

HOLDING OUR HERITAGE,  
REACHING TOWARD OUR FUTURE

Metropolitan Memorial United Methodist Church  
2003 Annual Commitment Campaign

DO ALL THE GOOD YOU CAN,  
IN ALL THE PLACES YOU CAN,  
TO ALL THE PEOPLE YOU CAN.

*John Wesley*  
*Founder of the Methodist Church*  
*(1703-91)*



## *A Faithful Witness*

**A HOME FOR MANY** Founded by our denomination in 1852, Metropolitan Memorial was envisioned as a "commodious" house of worship for Methodists throughout the country. In the 150 years since that original vision was imagined and brought to life, the church has been home to Presidents and laborers, to soldiers and peacemakers, to strangers and friends, to people of all races, heritages, and backgrounds.

**PROVIDING FOR THE FUTURE** As we mark our 150th year as the national church, we find ourselves looking both to our history and to our future. This church body has responded with boldness when faced with the difficult challenges of a young nation. Regardless of the challenge, it has been a place where a belief in what could be took precedence over what was. As those who have gone before us, we now step boldly into the future, guided by God's love and our unique heritage, to face the inevitable challenges — known and yet unknown — of our time. As God has asked much of our forebears, much will be asked of us.







## *Belief in What Could Be*

**A BEGINNING** Construction of the first church was completed in 1869. President-elect and Mrs. Grant joined 2,000 others for the dedication of that first home at 4 1/2 and C Avenues. It was located just a few blocks from the Capitol where it would fulfill its purpose to give strength and guidance to those away from home serving our nation.

**A GROWING NEED** As the 20th century brought growth to Washington, D.C., and an ever-growing role for the United States on the world stage, it also brought a wider vision to Metropolitan. When the church moved to its present location adjacent to Methodism's seat of learning, The American University, the new grounds allowed the church to expand — a necessity as its membership grew to its highest levels in the years after World War II.

**MORE THAN A BUILDING** While the church campus has grown and changed during its first 150 years, the congregation's dedication to community ministry has not. The early years found our church reaching out to rapidly growing immigrant communities, providing religious training and teaching daily living skills. In recognition of the needs of a growing capital city, the congregation helped to found several local institutions, including the Methodist Home for the Aged, The American University, and Sibley Memorial Hospital. Members of Metropolitan were also vital to the establishment of Wesley Theological Seminary. Responding to the turmoil of the community around it, the late 60s found Metropolitan reaching out to reconnect with the city through programs to help bridge the gap between the races. Activism and service continue today as we respond to our city and the world.



## *Serving One Another*

**WITH PRAISE AND THANKS** Inspiring, faith-led services are a Metropolitan hallmark. With a commitment to a breadth of worship styles, our services attract a diverse congregation. The early service has emerged as a relaxed setting for reflection and worship incorporating contemporary and blended music led by our intergenerational Dayspring Choir. Children participate in a range of activities, including a special children's message. Based on rich connections with the traditions of the Methodist Church, our later service embraces liturgical traditions in a setting that incorporates formal liturgy, chancel and handbell choirs, soloists, instrumentalists and organ.

**STRENGTH OF DIVERSITY BRINGS US VITALITY** Our 150th Anniversary celebration of Methodist music blended the inspiring, traditional hymns of Charles and John Wesley with joyful praise music written by a current member. First in the nation, we hosted an interfaith conference led by internationally acclaimed Christian composer Mark Hayes, offering a cross section of denominational churches the opportunity to explore their unique worship voices in dialogue with one another.

**INVITING OTHERS TO OUR HOME** In Christian hospitality, we open our church home. The children of Uganda brought God's love to us through joyful songs and dance. Hosting the Washington Women's Chorus and Washington Children's Chorus, we foster rich connections in our community. "For an Unheard Voice" united six area choirs to raise up the plight of those unable to speak for themselves in our society. With The American University, we continue to broaden our offerings of spiritual expression through development of concerts, recitals, and The Bruce Poynter Lecture series.

