



Furman Wesley Fellowship
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Rev. Edward McCutcheon,
campus minister



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Just a thought...

In his book, *11: Indispensable Relationships You Can't Be Without*, Leonard Sweet asks the question, "Who are you taking with you on the journey of faith?" He then moves through 10 characters from our sacred scriptures that we need in our lives – characters like Nathan, Jonathan, Peter, Paul, Barnabas, and Rhonda. Each of these characters plays a role in our lives – they are there to challenge us, support us, mentor us, encourage us, and even keep us young.

The final relationship he presents, is the relationship to *place*. He says that each of us needs a place to call ours, and a place that will claim us as its own. I am reminded of my youth and my time spent in Conway/Myrtle Beach. I remember always wanting a sticker that read, "You may be visiting, but I'm local." To which place, Sweet would question, are you a LOCAL?

As we come to the end of another year, this being my ninth, I am reminded of all the ways that we have provided a *place* for our students. Each week we gathered to study what it means to be a "neighbor" to all we encounter, so a *place* to wrestle with our faith. There were many opportunities to gather around the table at a meal, providing a *place* to fellowship and share our lives with one another. We participated in missional outreach to the Greenville community, and the people of New York City, so a *place* to engage with those outside the walls of Furman. Our monthly Sophomore, Junior, and Senior groups provided a *place* to discuss the transition points on the college journey, and the struggles associated with these moments. Finally, our Freshmen Group met weekly to provide those present a *place* to just be as they experienced everything [almost] for the first time!

The college campus can be a place where everything seems "up in the air." My prayer is that Furman Wesley Fellowship can be the *place* in the lives of these amazing young folks where things can be grounded. When a tree grows, it grows in two directions – up and down. It grows upward to explore, to spread its branches, and reach new heights. But, this is only made possible because it is simultaneously growing downward, and becoming more rooted in the stable soil that provides the necessary nutrients.

At Furman Wesley, we seek to be a *Place* where students can "Be, Belong, Connect, and Engage." It is our hope that like the beautiful, and majestic, trees that line the Furman Mall, our students too will grow to greater heights and immeasurable depths. The heights to reach their dreams, and the depths to remain rooted in the grace, love, and mercy of Jesus Christ.

We all need a *place* – may God bless this *place* we call Furman Wesley Fellowship, and those who call it home!

Year in Review

Hazel Davis

As a freshman ready to start their first day of class, the last thing on my mind was what religious group I would join on campus. I had been very active in an FCA group at my high school, and to be honest I just assumed that I would join a college chapter when I came to Furman. There were so many other things to consider – whether I was going to be able to find all my classrooms, would I be swamped with work the first week (classic freshman thoughts) – that when I walked by the Wesley table at the Student Activities fair, I paused for long enough to take a pamphlet with the schedule, talk with the very friendly Campus Minister who kept trying to ask me who I knew in Swansea, and then flitted through the different tables.

If you asked me now, what made me come to the Kick-Off freshman year, I wouldn't be able to tell you, but I definitely remember what kept me coming through that first semester. Edward did a demonstration where he started by wearing a clown suit, and slowly took off layers and layers until he was wearing what we all know and love as the classic Edward outfit: a t-shirt, shorts, and sandals. I don't remember the lesson and do remember very clearly being bitten a thousand times by mosquitos, but something about being outside that summer night with the chapel lit up from the Christmas lights on the Wesley tent stuck with me. It would keep me coming to Wesley Tuesday nights until the end of my first semester, where I let my academic life take over and my spiritual life take a backseat. It wasn't until the end of freshmen year that Edward reached out asking if I would be interested in serving on the Leadership board, and (maybe to his regret now) I said yes. So would begin a three year journey of serving as Hospitality Chair, then serving as one of two freshmen group leaders, until finally, serving as co-facilitator as a senior.

