



John Wesley Society

An endowment and planned giving recognition
program for the local church



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What Is The John Wesley Society?

The Board of Directors of the California-Nevada United Methodist Foundation established the John Wesley Society to honor United Methodists in the California-Nevada Annual Conference who have remembered their United Methodist church or any United Methodist ministry by naming it in a planned gift. Planned gifts may be current or deferred, and include: bequests through a will, trusts, charitable gift annuities, life insurance policies, pension plans, IRAs, securities, real estate, cash and/or other assets. Gifts may be made to an endowment or to a current ministry.

The John Wesley Society is not about us. It is about supporting the work of God through enduring gifts to United Methodist ministries, and sharing the joy of participating in God's transforming work.

The society is named after John Wesley because Wesley lived his life as a steward of the gospel; in his ministry priorities, in his use of time, and in his use of money. He demonstrated what it meant to "gain all you can, save all you can, give all you can;" in a way that led to overflowing generosity to the poor and advocacy on their behalf.

The John Wesley Society makes no distinctions about the amount of a planned gift. Anyone who has made a planned gift to a United Methodist ministry is eligible for membership. Likewise, the intent of the society is to honor all persons, whether they have made their gift through the Foundation or through any other organization.

Any member of a United Methodist local church or agency is invited to create a John Wesley Society chapter with their unique name and traditions. The Foundation provides a John Wesley Society lapel pin and a certificate, signed by the Bishop for the donor. Simply contact the Foundation Services Coordinator, Angela Slaton with the names of the recipients. Then a presentation can be made during a worship service or other appropriate event.

An example of a JWS booklet can be found on our Foundation website (www.canvumf.org under *John Wesley Society*). If you have any questions about the John Wesley Society, please don't hesitate to contact us toll free at 888-789-7374 or by e-mail: umf@canvumf.org for more information.



Why Have a Recognition Society in the Church?

Would the fact of a recognition society in the church lead to a sense of competition or of elitism? The answer to such a question is a resounding “No!” In fact, a recognition society for planned givers can:

1. Strengthen the current life of the congregation by building an atmosphere of generosity, openness and trust;
2. Encourage the resolve of potential planned givers by reminding them of the option of planned giving for their beloved church community; and
3. Affirm the joy of current planned givers in their having decided to give to the future ministries of the church.

In a world filled with busyness and constantly competing organizations, it is easy for even the most committed church members to forget about the possibility of endowing their annual church pledge or of making a planned gift to God’s work through the church. Providing a periodic in-person reminder helps them follow-through on what many members have intended to do all along. Such appropriate publicity motivates church members and friends to respond in a way that fits their own Christian values and involvements, suited to their unique situations.

As for those who have already made a planned gift, a recognition society in the congregation gives them the opportunity to witness to good stewardship and to their hope for the church’s future life and ministry. Such a decision is not a source of individual pride, but rather expresses their joy in giving, offers supportive relationships with others who have made similar decisions, and encourages them to continue to keep Christian ministries a priority in their wills or estate plans.

Recognition does not have to be intrusive, either to the donor or to the congregation. A simple form, on which donors can inform the church about an estate provision, is a useful way to formally establish society membership. (As an example, see the application form on this web page under “John Wesley Society Materials.”) The form invites donors to give specific local church leaders whatever information they are comfortable in providing. It makes it easy for donors to grant permission for their names to be included on the list of society members, and also has a box to check if they prefer to remain anonymous.

Likewise, recognizing planned givers in the church does not need to be complicated. Church leaders may choose one day a year (such as Memorial Sunday or All Saints Day) to acknowledge both past and present planned givers and share in a litany of thanksgiving for those who support God’s work through enduring gifts. Or the society might be lifted up each time a new planned gift is made to the church, all within the context of worship.

We have been helped greatly by having the Conference (Foundation) support and recognition of membership in the John Wesley Society.

Since the Conference (Foundation) established the John Wesley Society and honored two members from the Novato UMC, we have taken every opportunity to tastefully use John Wesley Society honorees at any special NUMC Endowment Fund Celebration.

We will be inducting several new members into the Society as we begin our annual Endowment Emphasis in November. At that time, we are able to highlight planned giving by wills and bequests, and end-of-year giving.

We also note membership in the Society with a star on our Endowment Plaques.

We appreciate the support we have received from all of you at the Conference level.

Jack Rothe

Endowment Committee Chair,
Novato United Methodist Church

The John Wesley Society is featured once a year with articles in the "Cornerstone" [local church newsletter] and/or a luncheon honoring the members.

We will have a luncheon on April 30, ['06] with Mark Parsons speaking. We will recognize new members and old, as a way of lifting up the First UMC Endowment Program and planned giving opportunities. . . .

Rev. Bill E. Beck

Endowment Committee Chair,
Modesto First United Methodist Church

The Los Altos United Methodist Church has had a John Wesley Society for several years. Currently, there are 76 members of the JWS at LAUMC. We recognize members of the JWS in a variety of ways.

