



DIMENSIONS

CONNECTING ELEMENTS OF WELL-BEING

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Gratitude and Prayer



ASK A PROFESSIONAL

Rev. Leigh Goodrich

First United Methodist,
New England Conference

“Gratitude is happiness doubled by wonder.”—G.K. CHESTERTON

This time of harvest and thanksgiving is a perfect time to put effort into the practice of Gratitude.

This is not the offhand, compulsory “thanks” when someone gets out of your path, or a waiter delivers your coffee, but

the intentional act of sincere, deeply felt gratitude. A practice of gratitude works hand in hand with prayer, one that we attend to throughout the day, giving thanks for waking in the morning, at mealtimes, and counting our blessings “instead of sheep” (a practice made popular by lyricist Irving Berlin).

Gratitude plays an important role in both our psychological and physical well-being. Creating a gratitude journal is one of the best ways to improve our emotional and physical health. When we are thankful, we make healthier food choices, engage in better self-care and have improved moods, energy, optimism and empathy.



Practice Gratitude Daily

- **Say a prayer of thanks for your safe travels.**
- **Thank God for nourishing food and the resources to buy them.**
- **Put thankfulness posts online—**it might be anything from the weather to your favorite pet.
- **Look around—give thanks** for the trees, the sky, the sun, the birds, and the sounds of life near and far.
- **Offer thanks for your place of worship,** and the many people who make it a vibrant space.

SPOTLIGHT

Sleep—Important for Your Well-Being



Over the past few years, research has shown how important getting enough sleep is to your overall well-being. For adults, experts recommend 7-9 hours per night. If you are getting less, it can negatively affect your physical health and safety through high blood pressure and diabetes. It can also affect your emotional health with strong mood swings and poor judgement.

One way to improve your sleep is to remember to be grateful. A research article in *Psychology Today* found that people who wrote down what they were grateful for before going to bed went to sleep faster, stayed asleep and had better overall sleep.

<https://www.psychologytoday.com/us/blog/minding-the-body/201111/how-gratitude-helps-you-sleep-night>

Wespath focuses on improving five dimensions of well-being—physical, emotional, spiritual, social and financial—for clergy and laity of The United Methodist Church (UMC) and their families. Among Wespath's offerings are: well-being programs, trends and research, educational opportunities and an interactive website.



Wespath

BENEFITS | INVESTMENTS

a general agency of The United Methodist Church



PERSONAL SUCCESS STORY: CHRIS LILLY

“...when I’m in the optimal zone I feel great. And that’s the win that keeps me going.”

Chris Lilly

Wespath System Administrator, Information Technology

Winning the Losing Game

I am now proud to say I fully utilize the well-being programs offered by Wespath, such as the Blueprint for Wellness blood screening.

In my role as System Administrator for Wespath, I work closely with the HealthFlex well-being programs. I was well aware that I wasn’t fully using the benefits available to me. When my wife was diagnosed with diabetes, she was forced into lifestyle changes which made it easier for me to initiate change.

My changes started small. For example, instead of just reading the helpful articles from WebMD, I decided to act on them. One article recommended walking. I started with an occasional walk. Then I walked every day. Then I walked further distances.

At first I was not ready to use a fitness tracker since I was just “dabbling,” but since I’m into gamification, watching metrics, like active minutes, piqued my interest. Tracking behaviors led to motivation and vice versa. I was solidifying good habits while enjoying myself. Eventually, I got an exercise bike just to maximize the results per minute spent on physical activity, and it resulted in weight loss.

My sleeping habits were also terrible. I blamed this on being overweight. A sleep study revealed I actually had sleep apnea and I was prescribed a CPAP machine. I now keep consistent sleep hours, and while I feel more rested than I have in years, I am also able to score 100% on my sleep app, which satisfies my competitive, data-driven nature.

I am now proud to say I fully utilize the well-being programs offered by Wespath, such as the Blueprint for Wellness blood screening. Between this and my daily tracking, I have a full suite of data on myself. I use that to analyze gaps in well-being from a comprehensive view. I can see visually that when I’m in the optimal zone, I feel great. And that’s the win that keeps me going.

As a short-term goal, I look forward to running a 5K. My long-term goal is to maintain good health into old age. I will continue to talk to others about my journey. When I share the story with the right people—those who are happy to hear the results of my efforts—it’s like scoring a point for your team; something we can all celebrate.





Shelly Brooks-Sanford
Population Health Manager,
Wespath Benefit Plans



Gratitude and Attitude

“Count your blessings, name them one by one.”

As a child, I learned this simple hymn which invites us to practice gratitude. As an adult I continue to see reference to counting your blessings. It sounds so simple, yet, I must confess there are times when an “attitude of gratitude” is not so easy for me.

A prominent roadblock is when I “compare my insides to others’ outsides,” comparing how I feel inwardly on a difficult day to how others appear to me on their good days! Of course, this is a losing proposition which leads only to feelings of envy and disappointment.

I also imagine I am not alone in that I can be hesitant to go to God in prayer until I first feel grateful. But I know prayer and gratitude can actually work in the opposite direction. If we go to God with our frustration, envy—whatever we are honestly feeling—and give God a chance to love us and accept us just as we are, it can lead to a genuine sense of gratitude on the other side. It’s like the clearing of storm clouds to reveal a beautiful rainbow.

