



# The Eastport Spire

## “Inspire Us to Great Things”

### August 2014

*We share our experiences of God’s Kingdom with all, through our faith, love, fellowship, and service. It is our vision to have everyone actively involved in worship that enriches, ministries that empower, and evangelism that embraces all.*

#### Pastor’s Corner

Dear Sisters and Brothers in Christ,

As I reflect on my first month here with you all at Eastport, the theme of my reflections has been gratitude. I am so grateful for the welcome that I have received here! There’s nothing like the experience of people making you feel at home. I have appreciated your kind words, your smiles, your humor, your invitations, your cards and emails more than you know. They have helped me begin to feel at home here at EUMC.

And so in this newsletter article to you all, I just want to say thank you. Thank you for welcoming me. I know that transitions can be stressful times. That we can be anxious about the unknown and the other changes that might come as a result of leadership changes. To that end, I’m reminded of the words of one of my professors from seminary, Amy Oden. In her book *God’s Welcome: Hospitality for a Gospel-Hungry World*, she writes, “Welcoming the stranger is risky: everyone will be changed, host and guest alike.... And we cannot know ahead of time what the changes will be.”

No, we cannot know ahead of time how our partnership will change both of us as pastor and congregation, but I am convinced that we were matched together for a divine purpose. And I can’t wait for us to discover this purpose together! Throughout my life, throughout the 10 plus moves in my life that I have experienced, I have learned to trust in the faithfulness of God, and in God’s presence not just with me, but ahead of me working in the places that I have been called and sent. So thank you for taking a risk and welcoming this stranger as your pastor.

I hope you know how excited, proud and delighted I am to be here and to be the pastor of such an amazing congregation! I can’t wait to see the impact that we have on one another and on our community!

As we look forward to the future God has in store for us, I want to leave you with these words from Mother Teresa, “You can do something I can’t do. I can do something you can’t do. Together let us do something beautiful for God.” Yes, together, let’s do something beautiful for God! That is my hope and my prayer for our ministry. May it be so!

*All God’s grace and peace to you,  
Pastor Michelle*

#### Visitation Ministry



We are looking for new members for our visitation teams. If you can give a short period of time once or twice a month, call the church office and let Wendy know. We have a small list of homebound members who enjoy a visit from their church family now and then. As with other church activities, some of the folks who faithfully performed this ministry in the past can no longer do so. Men or women, quiet introverts or Type As, it really doesn’t matter. A smile, a little attention, a copy of the Upper Room – these things mean a lot. Betty Tillack and Shirley Keller have volunteered to show you the ropes.

**There is no covered dish lunch in August. Stay tuned for news about the church picnic.**





## 2014 Peach Festival Corporate Sponsors

### Pastoral/SPRC Covenant 2014-2015

One requirement for the Pastoral Transition is that SPRC share with the congregation of Eastport United Methodist Church the main goals that have been set for the rest of 2014.

The Church's Main Goals for Ministry/Disciple-making in the next year are:

- Maintain our ACT's II Status
  - Meeting required apportionment 100%
  - Increase worship attendance by 2%
  - Start age-appropriate Sunday School Classes
  - Increase "Giving Units"
  - Support Lay Speakers through Study and participation in service
- Develop Community Outreach
  - Pastor plans to get to know the congregation through individual meetings and small group functions hosted at members' homes.
  - Develop an action plan for evangelism in the local community, focusing on Hispanic outreach.
  - Integrate but not alienate; increase diversity through Hispanic outreach, yet not alienate the current membership and maintain tradition.

These goals have been reviewed and approved by Pastor Michelle, our Lay Leader Jean Strucko, the members of the SPRC, and finally the Administrative Council.

~ Eric Smaridge, EUMC SPRC Chair

Building on last year's success, we once again had great corporate sponsor participation for this year's Peach Festival. We would like to thank the following sponsors for their generous contributions. Their sponsorship is indicative of the respect and care these businesses have for our community and the work of EUMC. Please express your appreciation through continued patronage.

#### Gold Level Sponsors

*(\$250 and up)*

Arban Precast Stone, Ltd.

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#### Silver Level Sponsors

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#### Bronze Level Sponsors

*(minimum \$50)*

Marc Bowen Parole Service, Inc.