Being in Wesley has meant a lot of things to me. Sometimes there have been those nights we listen to music and the lesson Edward has planned goes in a completely different direction. Sometimes people leave right around 9:15, and other times, we'll still be chatting in the Garden Room at 10:00. There are days where we're more focused, days when we're really hungry, but at every meeting there have been people who are there for one another. Edward will always talk about the family that Wesley is to him, and it might seem sappy but it's true. Wesley is that family you don't have to feel judged about your grades, or if you're fighting with your roommate, or even if there are things going on at home. You can just come and be yourself.

At the end of every Wesley, we stand in a circle holding hands, and read the benediction. We always leave a hole in the circle, and the reasons for the whole are threefold. I have never felt something with more conviction than that Wesley upholds each of those reasons: that we leave room for Jesus, that we leave a space for those who are not there, and that we are an open group. It is difficult to imagine now that my time at Furman is coming to a close, but I know that wherever I go, there will always be a place for me at Furman Wesley.

I hope that if you're reading this and an alumni, you can take a minute to think of all the wonderful things Wesley has meant to you. And if you're still lucky enough to be at Furman, I hope you make the best of what time you have left.



Hazel Davis graduated in May 2017 and will be attending graduate school in the Fall.

Freshman Perspective

Jillian Padgett

Nothing says friendship like papery waffles and powdered eggs, and that's the most important thing I've learned from joining Wesley this year—just kidding. But I am fortunate that my Wesley experience worked out the way that it did. Before the start of my freshman year, I knew I wanted to find a group of close friends. When I brainstormed about all of the ways I could find a community at Furman, Wesley was at the top of the list. I couldn't resist the thought of growing in my faith with such a close-knit group of people. To my pleasant surprise, Wesley exceeded my expectations. Throughout my first semester, I gradually immersed myself in this fellowship. I went to meetings sporadically, but each time I felt welcomed. People included me in conversations even when I hadn't seen them in weeks. This loving environment made me want to keep coming back. This led to a peaceful weekend retreat, during which we learned about the final hours of Jesus' life, and topped it off with a screening of the riveting film, *Zootopia*. We've also enjoyed volunteering and a couple of very memorable Waffle House dinners. The fun we've had has deepened our friendships, allowed us to share things about ourselves, and let us learn from each other's experiences. I'm grateful that God brought me to these people, and I can't wait to see what the next three years have in store.

Jillian is a rising sophomore at Furman.



Alumni Spotlight

Kristin Dollar

It was when the threads came loose in my flippant college life that I fell backward into Wesley Fellowship. Edward had sought me out during my very first week my freshman year. I thought I needed something more exciting and sophisticated than the denomination in which I'd grown up — and so, while I kept in touch by attending occasional Bible studies and freshman small group, I was not, in the beginning, one of the Wesley regulars. But during my junior year, I realized just how much I needed God. I'd tried to find homes in places that were not really home. I'd tried to fit in at service clubs and even other campus ministries, but I was only acting the part. Wesley had been my home all along, a *real* home, so when I began to fall apart, home I went — with my true self, with all my issues. Wesley Fellowship put up with me and welcomed my questions and carried me along my journey.

My senior year, I became the Wesley Fellowship Missions Coordinator. We organized a Habitat build, ate pancakes with day laborers, and planned a mission trip to New York City. This new responsibility gave me purpose during a difficult year, as I continued to ask hard questions and discover who I was in the context of community. Edward took my friend Jay and me to Exploration in St. Louis, an event designed to help college students discern a call to United Methodist ministry. While the conference itself was pretty cheesy, it was conversations with Edward and Jay that got me thinking about what it might be like to be a pastor.

When I graduated from Furman, I still had a lot of questions about God and God's relationship with humankind. Naturally, I picked the most expensive way possible to explore them. Edward wrote my recommendation letter for Duke Divinity School and helped me navigate becoming a United Methodist Candidate for Ordained Ministry. While in divinity school I did my summer field education at a Methodist church in Mexicali, Mexico, and then I spent two academic year placements at a Spanish speaking United Methodist congregation called Fiesta Cristiana. Through these experiences, I felt a deep call to both Hispanic-Latino ministry and to ordained ministry as a United Methodist Elder.

