps of the deck for a group photo!



Wesley Seniors sit on the steps of the deck to pose for a group photo. We excited to continue this tradition with all of our students!

We are so close to our final goal!

We are so happy to see the deck built and used by our community. We are very close to meeting our goal of making Wesley more handicap accessible! Our next phase of the project involves installing a door and an elevator for the deck. Thank you so much for all of your prayers, contributions, monetary gifts, and support towards making Wesley more accessible! You can visit our website to give directly towards completion of the deck.

www.wesleyfoundation.org/allhandsondeck



After Easter Sunday worship, students gathered by the deck. Everyone is waiting for the annual Easter egg hunt to begin!



West Point UMC provided a cookout after Senior Chapel! Our Senior Send-Off Dinner was a huge success!

COLORADO 2021



A NEW SPIRITUAL RETREAT

COVID-19 continues to strongly influence how we operate, and we were not sure if we would be having a Colorado Spiritual retreat this school year. In years past, we would take around 25 students and enjoy all the beauty that God has provided us in the mountains and nature. We would also partake in restaurant dining, church services, museum visits, interactive service projects, ranger station visits, and many other activities. However, COVID-19 caution must outweigh tradition.

We worked hard to figure out a COVID appropriate way to still safely enjoy a spiritual retreat and we are excited to share the success of our trip! We consulted multiple doctors and county health officers. They told us everyone must isolate for the 12 days, prior to the retreat, and test negative within three days of coming. Also, we were required to keep a room in the cabin free to isolate someone if necessary. If we could meet these requirements, we were told it would be reasonably safe for a small group of young adults who had no underlying medical conditions. I wasn't sure we would find enough students who would want to fulfill those requirements – but nine of us agreed to them. That is a third of what we usually take – but so worth it for those who went.



To form a safe COVID bubble and just be with each other for eight days in the Robyne's Colorado cabin was truly a gift to one another. Each day began with a devotion and ended with a devotion. Everyone journaled and reflected. Everyone led two devotions during the time and participated in the spiritual discussion that came from each devotion. We hiked a lot, including in state parks, national forests, up two 10,000-foot mountains, and even spent a day in Rocky Mountain National Park. We all cross-country skied once, some went downhill skiing one day, and we had a lot of relaxed cabin time. The trip was unlike any other, but we continued to take time to reflect on the beauty around us and within ourselves.

While it would have been nice to have more students experience Colorado, those that went have come back and really helped with our Wesley Foundation spiritual community this semester. A smaller number of participants was in many ways beneficial, including giving each person who went a stronger bond with the others.

WINTERIZATION 2020



Winterization Crew students up early at 6AM to finalize the check-in process at FUMCWL

Winterization Reinvented

Back in April 2020 (and even September) we were not sure that Winterization would happen. Thanks to a lot of support, brainstorming, hard work, and collaboration from our Winterization Crew Student Leadership Team, Winterization happened this year. We don't typically brag at Wesley, but the student leaders this year showed incredible creativity and adaptability. They completely reinvented the entire event to be COVID safe for our students and residents, and their plan was approved by Tippecanoe County Health and Protect Purdue.

On November 7th, we had over 1100 volunteers rake leaves, wash windows, and clean gutters for over 300 residents in the greater Lafayette area. Volunteers came in car loads, often roommates or close friends, wearing masks, to First UMC West Lafayette for our reimagined drive thru check-in process.

Students were given pre-packaged bagged breakfasts and all the supplies they needed. With rakes stuffed in trunks or hanging out windows, they headed off to

serve homes in smaller groups than normal, but no less fun. For the first time in recent history the weather was perfect! Many residents came outside in masks and interacted with students from a distance. Once finished they headed back to return their supplies and picked up lunch to picnic in the field near FUMCWL.



