

# From the Pastor

March 7, 2017



In 1840, Henry Perlee Parker painted the portrait shown above capturing the Epworth rectory fire that almost took John Wesley's life. He was just five years old. His father was the priest of the Epworth church just a few blocks away. The fire broke out in the middle of the night. Hatti, one of the Wesley's young children alerted the family about the fire after pieces of the burning roof fell on her bed.

Everyone made it out safely except John who was following his brother and sisters outside but ran back inside when he saw the door of the house he would have to pass on fire. He was saved when neighbors climbed on each other's shoulders to reach up and lift him out of an upper bedroom window just as the roof collapsed. His mother sometimes referred to John afterwards as a brand plucked from the burning, a reference to Zechariah 3:2. She believed God had spared her son in order to fulfill a great purpose.

In Parker's now famous portrait, a man stands ready to receive young John as he was handed down from the burning house. The Reverend James Everett, a well-known Methodist preacher, posed for the artist's depiction of the man who received him. Everett was concerned that some Methodists were not being true to Wesley's theology and saw his participation in the painting as a symbol of the role he was playing in the church at the time.

I am grateful to be a part of a congregation that continues to value John Wesley's teaching. May we continue to receive "Wesley" and pass on the best of the Wesleyan tradition to all who come after us so that Methodism may continue to be a blessing as we serve Christ in the world!

With Much Appreciation,

Craig