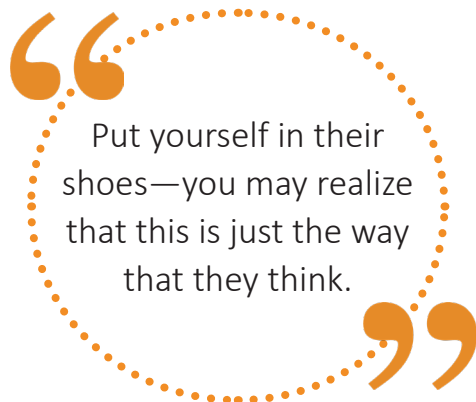
LOOK AT THINGS FROM A DIFFERENT PERSPECTIVE

Health Tips for Leaders

Leadership isn’t always easy, but there are reasons that some people are better at it than others. One is that a good leader recognizes that people think and see the world differently. By looking at things from another person’s point a view, one can better understand the conversation, and what they are trying to accomplish.

For example, if you are a person who thinks very creatively and abstractly, and you are in a meeting with someone who is very detail oriented and likes to talk through every step of a problem, you might think they are talking down to you or deliberately going slow. If you, instead, put yourself in their shoes, you may realize this is just the way they think. By being deliberate and thoughtful, they are making sure they are prepared and satisfying their need for accuracy. A good team has a variety of members who think in different ways. Appreciation for how everyone thinks makes for a great team.

The ability to listen through multiple perspectives makes you a great leader.



<https://www.jodymichael.com/blog/listening-from-multiple-perspectives/>



Healthy Recipe

MOROCCAN VEGETABLE STEW

INGREDIENTS

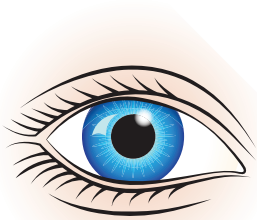
- 6-8 cups of any combination butternut squash, potatoes and sweet potatoes peeled and cut into 1-inch cubes
- 4 medium carrots, sliced
- 3 plum tomatoes, chopped or one can diced tomatoes (with liquid)
- 2 cups kale or zucchini, cut into bite-sized pieces
- 1 cup dried lentils
- 1 tablespoon honey
- 1/2 cup chopped dried apricots (optional)
- 1 can (15 ounces) garbanzo beans or chickpeas, rinsed and drained
- 1 tablespoon olive oil
- 1 large onion, chopped
- 2 teaspoons ground cumin
- 2 teaspoons ground cinnamon
- 1 teaspoon ground coriander
- 1/2 teaspoon turmeric
- 1/2 teaspoon cayenne pepper
- 3 cups low-sodium broth
- 1 cup water

DIRECTIONS (makes 12 servings)

- In a large pot, heat oil over medium-high heat on stove; sauté onion until tender. Add seasonings; cook and stir 1 minute.
- Stir in squash, potatoes, carrots, tomatoes, lentils, broth and water; bring to a boil. Reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until squash and potatoes are almost tender, 15-20 minutes.
- Add remaining ingredients. Bring to a boil and reduce heat; simmer, uncovered, until vegetables are tender, 5-8 minutes.

NUTRITION INFORMATION (per serving)

Calories	174.7
Total Fat	1.8 g
Saturated Fat	0.2 g
Cholesterol	0.0 mg
Sodium	149.0 mg
Potassium	573.6 mg
Total Carbohydrate	38.0 g
Dietary Fiber	9.2 g
Sugars	9.2 g
Protein	7.0 g
Vitamin A	339.0%
Vitamin B-6	19.6%
Vitamin C	51.1%



You Won't Believe your Eyes

Eye exercises are really a thing. Doctors prescribe them for eye ailments, and to strengthen those muscles just like many other parts of the body. They can also improve focus, ease eye movements and stimulate your brain's vision center.

Try any of the following to strengthen these valuable muscles:

1

Change focus from near to far and back again.



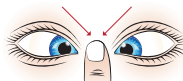
2

Cover one eye and look at different objects.



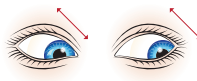
3

Concentrate on a solitary object.



4

Follow a pattern with your eyes like calisthenics.



*Source: WebMD

VP and UMCOR

Help others by being well. Virgin Pulse participants can now donate PulseCash earned directly to the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR). [Click here](#) for the steps involved in making the donation through the Virgin Pulse website:



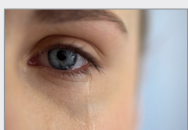
Print and Share Bulletins

See this issue's bulletins for great resources to share with your congregation. Print and stuff in weekly worship booklets or other church newsletters, use as a small group handout or forward to church groups you think could benefit from the well-being topic. We support you in your effort to create a more vital church.

BULLETIN #1: COMPARISON



BULLETIN #2: GOOD GRIEF



Resources



A host of resources are available at wespath.org/benefits



Wespath [articles](#) related to each of the five dimensions of well-being



Hark!
October 2019 edition



Newsletter and Bulletins found at wespath.org/benefits/newsletter



Well-Being Toolkits



Sifting Through the Facts
Webinar Series

The journey to well-being lasts a lifetime. Sometimes the path is smooth and other times, there are bumps in the road and work to be done to restore balance. With patience, persistence and support from Wespath—you can do it!

Let Us Know

If you have questions or comments, please contact us anytime at: wellnessteam@wespath.org

Coming Soon!

Wespath is launching a new website in **December**. Expect better navigation, personalized experience and more. wespath.org

Disclaimer

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