



# WESLEY WEAVINGS

November 2022

## Exploring, Engaging, & Embodying An Active Faith in God Celebrating “Our New Normal & 60 Years in the Wesley House”

**Max’s Musings...** As we enter the fall semester of 2022, we are so very thankful for the ministry that we were able to provide during the COVID restrictions of the past two years and the phenomenal ability of our ministry to meet the ever-changing needs of students and the larger William & Mary Community. This is possible because of our talented and dedicated student leadership, the gifts, talents, and passions of our administrative assistant and house manager, a dedicated group of house residents, and the rebuilding of our Wesley Foundation Board of Directors. We also recognize the importance of the Wesley House to our ministry and its role as a “safe-haven” for William & Mary students. As many of you are aware, the Wesley House was purchased to support our ministry sixty years ago! We are also grateful for the financial support provided by our alumni, friends of Wesley, and our local churches. We are “restarting” the Wesley Weavings as a means of keeping you informed of this continued partnership and a way of maintaining our accountability and gratitude to you. This edition summarizes our response to COVID, introduces our Wesley Team, highlights the programs we are offering to our students, our college community, and provides a focus on the Wesley House and the Residential Program.

Peace,

### Inside this Edition

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## A Vital Ministry in Any Circumstance

*By Max Blalock*

I could not be prouder of our students, our board, and our community. Because of the amazing support and commitment of so many, we live out God's call just as powerfully, no matter what the circumstances. All of this is possible because we are clear on who God is calling us to be, and we continue to follow God's vision for us.

Wesley continues to be a vital ministry and lifeline for many students during the pandemic, with a variety of ministries, all focused on meeting students where they are, and keeping them as safe as possible. With all our ministries, Wesley continues to have thousands of interactions with students, as well as faculty and staff, each year.

Since January 2020, the Wesley House has continuously provided in providing housing for students. When the campus is open, we are housing the students who have applied, interviewed, and been accepted to live at Wesley. When campus is closed to residents, we are full of students who do not have a safe place to live with the dorms shut down.

With these students, we are not only providing housing, but groceries, transportation, and vital community for folks who do not have a network of support. When there are more students than we can house, we network with trusted folks in the community to find them housing. But don't take my word for it, listen to what one student, new to Wesley, has to say:

"I was struck by the warm, welcoming, unconditionally accepting atmosphere of the group. I was impressed by how meetings managed to blend lighthearted fun and friendship and serious conversations, and I left them all feeling both joyful and contemplative. I was also really moved by how the Wesley House functions as a campus pantry and as a sanctuary for students who don't have anywhere else to go. Above all, I really liked Wesley's attitude of striving to do good without being self-congratulatory, always exploring the systemic roots of issues, embracing Christian values of doing good, while examining how Christianity has been used for nefarious purposes, and emphasizing "loving your neighbor" while taking a stand against injustice and discrimination."

## Meet Jess Raymond



Jess Raymond joined the Wesley Foundation in April 2022 as the Administrative Assistant and Wesley House Manager. In this role she provides administrative support for the Director (Campus Minister), clerical support for the Board of Director's finance and development committees, and provides general operational support for the Wesley House. Jess brings outstanding talent and expertise to our ministry.

Jess has a Master of Arts in Education from Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University, where her field of study was in College Student Personnel Services and Counseling. Jess has spent 25 years in Collegiate Residence Life and Property Management. Some of her previous positions were as the Assistant Director of Housing and Residential Life at the University of Central Florida, and as the Assistant Director for Community Development for the William & Mary, Office of Residence Life. As this is a part-time position, she is also the Office Administrator and Legal Advisor for Raymond & Raymond, Attorneys at Law, in Williamsburg.

Jess joined the Wesley Foundation Board in 2019 and was a founding member of the Food Exchange. Everyone is excited to have Jess on-board and greatly appreciates the leadership and expertise she has brought to the ministry and community.