The remaining Winterization Crew at Wesley at 4PM having finished all the days activities and returned all the rakes to the dungeon for another year

WESLEY RECREATION



ULTIMATE FRISBEE

A DIFFERENT GAME EVERY TIME WE MEET

First, let me just say that Ultimate Frisbee is not the only recreation that we do at Wesley. We also enjoy bike rides, hiking, disc golf, and much more. It can be challenging to get a group photo but I think everyone was too tired to go home right away for the photo above! Ultimate is very popular at Wesley. If we took a picture after every meetup, you would find that we would have different people every time. It is very common for other student groups to join our games. We had all different levels of experience and

it was a great way to meet other students. Did I mention we play in the rain? Students get super excited when it rains because it means an entirely different game. Wet and muddy conditions mean we have to play smarter and cautiously. Honestly, it's a very refreshing way to exercise and have fun. I am grateful for such fun memories with amazing people. Oh by the way, you can find me (Abe Zaragoza) posing right below Pastor Glen in the picture above!

HOLY WEEK

As Holy Week is tradition for Wesley, we had a variety of events throughout the week. On Tuesday in place of our usual activities we had a prayer walk and ice-cream run. It was a rainy evening, so the group was small but bright spirited.

Thursday, we had our Maundy Thursday service. The praise band performed multiple songs and we had guest Pastors Lauren and Duane from First United Methodist Church (FUMC). All three pastors delivered a wonderful message. The service was both in person and livestreamed for both the Wesley and FUMC viewers.

On Friday we had the annual Good Friday Sunrise Service. The view was definitely worth the lack of sleep. We started the morning with scripture readings of the crucifixion story and continued the story on our way to the top of the Grant Street Garage. Once we reached the top, we took a moment to pray and watch sunrise.



GLOBAL CONNECTIONS

New discussions every semester

Global Connections was created to support our growing population of international students and to bridge the gap between them and our domestic students. This event happens every Friday with dinner at 6:30 and a cultural discussion after.

This semester we have had a variety of discussion topics ranging from holidays to civil rights, and cultural differences.

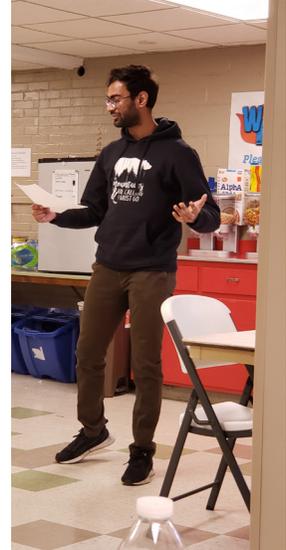
As for the food, we have students volunteer to cook. We also occasionally have Wesley supporters volunteer. Every week there is something unique.

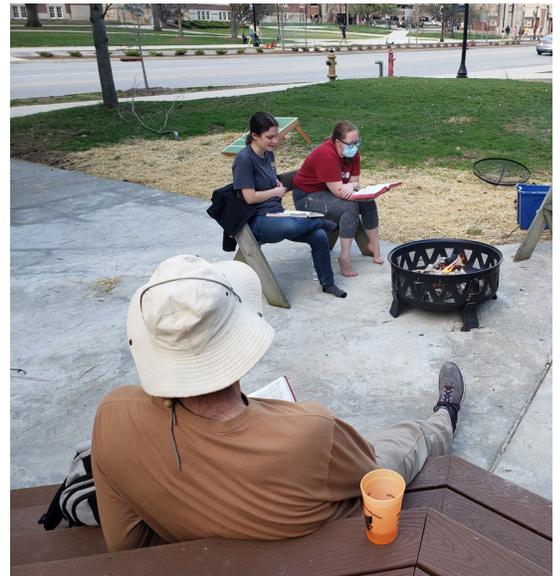
Thank you to our amazing students!

Speaking of supporters of Wesley, Apoorva (pictured far right center) is a Wesley Alumni who loves to cook! She is one of the most frequent cooks for Global Connections and brings a variety of recipes to share.

March was national crafting month, so Raj (pictured far right top) decided to present on the topic of origami, and with assistance of Ethan Brady (pictured far right bottom), led the group in creating paper cranes. Some people even chose to make new creations like pinwheels and dinosaurs.

Global Connections has continued meeting during the summer and we are super excited for what the next semester will bring!





SPRING RETREAT

Wesley hosted its annual Spring retreat the last Saturday of March. Retreats and trips at Wesley have looked very different from how they were hosted before the COVID-19 pandemic.