## The 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday Out-To-Lunch Bunch

Each month on the 4<sup>th</sup> Wednesday, several members and friends of EUMC meet at Sammy's (across the street in Eastport Shopping Center) at 12:15 for a light lunch. Sammy's crew is beginning to be accustomed to the demand for slices of veggie pizza, and make sure to have enough on hand. However, there is plenty more on the menu to choose from, and the food is good. For good food, and good company, join us! The next meeting of the group is August 27<sup>th</sup>. See you there!



## Sunday School News

Okay everyone, let's get excited!! Sunday School will be starting again soon – September 7th. We are making some changes this year. We are excited to have such a growing youth program, and we're now going to have two classes for our youth attending Sunday School. If your child will be in kindergarten through second grade, he/she will be in Mrs. Val's class, and any child in third grade or higher will be in Mrs. Nicole's class. We'll study many fun things in each class – Bible study, games, activities, and crafts, and of course we can't forget that music will still be an important part of our program. Mrs. Val and Mrs. Nicole are very excited to take on this year's study!! Our first unit will be titled "Out of Egypt" which will also tie into Pastor Michelle's messages! So please, come one, come all for this year's Sunday School fun!

~ Nicole Hughes and Val Devaris

## Our Card Making Marathon

We're happy to report that our July 12 card making venture with John Wesley UMC was a big success. Cards for the troops were crafted throughout the day by 39 wonderful folks and we ended the day having produced 1,076 patriotic cards! Operation Welcome Home Maryland was thrilled to receive them. We thank all our friends and members of the congregation who participated. How blessed we are to have folks who care and reach out to help others.  
~ Joyce Conley



CARD MAKERS HARD AT WORK



## Mission Trip



It is time to commit to going on the fall mission trip to Appalachia Service Project (ASP) in Brenton, WV. We will join Calvary UMC and several other churches to do home repair. Dates are Wednesday, October 15 to Sunday, October 19. Contact Jackie Cunningham if you are interested in going.



## Mark Your Calendars

Aug 26	Homework & Reading resumes – Tuesdays & Thursdays
Sept 3	UMW resumes
Sept 4	Choir rehearsal resumes
Sept 7	Sunday School resumes
Sept 8	Bells practice resumes
Sept 21	Church picnic at Bay Ridge Clubhouse – 2 p.m.
Sept 27	Fall Planning Retreat hosted by Jackie Cunningham
Oct 8	Charge Conference
Oct 15	Mission Trip to Brenton, WV
Oct 18	Cluster Conference at EUMC
Oct 19	Laity Sunday



The United Methodist Women will hold their next meeting on September 3, 2014, at 5:30 p.m. with a brown bag dinner and meeting starting at 6:00 p.m. All women of EUMC are United Methodist Women. Please come and join us for some good fellowship.

~Ann Rawls, UMW President

***“My profession is to always be on the alert to find God in nature, to know his lurking places, to attend all the oratorios, the operas, in nature.”***



~ Henry David Thoreau

## 1000 Children

*This article was posted on July 16, 2014, by **The Desert Connection**, a website of the Desert Southwest Conference of the United Methodist Church.*



*By Rev. Dr. Dottie Escobedo-Frank  
United Methodist Pastor & District Superintendent  
Desert Southwest Conference UMC*

It didn't look like anything out of the ordinary for the border town of Nogales. My hometown is used to seeing Border Patrol facilities, and we have always noted the humanitarian actions of the staff. They see the same things we do on the ground, and you can't be human without being moved. So, when a group of United Methodist pastors and church leaders met outside the facility that housed about 1,000 unaccompanied children that we'd been hearing about in the news, well... I wasn't so impressed. We met outside a gate-like entry that said, "U.S. Border Patrol, Nogales, Arizona." That was it.

But Special Operations Supervisor, Gustavo Soto, met us outside the gate and began telling us the story of the children. About a month and a half ago the children started arriving from Texas. There are typically around 1,000 children, sometimes more, sometimes less. All the children in this facility are unaccompanied minors. Ok, I don't know about you, but that fact alone took my breath away. The oldest is 17, and the youngest was a newborn, delivered at Holy Cross Hospital in Nogales.

Children come in and out in the processing ritual. Sometimes 300 children are bused in per day, and the same go out. You can see the buses on the hillside. While there, they get bathed, medical care, and they make phone connections with family members. They have Red Cross volunteers to play with the children, and Chaplains help with the spiritual needs. They are divided into age groups

and gender, and sibling groups are allowed to see each other whenever they ask. They have a playground. And they have toys. Everyone falls in love with the children.

