

## John Wesley and Francis Asbury

John Wesley was the founder of Methodism. He was born on June 17, 1703, the 15<sup>th</sup> child of Samuel and Susanna Wesley. His is a fascinating life story. He endured much and suffered much but his faith in God never wavered although he questioned his worthiness at times. He had a life-altering experience at Aldersgate on May 24, 1738. While listening to Luther's preface to the Epistle to the Romans, Wesley said "I felt my heart strangely warmed, I felt I did trust in Christ, Christ alone, for salvation; and an assurance was given me that He had taken away my sins, even mine, and saved me from the law of sin and death." When we read about those who have led the way in our Faith journey I am amazed at their dedication, their stamina, and determination. Francis Asbury and John Wesley rode horses from place to place and called people together to hear the words of salvation. Asbury in a 45-year Ministry rode 300,000 miles on horseback giving 16,500 sermons. There were times when he had ridden so far that he had to be carried into the meeting place and sat in a chair to preach. Wesley preached three times a day and traveled 280,000 miles and preached over 40,000 sermons. When he doubted his faith, he was told by a mentor to "Preach faith until you have it and then because you have it, you will preach faith." Now if we could only live faith until we have it and then because we have it, we will live it, what a wonderful world we would have. They were the very first evangelists in the Methodist Church preaching to saints and sinners alike and the poor and downtrodden, the very foundation of our church. I have always admired those who have gone on Mission Trips to far off places to carry the word of God and to help people with wells, sanitation, buildings, prayer, and whatever is needed while not only saying the words of salvation to those who may have never heard it but living it as an example to all of us. When I started my faith journey, I had never read the Bible or attended a class or even been to church. I recalled the Pastor at my brother's funeral reading the 23<sup>rd</sup> Psalm but had never seen it or read it for myself. I had never, at that point read or owned a bible. When I went into Nurses' training, I vowed to read the Bible every day and did for three years. Sometimes sleep would overtake me, but I read at least one verse every night. But it was not until I began to really read the verses, especially those that spoke to me, and take classes that it helped me in my daily life.

Note: Francis Asbury is one of the very few religious leaders (I have read previously the only one, but other sources say one of a few) to have a statue dedicated to them in Washington D.C. It was raised and dedicated on the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of his death.

Ephesians 1:18 I pray also that the eyes of your heart may be enlightened in order that you may know the riches to which he has called you, the riches of his glorious inheritance in the saints.

Lord, we thank you for the saints you have sent to teach us and give us an example of living the life you have called us to. Lord be with those who are ill and those who grieve in our midst. May we minister to them in your name. Be with our church Lord, may we, with your blessings make it all it can be. Be with our Pastor, may we be a blessing to him as he is to us. Be with our staff and leaders bless their work and their dedication to your church. We thank you for the blessings of home and family. In Jesus name we pray. Amen

Grace Epperson