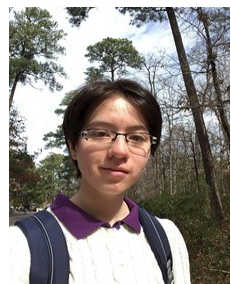
## The 2022 Student Leadership Team

Our Student Leadership Teams are elected by the Wesley students in December of every year and serve from January to December to ensure a smooth transition from one academic year to the next. The team works with the campus minister to plan all activities and programs, and then takes the lead in conducting each event. We are truly blessed with a talented and energetic team that began in January of 2022 - please meet the team:



**Grace Nelson - President** (*any pronouns*)

Hey y'all! I am from Stafford County, Virginia and I am a senior at William & Mary majoring in Biology and minoring in French. This is my third year in Wesley leadership after I served two terms as Small Group Chair. I am passionate about making Wesley a space for us to have a community we can be proud of, that is inclusive, safe, and reflects our mission statement.



**Annamarie Warnke - Service** (*they/she*)

Hi! I'm a sophomore from Delaware majoring in Data Science and minoring in Educational Studies. I enjoyed helping organize our first Fall Retreat since COVID, and I am looking forward to continuing to coordinate service efforts on campus in conjunction with other campus organizations



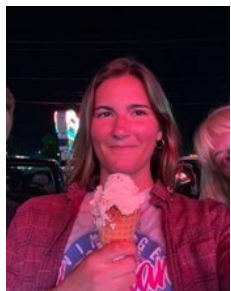
**Kat Johnson - Fellowship** (*she/her*)

I'm a junior from Raleigh, North Carolina studying German and Integrative Conservation. I love hosting fun fellowship events to bring the community together and take a break from the stress of school.



**Bennett Snyder - Small Group** (*he/him*)

Hi there! I'm a sophomore double majoring in History and Government from Roanoke, Virginia. I love being the small group chair - the community and conversation we build during our discussions is unparalleled. In my free time, I enjoy taking walks around campus, eating white cheddar cheez-it's, and adding more Christmas lights to my bedroom.



**Elizabeth Lundy - Communications** (*she/her*)

This is my first year on the Leadership Team! I am a senior majoring in Government from Arlington, Virginia. As Communications Chair I manage our email and social media accounts. If you have any fun memes please email them to [wesley@email.wm.edu](mailto:wesley@email.wm.edu)!

## A Great Start Sunday, Sep 4, 2022

### Wesley Cookout - Paws for Stress - S'Mores with S'Methodists

We got off to a great start with our first large group event of the semester. You could say we combined three of our most popular programs into one event. The evening started with the leadership team doing the grilling of hamburgers and hot dogs and a very large group participating in the dinner, followed by an introduction to the leadership team and the Wesley ministry program. Immediately following this there was a surprise visit by the "Paws-for-Stress" team. All then ventured outside to meet the dogs and handlers and to have S'Mores with S'Methodists!



### A Wesley Week!

There is a lot going on every day at Wesley—however the focus of this article is to provide a brief review of each of the regularly scheduled programs or events. Here is a brief overview:

**Large Group** - Sunday Evening Dinner and Worship. Every Sunday we have a dinner at 5pm and a large group meeting at 6pm in the Fellowship Hall.

**Small Group** - Every Monday at 7:00 pm we have a small group meeting held in the Wesley House Living Room. The focus is a book study/discussion. The book this semester is *Abuelita Faith* by Kat Armas.

**Fellowship Events** are held on Thursday's at 7pm and Saturday's at 8pm. The Thursday events are "craft oriented" and the Saturday evenings focus on a movie.

**Chill Coffee Hours** are held throughout the semester on Wednesdays from 11-3 in the Wesley living room! Come enjoy a hot beverage and a quiet place to study.

**Food Exchange:** The W&M Food Exchange operates out of the Wesley House lower level. The hours are Mondays 1-3, Tuesdays 4:30-6:30, and Saturdays 3-5. The Food Exchange is part of a larger Food for All student group that focuses on food insecurity. From January through June this year we had over 200 visits to the Food Exchange and provided over 2,500 meals through this ministry.

**Service/Missions:** There are special events throughout the year that are sponsored by Wesley that focus on service/mission trips. We also participate in William & Mary and Williamsburg UMC sponsored community service projects.





## Wesley Homecoming Tailgate October 5th



This year's Homecoming Celebration was a tailgate held from 11am to 3pm. We were pleased to host our students, parents, and alumni. We would like to extend a special thanks to Karen Robins and the Wesley Board for providing an excellent assortment of food and snacks. Our plan is to have our traditional "Open House and Tailgate" next year. As in previous years, we hope to include a pregame tailgate, a webcast of the game on the "big screen," and a wide assortment of photo albums and memorabilia and opportunity for our alumni, friends, and family members to enjoy time for fellowship.