But the children wear the same outfits while inside, and they have strict protocol to keep everyone healthy. And they are not allowed to leave, of course, for this is only a stopping point along their already-lengthy journey. They seek a land of freedom and possibility, but this is a necessary pause along the road.

We asked questions about why they came here, and what the journey is like. They live in violence, under threat of death by gangs, extreme poverty, and weak structures. Their parents hope for a life without violence and with food on the table. So they believe the story that there is a better place for their children, and they pay the human trafficker to take their children on a journey across national borders and through deserts and mountains, on buses and other forms of transportation. The human traffickers leave them at the Rio Grande River, which is the natural border in Texas, and the children are set on rafts, or they swim, till they make it to the other side. When they hit American soil, they are known to run to the Border Patrol personnel with relief and gratitude for a country that will take them in and give them safety, and maybe even hope.

We wanted to find out how the faith community could help. But, they are children who need to be protected from the public. We felt somewhat helpless for a moment. But suddenly that unassuming sign that said “Border Patrol, Nogales, Arizona” had a different meaning. There were children there! Many thousands of children who are looking for help in our country... Children who left their families because life at home was unbearable. Children who were lonely, and sad, and happy, and hopeful. They missed Mom and Dad, and Grandmother. Children who were braver than I could imagine... Children who had traveled alone seeking hope and life... Suddenly I felt as if I was standing outside holy ground, and I didn’t know what to do.

There are some things we can do. We are still figuring them out. But so far these things pop out:

1. We can pray. Pray every day for the children and their families, their countries, and for peace to rule over violence. Bishop Carcaño

has called July 18-20 (from sunset to sunset) a weekend of prayer. You can join this movement and follow it at <http://www.theyarechildren.com>.

2. UMCOR, at the request of Bishop Hoshibata, has secured a \$10,000 grant which will be filtered to the ministries that are helping the children and parents who end up at the bus stations. We can help by volunteering at the bus stations, especially if you are blessed with the Spanish language. And we can donate to UMCOR at <http://tinyurl.com/UMCOR901670>
3. We can volunteer through Red Cross, attending training and volunteering to play with the children in facilities <http://www.redcross.org/support/volunteer>.
4. Churches can work with the Office of Refugees Resettlement. After leaving the facilities, they will place the children in caring environments, and volunteers are needed to assist and provide care. <http://www.acf.hhs.gov/programs/orr/resource/unaccompanied-childrens-services> . Or connect with foster care agencies that are looking for foster families to care for the children temporarily.
5. We can call our Congress members, and urge them NOT to repeal the provisions in the William Wilberforce Trafficking Victims Protection Reauthorization Act (TVPRA). This would help to prevent returning children into the hands of traffickers and violent situations
6. We can advocate for reform and safe borders through the various groups connected with the Arizona Interfaith Network. They work for change at the national level, bringing together people of all faiths for the common good.
7. We can connect with Border Community Alliance at <http://www.bordercommunityalliance.com>. They are hard at work to improve the vitality of U.S. and Mexico border communities.

I left the meeting with the kind Border Patrol gentleman, and the overwhelmed church leaders, feeling like something extraordinary was going on

in this spot of earth that I call my hometown. I felt overwhelmed by the great need, but if each of us did one thing listed above, together we could create a place where this facility would be empty, and where children were free from harm and welcomed everywhere. I'm sure of that.

And I left with a deep image from my own family. My grandmother, Sarah Estrada, who crossed the Rio Grande herself, while having labor pains, so that my father, Rev. Louis Escobedo, could be born in America. She didn't do it for economic reasons, but because she wanted her child to have religious freedom. That child of hers became a Lutheran pastor and missionary to Mexico. And I am his daughter, a United Methodist Pastor and District Superintendent, the granddaughter of one who crossed the Rio Grande with dreams. I am grateful for her, and for a country that welcomed me. I join with you in prayer....

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## Log Meeting House at Strawbridge Shrine turns 250

*(Reprinted from UMConnection)*



*by Erik Alsgaard, UMConnection Staff*

In 1764, Robert Strawbridge and his fledgling Methodist Society built a Meeting House in the fields of Maryland in what was then eastern Frederick County. Made of logs, the Meeting House became the first place of worship for Methodists in America.