Members are inducted into the John Wesley Society when the Endowment Committee learns that someone has named LAUMC or any other Methodist agency as a beneficiary of a planned gift, or when someone has made a gift to the Endowment Fund. The formal induction is done at a dinner the Endowment Committee hosts for all members of the JWS at LAUMC. We have a recognition dinner every two years. At the dinner, new inductees are presented by the certificate signed by Bishop Shamana and presented with a John Wesley Society lapel pin.

Periodically, we place an article in the "Good News" [local church newsletter] about the John Wesley Society or have some item in the Sunday bulletin. We believe that the John Wesley Society has been beneficial in helping us to increase the amount in our Endowment Fund.

If you would like some other information about our JWS, please let me know.

Harvey Dixon

Endowment Committee Chair,
Los Altos United Methodist Church

Local John Wesley Society Chapters



- *Alum Rock United Methodist Church*
- *Castro Valley United Methodist Church*
- *Grass Valley Sierra Pines United Methodist Church*
- *Los Altos United Methodist Church*
- *Modesto First United Methodist Church*
- *Novato United Methodist Church*
- *Orinda St. Mark's United Methodist Church*
- *Palo Alto First United Methodist Church*
- *Paradise United Methodist Church*
- *Walnut Creek First United Methodist Church*
- *Walnut Creek Tice Valley United Methodist Church*
- *Watsonville United Methodist Church*



California-Nevada
United Methodist
FOUNDATION

APPLICATION FOR JOHN WESLEY SOCIETY

Name of Church:

Person to Contact:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone:

Fax:

Email:

NEW MEMBER INFORMATION

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone:

Email:

Have you spoken with this person regarding the John Wesley Society and this application? Yes No

Has this person agreed to be publicly recognized as a JWS Member? Yes No

Please tell us something about this donor's planned giving intentions for the church:

Name:

Address:

City:

State:

ZIP Code:

Phone:

Email:

Have you spoken with this person regarding the John Wesley Society and this application? Yes No

Has this person agreed to be publicly recognized as a JWS Member? Yes No

Please tell us something about this donor's planned giving intentions for the church:

FOR OFFICE USE ONLY

Entered into database

Certificate

Pin

***Please use additional sheets for additional nominations**



Certificate of Appreciation

John Doe

is hereby honored with an honorary membership in the

John Wesley Society

of the California-Nevada United Methodist Foundation in recognition of support of a local church, special ministry, or church institution through provision by Will, Trust, Charitable Gift Annuities, Life Insurance Policies, Pension Plans, Securities, Real Estate, Cash and/or Other Assets.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Warner H. Brown, Jr.", written over a horizontal line.

Bishop Warner H. Brown, Jr., Chair, Board of Directors

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Susan Peters", written over a horizontal line.

Susan Peters, Executive Director

Litany

Dedication for Members of John Wesley Society



[Invite members of the John Wesley Society to come forward and stand before the congregation.]

Gracious, giving God, You have blessed us with every gift, and especially with the gift of Jesus, who came that we all might have abundant and eternal life.

We give You our hearts and our lives! We seek to follow You through Jesus Christ and to extend his mission by the way that we live.

We give You our passion, our concerns, and our resources – the first and the best of what You have entrusted to us. We also seek to use the rest of what You have given according to Your priorities for all Your creation.

We dedicate ourselves to You, O God, that we may embody Your love for future generations as well as our own.

Thank You, God, for these members of the John Wesley Society, whom we recognize before you now, as those who have generously remembered this congregation or another United Methodist ministry by naming them in their wills, trusts or other endowed gifts:

[List their names and present them to the congregation]

Wesley preached the Gospel and put his faith into action. He reached out to those in need, leaving a legacy to transform the lives of people in generations to come. In the same way, *these persons* have committed themselves to Your work through the gift of their resources for ministries beyond this lifetime.

We pray for *these persons* before us now, who serve in Your name on behalf of those who will come after us, as a gift forever to Your work through the Church.

May *their* gifts plant and nurture Your Gospel in future generations. May they continue to be a model of stewardship that others may follow in faith. This we pray through Your grace shown us in Jesus the Christ. Amen.

[Other members of the John Wesley Society are invited forward to greet them, along with the pastor and Lay Leader of the church. They receive their John Wesley Society pins and certificates.]

Prayer

*For Worship When
John Wesley Society
Members Are
Recognized*



Glowing Cloud and Pillar of Fire, You raise up in each age leaders with a burning vision to guide Your people toward the land of promise.

We remember before You now those ancestors who have gone before us, leaving us a legacy of faith. *[The worship leader or congregation may say aloud specific names.]* They have given us a bedrock of values and resources with which to serve You in this present lifetime.

We thank You also for these among us who have committed themselves to sharing Your vision with those who will come after us. We consecrate to you these members of the John Wesley Society among that number, that their lives may express the fullness of life with You, not only for us now but also for generations to come.

This we pray in Jesus' name. Amen.