## W&M Wesley Alumni News



The Wesley Weavings was established as an alumni news letter. We would like to continue this tradition. Starting this Spring we will solicit alumni updates and news that can be shared. We would also ask that our alumni use the Wesley Foundation Facebook Page.

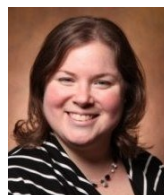
The link to the page can be found on our web site ([www.wmwesley.org](http://www.wmwesley.org)). You can also find Wesley Weavings from 2018 and earlier on our alumni web page link.

## Alumni on the Wesley Board

Our Wesley Board of Directors enjoys the leadership provided by three alumni that were student leaders in Wesley. Rev. Meghan Roth Clayton ('08 ) the associate pastor of Williamsburg UMC serves as the WUMC board liaison. Lauren Garrett ('02), is the W&M Director of Student Transition Engagement Programs. Lauren will assist the board in the areas of college and community outreach. Dr. Marni Robins ('15) serves as our secretary. Marni is an Optometrist for Eastern Eye Associates in Williamsburg



Meghan



Lauren



Marni



## Wesley Fall Break Mission/Service Trip October 13-15, 2022

We took our first Mission/Service Project trip since 2019! For the first part of the trip we focused on faith and service, and joined the Virginia Tech Wesley Foundation to clean and maintain the FUN123 trailer. We organized their library, scrubbed bathrooms, and sanded and painted cabinets, among other projects. The improved environment will help the middle and high school students in the trailer park community have a much safer and more welcoming environment for tutoring and mentoring.

The other focus was on faith and activism, as we focused on the Mountain Valley Pipeline (MVP) and the efforts by local community leaders that are calling for an end to the project that has faced resistance since it's start. The pipeline is intended to carry methane gas from West Virginia to North Carolina. We had the opportunity to meet with community leaders, including the pastor and our own Grace McGehee at Newport-Mt. Olivet UMC and gain a better understanding of their concerns. The MVP threatens public health, clean air, and the region's water and land. MVP would contribute to climate change at a time when we should be fighting it.



Our Team outside the FUN123 Trailer



Organizing Books



Meeting with Local Leaders

### The House Residents' Program

During the COVID pandemic, the restrictions only allowed five residents during the semester. However, since the campus first shut down in March of 2020, Wesley has housed students who had no safe home to go to, whenever the campus shut down. This means that from January 2020 until August 2022, there was never a time that there weren't students living at Wesley. The Wesley House and community became a place of hope, healing, and safety for students who would not have had it otherwise. Although we can house seven residents, this semester we have six residents in order to ensure the safety of one of our residents who is particularly vulnerable to COVID. Our residential program is designed to be a leadership development and service program. In addition to creating a powerful, welcoming community here at Wesley, our residents work to provide hospitality, care, and community for all students who arrive at the house, especially those in need.