Last month, 250 years later, United Methodists gathered near the site of that Meeting House to celebrate and remember a proud heritage. As a men's barbershop chorus serenaded guests and the smells of fried chicken and fish wafted over a large tent, people listened and learned about United Methodist history that's right in their back yard.

"What did it take to travel an ocean and come to what was then a frontier land and build a meeting house by hand," said John Strawbridge, a sixth or

seventh great-grandson of Robert. As the communications coordinator for the Shrine and a member on the Board of Directors, he was present at the celebration to give tours and the history of the Shrine to guests.

"The cathedral of Methodism is a farm house or a log house," he said. "That's the image of Methodism that I want people to leave here with. It's a sleeves rolled up, get your hands dirty and get out in the field kind of denomination."

Strawbridge and his wife, Elizabeth, immigrated to the Colonies from Ireland in 1760. How they ended up in what is now Carroll County, Maryland, is somewhat of a mystery.

The Strawbridges rented 50 acres from John England. Records indicate that he had business interests in Annapolis at the time. Records also show that the Strawbridges landed in Annapolis when they arrived.

"It was not a denomination when they came here," said Helen Kemp, Curator of the Shrine. "It was a movement."

Robert Strawbridge preached throughout the Colonies, she said, from New Jersey to what is now West Virginia, from the Eastern Shore of Maryland to central Virginia, all of it ridden on horseback. While he was out preaching, Elizabeth tended the home, which visitors can walk through today.

Elizabeth Strawbridge is credited with the first Methodist convert in America. Kemp said that Elizabeth would share the Gospel with workers who came to help out on the farm. One of the workers, John Evans, a Quaker, heard Elizabeth and gave his life to Jesus and embraced the Methodist movement. John England, the landowner, converted to Methodism under the hand of Robert Strawbridge, who is also credited with the first Methodist baptism in America, even though he was not ordained.

"He was the only one out there in the wilderness, preaching the Gospel," said Kemp. "He knew that people also needed Holy Communion and baptism."

Kemp said that an ordained person couldn't be counted on in those days, since the only ordained Protestants were Church of England priests and anti-England sentiments were running high. Strawbridge took it upon himself to administer the

sacraments, even though, technically, he wasn't supposed to.

"He saw the need and did it," Kemp said. "Francis Asbury wrote to John Wesley about this, and Wesley replied to tell him to stop, now. Asbury did; Robert did not. He just went on doing what he did."

Eventually, Methodism being nothing if not a movement of compromise, especially in its early days, Asbury wrote that Strawbridge was the only lay person authorized to administer the sacraments.

Robert Strawbridge died in Baltimore in 1781, at the age of 49, which Kemp said was old for a Circuit Rider. Elizabeth died in 1791, and they are both buried at Mt. Olivet cemetery in Baltimore in what is called the Bishop's Lot.

"It's remarkable to be at a place that you know your relatives lived in and worked in and raised a family," said John Strawbridge as he stood in front of the house his great-great-great-great-great-great grandparents lived in. "It's a place where you can trace your roots directly back."

The site reminds him that the people of The United Methodist Church are all the spiritual descendants of Robert Strawbridge. As he sees confirmation classes come through the site, the visitors and guests and how they connect with it, he's keenly aware of the importance of this place.

"It really makes you appreciate, as a descendant, that it's not just my history, it's all of our histories," he said. "It's the thing that connects us as Methodists."

[Issue Date: Tue, 07/01/2014]

## For Your Health.....



### What Is Glaucoma?

Glaucoma is a group of eye diseases causing optic nerve damage. The optic nerve carries images from the retina to the brain so we can see. In glaucoma, eye pressure plays a role in damaging the delicate nerve fibers of the optic nerve. When a significant number of nerve fibers are damaged, blind spots develop in the field of vision. Once nerve damage and visual loss occur, it is permanent. Most people don't notice these blind areas until much of the optic nerve damage has already occurred. If the entire

nerve is destroyed, blindness results. **Glaucoma is a leading cause of blindness in the world, especially in older people. Early detection and treatment by your ophthalmologist are the keys to preventing optic nerve damage and vision loss from glaucoma.**

