

March 2

Commemoration: John Wesley, 1791; renewer of the church

John Wesley (28 June 1703 – 2 March 1791) was a Church of England cleric and Christian theologian. Wesley is largely credited, along with his brother Charles Wesley, as founding the Methodist movement which began when he took to open-air preaching in a similar manner to George Whitefield. In contrast to George Whitefield's Calvinism, Wesley embraced the Arminian doctrines that were dominant in the 18th-century Church of England. Methodism in both forms was a highly successful evangelical movement in the United Kingdom, which encouraged people to experience Jesus Christ personally.

Wesley's teachings, known as Wesleyanism, provided the seeds for both the modern Methodist movement, the Holiness movement, Pentecostalism, the Charismatic Movement, and Neo-charismatic churches, which encompass numerous denominations across the world. In addition, he refined Arminianism with a strong evangelical emphasis on the Reformed doctrine of justification by faith.



Painting: "John Wesley," by the English artist George Romney, oil on canvas. 29 1/2 in. x 24 3/4 in. Courtesy of the National Portrait Gallery, London.