# The Wesley House Today



**House Front View**



**House Rear View**



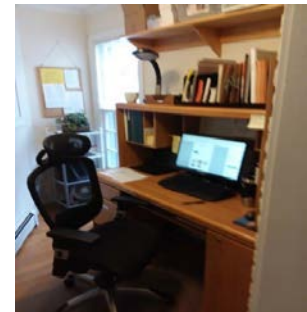
**House Deck View**



**Residents Living Room**



**Campus Minister's Office**



**Administrative Assistant's Office**



**Kitchen**



**Fellowship Hall**



**Food Exchange**



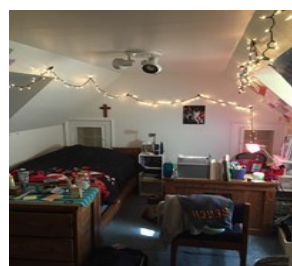
**Double above Office**



**Double above Living Room**



**Single - The Cloister**



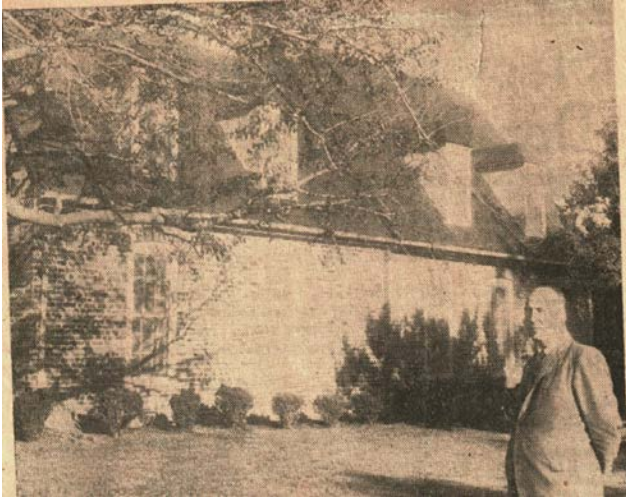
**Single above Fellowship Hall**



**Single in Basement**

# 60 Years at the Wesley House

October 1962 article from the *Williamsburg Journal Tribune*, “Wesley Foundation Buys Home On Jamestown Road” (article excerpt)



The Reverend Rudolph Benesh, director of the Wesley Foundation, announced the purchase of an eight room brick house at 526 Jamestown Road for its future fellowship hall and lodging for students. The actual purchase was made by the Wesley Foundation at Virginia Methodist, Inc., the statewide parent organization. Rev. Benesh stated that he has been looking for a house for over two years and that the location couldn't be better. The ministry will move from their current location in the Education building at Williamsburg Methodist Church. Rev. Benesh also announced plans for a \$25,000 addition of a multipurpose room in two years. This room will have expanded kitchen facilities, a projection booth, and a stage. It will also be

used as a chapel. The foundation, in attempting to serve the religious needs of the students, has a full program which includes discussion and fellowship groups and religious services.

## Wesley House Management and Wesley Partner Support

The Virginia Annual Conference owns the property, however the Wesley Foundation has the responsibility to manage the property and to fund property maintenance and upgrades. The Wesley Foundation is deeply appreciative of the support provided by the United Methodist Virginia Annual Conference over the past 60 years. As we move forward to the “next 60 years,” the Wesley Foundation has been tasked to ensure our property is financially self-sustaining through the use of property-related income, and annual fundraising campaigns. The funds received from resident room rental and parking lot fees cover the annual property related expenses such as utilities, landscaping and general maintenance. However, our three year program for property repair and upgrades will require a combination of property fundraising (WF Property Endowment Fund) and volunteer work projects. We will be looking for Wesley Partner support to complete these projects. A summary of the projects is shown below:

### Major Repairs-Upgrades - Contracts

Parking Lot Repair/Resurfacing (\$33,480)  
Exterior Building Work, doors, windows (\$24,000)  
Resident Room Modifications (\$10,000)  
Plumbing, Heating & A/C (\$15,000)  
Fellowship Hall Expansion (\$70,000)

### Self-Help Projects

Brick Sidewalk Repair—Deck Repair  
Interior/Exterior Trim Painting  
Landscaping/Bamboo Removal  
Exterior Signs/mailbox/lights  
New Rugs  
Kitchen Appliance Replacements





## Supporting the Wesley Foundation

Please take the challenge and become a Wesley Partner. Our partners sustain the campus ministry through prayers, advocacy, participation, and financial support. The following presents a brief review of how you can help:

Prayers: Pray for our campus ministry to nurture and enrich the lives of students by being a service of both local pastoral care and mission outreach, that the Wesley Foundation will answer our call to witness to God's graceful activity in the world of higher education, by being an educational partner that continues to shape the quality of individuals and community life to foster a more just and human society.

Advocacy: You can advocate for our and other campus ministries based on the information and guidelines from the "Global Board of Higher Education and Campus Ministry: What Your Local Church Can Do." You can download these guidelines at ([Higher\\_Education.pdf \(wesleyboardresources.org\)](#))

Participation: If you live in the Williamsburg or Hampton Roads area, you can fill vacant Wesley Board positions, support property self-help projects, or support our student Sunday Night dinners.

Financial Support: The Wesley operating budget is dependent on donations from alumni, friends, area UMC churches and church groups. A general donation supports funding for campus ministry administration, student programs, campus outreach, and community service programs. Specific donations may also be designated to support the Campus Food Exchange and the Wesley Foundation Property Endowment Fund.

To donate on-line by credit card. Go to [www.wmwesley.org/donate](http://www.wmwesley.org/donate)

Or mail a check to:

The Wesley Foundation,  
526 Jamestown Road,  
Williamsburg, VA 23185-4044

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