**COMMON GROUND** Study and discussion of the Bible, theology, and world issues provide common ground to experience and discover our faith. Classes and special activities teach children the stories of the Bible and create an environment through which they can experience the love of God. Youth activities provide opportunities for worship, community service, learning, and fellowship.

Through series such as "Belief in God in an Age of Science" and the "Israeli-Palestinian Conflict," adults take part in discussions that help to nurture faith. Disciple Bible Study Groups, Christian Believers Class, and small-group studies allow for in-depth study, reflection, and discussion.



## *Serving Those Around Us*

**SERVANTHOOD** Christ's ministry reached out to his disciples, to the rich and to the poor, to his dearly beloved and to strangers. Through diverse ministries, we strive to follow his example.

We create a community of faith for one another as we celebrate life's passages, nurture the troubled, and care for the sick. By delivering handmade blankets for newborns, visiting the homebound, ministering to the elderly, and listening to those troubled or in distress, we live out our faith in service to one another.

God teaches us to open our doors to those outside our church family, saying "just as you did it to the least of these who are members of my family, you did it to me." Committed to living those words, our members help to feed the hungry at soup kitchens and Bread for the City as well as house the homeless in our church building. We work with Christmas in April and the Appalachia Service Project to guarantee affordable, decent housing. Where we see needs go unmet, we seek to help through clothing drives, visiting programs to local mental health service providers, and in other ways.

**THE WORLD AROUND US** Global concerns are also a vital part of Metropolitan's mission. The church sponsors an annual scholarship at Africa University in Zimbabwe. Through the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), we reach out to troubled areas throughout the world, places at home and abroad affected by natural disaster, war, or violence. Planning is underway for Metropolitan's first overseas mission trip to Russia as part of the Volunteers in Mission program.

**SOCIAL JUSTICE** Metropolitan Memorial is committed to challenging injustice and dealing with the root causes of social ills. We were a founding congregation in the Washington Interfaith Network (WIN), a coalition of churches working to improve housing, education, and public safety in the District of Columbia. Our Amnesty International "Freedom Writers" actively seek release of the unjustly imprisoned around the world.





## *The Assurance of Things Hoped For*

**THE MUSTARD SEED PROJECT** Long ago our denomination created Metropolitan as the national church. With thoughtful intention, our forebears created an inspiring, resourceful institution dedicated to scattering the word of Jesus Christ. Now, as the community and society changes around us, we must define what it means to be the national church in our times and beyond.

With existing ministries as a strong foundation, we now engage in dialogue about how to expand and strengthen them. The Mustard Seed Project — a new congregational initiative — seems an appropriate name for this hopeful and exciting exploration of God’s plan for us. While challenging us to define our church’s identity as the “national church,” we are also challenged to give the very best of all that we have to God. Together, we strive to be a church bold in its actions; faithful to the example of Christ and his unwavering love for those around him; and committed to the diversity of our denomination, our city, and our world.

As we seek to live into that vision, we explore the many ways to create it. The possibilities include fostering closer, stronger relationships with Wesley Theological Seminary and The American University, becoming a Global Missions Partner, and building Metropolitan’s Foundation through the Reredos Society.

We remain committed to our core mission of offering powerful worship experiences, building on our foundation of worship expressions through music and the arts; sponsoring seminars and programs relating to Christian life in contemporary society; growing our Christian education program so that we inspire and nurture adults, children, and young people; teaching and modeling both the importance of Tithing but also the importance of living within our means; and, importantly, expanding our community of members.

**WITH GOD, ALL IS POSSIBLE** In recognition of the unbounded promise available to us, you are invited to make your annual commitment. We ask you to adopt the biblical standard of Tithing — 10 percent of your income — as the level of your gift. For many, that may be a significant increase. But, we ask you to reflect on your many gifts from God and then give back a portion of what God has entrusted to you — what, in fact, already belongs to God.