My first year in ministry, I was appointed as an associate at St. John's United Methodist Church in Aiken, but while I loved my congregation, I still felt called to serve with my Hispanic-Latino brothers and sisters. So, the bishop moved me back to Greenville, where I currently serve at Faith United Methodist in Greer and am the Greenville District Coordinator for Hispanic-Latino ministry. I love my job, and I love being back in Greenville, where I still receive overwhelming support from my campus ministry and my campus minister. This June at the 2017 Annual Conference, Edward will accompany me onto the stage as my mentor when I am ordained.

If you are able to be present at Annual Conference, I hope that you too will stand when my name is called, as it is largely through the expansive network of Wesley Fellowship that I have learned to live into God's calling on my life to ordination as a United Methodist Elder. Thank you for being part of our community and for supporting me on my journey.



Missions

Kaitlyn Pugh

This year our Spring Break Mission Trip took place in New York, New York. Some people may think that this seems like an odd place to do mission work. In fact, several people gave me confused stares when I told them my spring break plans. Mission work in a U.S. city? In New York? Isn't mission work something that happens in third world countries with no running water or electricity? Sure, help is needed in those places, but it is also needed here at home. That is why Furman Wesley Fellowship served people throughout the different boroughs of New York over spring break.

It was very cold throughout the week, and some of our work was outside, but we enjoyed it nonetheless. Our crew of eight was fortunate enough to have a church host us while in New York, so we stayed in the fellowship hall of a small church in the Red Hook neighborhood of Brooklyn. Every day we would take the bus and subway into different boroughs to serve the people of New York. Our first day of work was spent in a soup kitchen. We cooked and served food, cleaned the dining hall, and spent some time talking with the patrons. We spent another day in the Bronx working at a distribution center for World Vision, helping them sort and package goods that were to be distributed to families in need. In Manhattan we visited the Church of the United Nations where we attended a seminar, then distributed bagged lunches to homeless men and women on the streets of Manhattan. We also worked with City Meals one day to carry Passover boxes to some of their Jewish senior citizens. These were all very informative and rewarding experiences from which we all gained a lot.

In addition to the service, we also had time to enjoy ourselves in the city. On Sunday morning we attended church at the Brooklyn Tabernacle. The church was huge, with a choir of around two hundred people. The sanctuary was filled with joy and praise and the love for Christ was evident among the congregation. We also had the opportunity to do some touristy things while in New York. We visited the Empire State Building, went to see the Statue of Liberty, walked around the 9-11 memorials, walked many, many miles across Manhattan, and ate lots of great food. We laughed, loved, and worshipped. We felt pain for those who were hurting for assistance, but also rejoiced over the fact that people were willing and able to fill at least some of their needs. While we had a lot of free time and fun in the city, by far the most rewarding of our experiences were those in which we were serving others. I believe at the heart of Christianity is helping people, both spiritually and physically. Hopefully, that is exactly what we did in New York.



Kaitlyn graduated in May 2017 and will be attending Duke Divinity in the Fall.



Wesley Snapshots – Fall 2015, Spring 2016

Left Column:
Mission Trip
Christmas Party
Right Column:
Wesley Winter Day

**Furman Wesley
Fellowship**

For more information:

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OR

<http://www.furmanwesley.com/>

**Thanks for Your Support!**

Our Wesley Fellowship operates by the support of three areas – our UMC apportionment dollars, Furman’s Religious Council, and the generous donations of our friends and families. If you would like to donate to help with mission opportunities, retreats, and gatherings, there are two options:

1. If you are a Furman alum, instead of offering a general alumni donation to Furman University you may specify toward which program you would like your donation applied. For Wesley, please indicate “Furman Wesley Fellowship.”
2. You can send your donation to our group directly. Please make your check to “Furman Wesley Fellowship” and mail to: Furman Wesley Fellowship, 3300 Poinsett Hwy, Box 28538, Greenville, SC 29613.

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