### What are the Warning Signs?

Unfortunately, most cases of glaucoma do not occur with readily noticeable symptoms that warn of the irreversible optic nerve damage being done. However, the presence of the following warning signs, indicates that you need a thorough examination by an eye doctor:

- Unusual trouble adjusting to dark rooms
- Difficulty focusing on near or distant objects
- Squinting or blinking due to unusual sensitivity to light or glare
- Change in color of iris
- Red-rimmed, encrusted or swollen lids
- Recurrent pain in or around eyes
- Double vision
- Dark spot at the center of viewing
- Lines and edges appear distorted or wavy
- Excess tearing or "watery eyes"
- Dry eyes with itching or burning; and
- Seeing spots, ghost-like images

The following may be indications of potentially serious problems that might require emergency medical attention:

- Sudden loss of vision in one eye
- Sudden hazy or blurred vision
- Flashes of light or black spots
- Halos or rainbows around light

The symptoms listed above may not necessarily mean that you have glaucoma. However, if you experience one or more of these symptoms, contact your eye doctor for a complete exam.

### Treatment

In general, glaucoma cannot be cured, but it can be controlled. Eye drops, pills, laser procedures, and surgical operations are used to prevent or slow further damage from occurring. With any type of glaucoma, regular eye examinations are very important to detect progression and to prevent vision loss.

*~ Contributed by Dianne Crews, St. Luke's Episcopal Church*

## August Birthdays

Aug 1	John Peret
Aug 2	Adam Valentine
Aug 3	Marty Dobbs
Aug 8	Bill Malamphy
Aug 17	June Stevens Collette Krebs
Aug 19	Peggy Roper Carole Williams
Aug 20	Ruth Bowen
Aug 21	Joyce Conley
Aug 22	Jeff Conley
Aug 23	Rawle Green
Aug 27	Dave Wheeler
Aug 28	Lisa Parrish Tammy Lesley Erin Connor
Aug 29	Albert Stevens
Aug 30	Linda Harrison
Aug 31	Jean Strucko

## August Anniversaries

Aug 4	John & Sue Peret
Aug 5	Richard & Margie Hughes
Aug 7	Bo & Debbie Morgan
Aug 8	Jeff & Joyce Conley
Aug 14	Bill Riggs & JoAnn Kulesza
Aug 21	Tom & Elizabeth Eicher
Aug 22	Ed & Sharon Owen

"I think joy and sweetness and affection are a spiritual path. We're here to know God, to love and serve God, and to be blown away by the beauty and miracle of nature. You just have to get rid of so much baggage to be light enough to dance, to sing, to play. You don't have time to carry grudges; you don't have time to cling to the need to be right."

~ Anne Lamott

*The Spire* is published monthly by Eastport United Methodist Church, 926 Bay Ridge Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403. 410-263-5490

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Pastor: Michelle Mejia

Editor: Eunice Corse

Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
					<b>1</b> 	<b>2</b> <b>39<sup>th</sup></b> <b>Annual</b> <b>Peach</b> <b>Festival</b>
<b>3</b> Worship 10am	<b>4</b>	<b>5</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>7</b>	<b>8</b>	<b>9</b>
<b>Well done EUMC....Relax, rest, renew, and enjoy!</b>						
<b>10</b> Worship 10am	<b>11</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>13</b>	<b>14</b>	<b>15</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>17</b> Worship 10am	<b>18</b>	<b>19</b> Trustees 6:15pm  Finance Team 7:30pm	<b>20</b>  Food Pantry 1-3pm	<b>21</b>	<b>22</b>	<b>23</b>
<b>24</b> Worship 10am	<b>25</b> UMM 7pm	<b>26</b> Homework & Reading 4pm	<b>27</b>  Lunch Bunch 12:15pm	<b>28</b> Homework & Reading 4pm	<b>29</b>	<b>30</b>
<b>31</b> Worship 10am	 <b>School days, school days, good ole golden rule days...</b> 					

**Eastport United Methodist Church**

926 Bay Ridge Avenue  
Annapolis, MD 21403-3091

**The Rev. Michelle Mejia, Pastor**  
**Church 410-263-5490**

**Worship Service 10:00 a.m.**  
**Sunday School & Nursery 10:00 a.m.**  
**Office Hours 9:30-3:30 Monday-Friday**  
**Office Closed 12-1 p.m. for Lunch**



[www.eastportumc.org](http://www.eastportumc.org)