We started the day at 8:30 with breakfast (mostly cereal), then participated in two different service projects. One group went to Food Finders and the rest of the group moved Winterization supplies from Wesley's basement to the garage at First

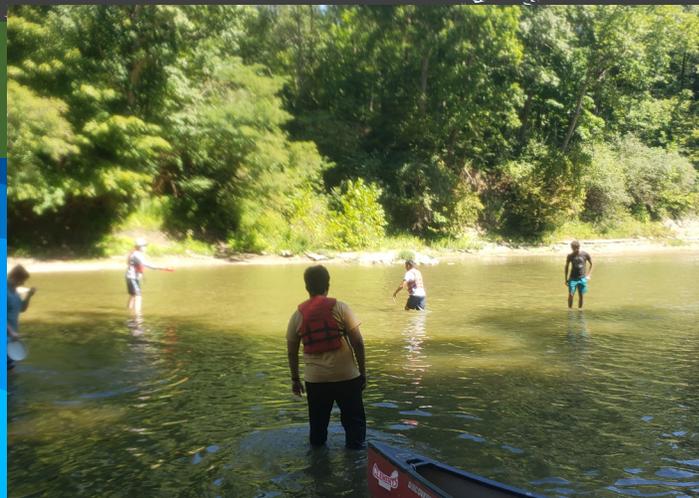
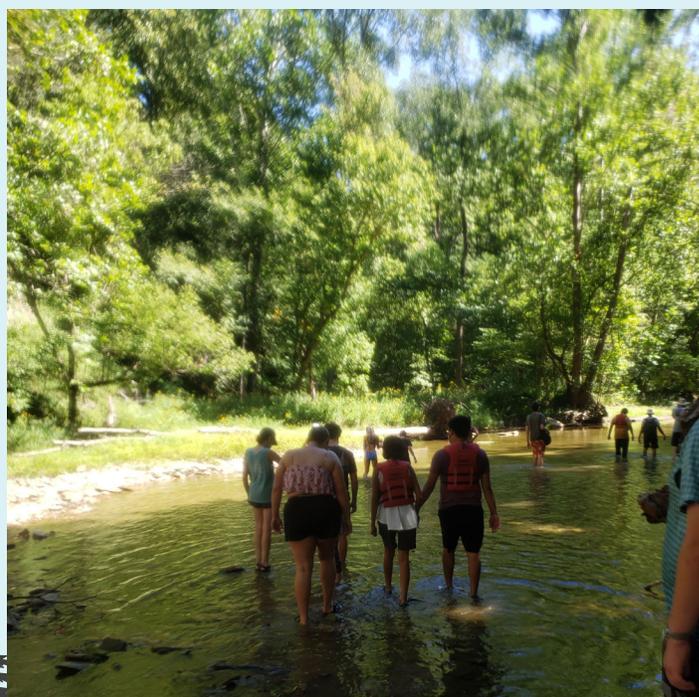
Church (which they are generously letting us use for storage). Lunch was made by Kelden with help from Kendra. After lunch we had a devotion by guest Pastor Craig LaSuer. Around 1:30 we started recreation, the options included disc golf and escape rooms. At 4pm we had our second devo by Ethan Brady on Stairway to Heaven. We ended the night with our official debut of the deck, with a cook-out, yard games, and campfire songs.

WESLEY CANOE TRIP

Wesley has a tradition of going on a canoe trip on Labor Day, However, in 2020 Purdue did not give Labor Day as a day off, so we decided to go on the Saturday before Labor Day instead.

The weather was beautiful but the water level was a bit low, so many groups got stuck frequently. One positive outcome was being able to walk more in the water! Groups that did not get stuck were able to help out the groups that did.

There are a few traditions that happen on every canoe trip with Wesley. First: packing lunch so we can stop for lunch on the riverbank. Second: playing Frisbee when we break for lunch. Third: taking a hike to a nearby waterfall near the end of the route. Lastly, baptismal remembrance offered by immersion. These traditions make the trip more memorable. This year may have been a little more challenging, but it was still just as fun!



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