

June 18, 2017 Abby Maziarz

What does Wesley mean to you? If I were to ask you that question, what would you say? Since today is the last time I'll get to participate in our children's Sunday, I want to take some time to reflect on just that. Many of us have been a part of this church for as long as we can remember and some of us are newer members, but I know that no matter how long we have been here, Wesley has a special place in each of our hearts. Because of that, I want to talk about the important lessons this church has taught and continues to teach all of us and why it is so special.

One thing I know I've learned from being a member of this church is what it means to follow God. I am positive that everybody here has learned that the best way to do this is not only to worship and praise him here through prayer and song, but also to share his love. We do this through helping others. We are all so lucky to be a part of an extremely giving congregation where we step up to not only help each other, but also strangers. Whether it is helping the community around us through volunteering in local food drives, reaching out to other parts of the country through programs like City Reach, or touching the other side of the world through our participation World Vision's Thirty Hour Famine, Bridge Liberia, or of course our sponsorship of Godwin, Wesley has made a difference and that is something we should all be proud of. There's a song in The Faith We Sing hymnal called As a Fire is Meant for Burning. There's a line in that song that says "As a fire is meant for burning with a bright and warming flame, so the church is meant for mission, giving glory to God's name. Not to preach our creeds or customs, but to build a bridge of care, we join hands across the nations, finding neighbors everywhere." I really think Wesley as a whole embodies that and we as a group know the importance of sharing our love with others. In a time where the news and media show us all of the hate in our world, it is important to spread love and that's what we do here. I am very thankful to be able to say that.

Something else I know this church has taught us is what it means to have faith. I used to think that having faith meant believing that everything would work out perfectly or exactly the way I want it to. I thought it meant believing in God and believing that he would never let anything bad happen. But, over time, I have learned that that is not true. There will be sorrow and sadness and hard times in your life, but having faith is knowing that things happen for a reason and that God has a plan for each and every one of us. And, above all, I've learned that having faith is important. I know that all of you know this, too, because a very strong woman once told us "if you have your faith, you have everything." I hope we all remember that, and no matter what happens in our lives I hope that we never lose our faith.

One other very important thing I have learned from being a part of this church is the meaning of family. Typically, a family member is thought to be a blood relative or someone you live with. What this church has taught me is that family means so much more than that. Family, to me, means those who have seen you at both high and low points in your life, yet continue to love and support you unconditionally. Today I consider the members of this church a family because of the way they never fail to love and support each other, especially in times of need. That is something to be grateful for. Every Sunday we announce our celebrations so that we can thank God for them. We raise our hands to share recent birthdays, anniversaries, and graduations. But nobody ever raises their hand to celebrate that they are a member of Wesley church and that they get to spend their Sunday morning here as a part of this family. So today I

think that we should all take time to thank God for blessing us with this community. The values we have from being a part of this church we will carry with us forever. Life is always changing, it changes every day. Yet as life continues to change, this church, you guys here, have remained the same. You are a constant in my life and for that, I am forever grateful.