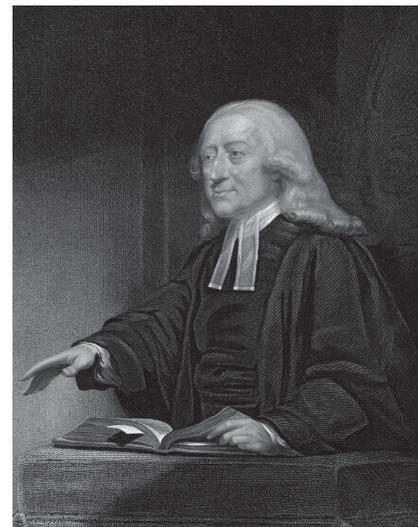


## The Wesleyan Way

### 2023 Lenten Study for Minnesota United Methodists: Week 3

*Thank you for journeying through Lent with the Minnesota Conference Cabinet. One of the values we seek to live out as people called United Methodists in Minnesota is to be “grounded in Wesleyan theology.” With that in mind, each of us has selected one sermon from John Wesley’s standard sermons, sought to recap the sermon in our own words, and then offered our reflection on why we believe the sermon’s message matters to us today. For each week, we have provided a scripture verse for the sermon, a 10- to 15-minute video, a link to the original sermon, some questions for reflection, and a hymn composed by Charles Wesley that we believe beautifully illustrates the splendor of Wesleyan theology in lyric.*



#### **Wesley’s Sermon: “The Circumcision of the Heart”**

Preached at St. Mary’s Oxford, before the university, on January, 1, 1733

**Wesley’s Sermon Outline:** Near the beginning of each of John Wesley’s sermons he generally provides an outline of what he seeks to answer or accomplish in his message. This sermon’s outline is:

- I. Circumcision of the heart is holiness
- II. Circumcision of the heart is evident through:
  - a. Humility
  - b. Faith
  - c. Hope
  - d. Charity/Love

**Opening Prayer:** God of our hearts and minds, meet us in this study to lay bare our emotions and to engage our intellect. May this time together break us open to inner transformation. Lord, I want to be a Christian... Lord, I want to be more loving... Lord, I want to be more holy... Lord, I want to be like Jesus... In my heart! Amen.

**Scripture Text:** Read all of Romans 2 for context, but Wesley’s key verse is:

“Rather, a person is a Jew who is one inwardly, and real circumcision is a matter of the heart—it is spiritual and not literal. Such a person receives praise not from others but from God.”

– Romans 2:29 (NRSV)

**Watch Sermon Recap & Reflection** by Rev. Dan Johnson,  
Outgoing Superintendent of the Twin Cities District

#### **Questions for Reflection:**

- How does Wesley’s image of a circumcised heart speak into the polarization of his day? Into the polarization of our day?
- Humility, faith, hope and love: Which of these characteristics of a circumcised heart is evident in your life? Which characteristic is elusive?
- What life disciplines are important for you in developing a healthy spiritual heart?

Scan this QR code with your smartphone camera for quick access.

**Watch Today’s Sermon  
Recap and Reflection**

<https://vimeo.com/801389502>



**Hymn:** “O for a Heart to Praise Our God”

**Close with Prayer**

**For Those Wanting to Go Deeper**

**Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript**

**Did you know?** John Wesley wrote one of the all-time bestselling medical texts.

Wesley was deeply convicted that God is concerned about our earthly life as well as our heavenly one. To that end, he wrote a medical text for the everyday person titled *Primitive Physick*. The book detailed the current knowledge about home remedies and went through 32 editions, making it one of the most widely read books in England.

Many of Wesley’s cures and tips on healthy living remain widely accepted. While some of his advice was wishful thinking, the most important part of his philosophy was his insistence on continual observation to support hypotheses. Wesley boldly questioned modern doctors — how they sometimes treated humans like machines; that much of their “medicine” lacked merit and they lacked evidence to support its efficacy. By the same token, some of Wesley’s beliefs certainly needed more supportive evidence. For instance, Wesley recommended holding a puppy against the stomach to cure stomach pain. He offered dried and powdered toad pills for asthma. He also enjoyed regular dips in cold bathwater, thought to be a near panacea. It sounds strange to us, but many leading minds during Wesley’s time, espoused these sorts of folk remedies. And honestly, who doesn’t feel better after holding a puppy?

**Listen to Today’s Hymn**

[https://youtu.be/OmEMCMa\\_-4E](https://youtu.be/OmEMCMa_-4E)



**Read John Wesley’s Original Sermon Manuscript**

<https://tinyurl.com/circumcision-heart>

