



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

December 2018

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.

From the Pastor

Dear Church,

Each year, Advent becomes a little more meaningful for me. I’m convinced that if Christmas is for children, it is Advent that is made for adults. Advent, simply means “coming,” and it is the season in which we both remember Christ’s coming over 2,000 years ago to be with humankind in the flesh through Jesus, and where we look towards Jesus’ return one day to make the world right. Advent is a season of waiting, a season of holding two conflicting things together in our hearts. As Christian author and speaker Sarah Bessey wrote in a blog about Advent: “If Christmas is for the joy, then Advent is for the longing.”

When I was child, I didn’t understand Advent and the waiting. I just wanted it to be Christmas already. To bake the cookies. To decorate the tree. To open the gifts. To sing all the carols. After all, we heard the songs in stores and on the radio since Thanksgiving. Why could we not just live in this time of joy and celebration the whole season? Why must we wait?

We wait, because Advent is for the longing. It is for the waiting for all things to be made right. Advent is about living in the tension between the good news that we already know has come and the fact that we are still waiting for the day “where there will be no more death, or mourning, or crying or pain” and “every tear will be wiped away.”

Part of becoming a mature Christian, an adult in the faith, is that we learn to see and feel the heartbreak in the world. We draw closer to the suffering of others instead of withdrawing into safe and warm places of comfort. And so, the longing grows. And the tension grows. And we learn to hold joy and pain together, one with the other as we deeply long for shalom, for all to be well. After all, the joy that comes

after the longing, does not erase all the longing and pain, but is a deeper, richer, and more real joy, since it has been held in our hearts’ deep desire for so long.

I must say, the suffering looms large for me this year, as it does most years around this time. The gap between the comfortable and the afflicted seems to expand for this season. I doubt that it actually does, more likely, I’m just more aware of it.

There is no doubt that we live in a time with much suffering around the world. Many countries in Africa are facing years of civil war, conflicts, draught, famine, and humanitarian crises, causing people to be displaced from their homes and flee to neighboring countries. Violence in Latin America has led to an increase in migrants seeking legal asylum, and the response of our own country just this past week has been to tear gas children as young as toddlers with their mothers and fathers on the border. These are just a taste of the complex world issues happening.

We live in a time where our communities, our churches, and our world are torn and divided about many issues. Where families cannot gather around holiday tables without fighting. Where our politicians argue and refuse to work together. Where ignorance and hatred multiplies so quickly on the Internet. There are even divisions in the church, and our own United Methodist Church is on the precipice of an important decision which could lead to either the unifying or the splitting of our own denomination.

In light of these things, sometimes we can feel that hope, peace, love, and light are missing. The world can seem a dark, cruel, and lonely place.

I don’t know about you, but I am finding much to

long for this year. And I need a Savior, like Jesus, who suffers with us, a God who weeps alongside us, and One who protects and embraces us like a mother hen with her chicks.

The classic Christmas Carol, “Silent Night” had its debut on Christmas Eve, 1818 at the St. Nicholas Chapel in Oberndorf bei Salzburg, Austria. Since then, the original German lyrics have been translated into over 140 languages. In 1914, soldiers fighting World War I along the Western Front held a ceasefire on Christmas Eve out of reverence for the holiday. Members from opposite sides of the war exchanged presents and stories with one another, played games, and sang the beloved “Silent Night” together. Today, it is a Christmas tradition all around the world, to gather each year on Christmas Eve, light candles, and sing “Silent Night.” Here at Eastport, we participate in this powerful and timeless tradition.

Perhaps this year, we could declare our own “ceasefire” from our sources of conflict. Perhaps this year, we can claim our own responsibility to be part of healing the divisions humanity has caused in the world, and to bring the agents of this healing, the gifts of our peace, love, hope, and joy, as our Christmas gift to the Christ-child. Perhaps, if we practice these gifts this Advent, as we wait with longing for the world to be made right, we will become part of making the world right. Perhaps, then, on Christmas Eve, when we raise our voices to sing Silent Night and celebrate the birth of Jesus, our Savior, our spirits will be full of the peace and love that transcends all barriers, hatred, division, and conflict.

The true joy of Christmas, is that choice that God made to be close to us, coming in the form of a baby boy, as Emmanuel – God with us.

But before we jump into that joy this year, let us hold a place for Advent. Set your intentions for how you will hold Advent this season. Come, join us in worship each week, as we let the song Silent Night guide our worship series. And this Advent - let us hold a place for the ones who are hurting. Let us weep, let us grieve, let us wait with those who have lost everything, and let us long for a more loving and just world. So, at Christmas, our joy will join with the longing, and be a deeper, richer joy.

~ *Peace & Light,*
Pastor Michelle

Join our EUMC youth as they lead a “not to be missed” Christmas service on December 16th. Please come out to support our Church School as they once again teach us the true meaning of Christmas spirit.



United Methodist Men’s Toy Drive



The Eastport United Methodist Men are conducting again a Christmas gift and toy drive for needy children at Eastport Elementary School. This year, we will help 38 pre-K children (20 boys and 18 girls). School officials have told us these presents represent the only ones received by many kids because of their economic circumstances.

We are asking *all men* of the church to donate a new toy or gift (or a used item that is in good condition) that would be suitable for a child ages 4 or 5. The value of each toy or gift should not exceed \$20. Gifts must fit into a child’s school backpack. For those who wish to take part in this endeavor to make Christmas a happier time for a local child, please place the item in the specially marked box in the church fellowship hall no later than Sunday, December 16. ***In a change from previous years, all toys and gifts MUST be wrapped and marked as appropriate for a boy, a girl, or either one. Stickers will be provided for the purpose of marking the gifts.*** The gifts will be delivered to the school on December 17.

~ *Mike Keller*



Christmas Eve
Family Service with Candlelight
5:30 p.m.
Candlelight and Communion Service
9:00 p.m.

Advent Small Group

For our Advent small group this year, we are planning to gather to create kits that bring hope, light, love, joy, and peace in the world. Our United Methodist Committee on Relief has asked for three particular kits in order to respond to the unprecedented devastation caused by the wildfires in California. The California Conferences of the UMC have asked for cleaning buckets, hygiene kits, and school kits. Beginning December 5th, we will be gathering on Wednesdays at 6:30 p.m., have a time of reflection around a scripture and the word of the week, and then assemble the kits together. All ages are welcome!! ~ *Pastor Michelle*

Bowman Place Gift Bags



As in the past, we are planning to provide Christmas gifts for the folks in Bowman Place (formerly Timothy House). This is a low income senior housing unit located two blocks from the Governor's Mansion. Some of the residents there have told us that our gifts to them are the only ones they receive at Christmas. Gift bags for men and women are available in Fellowship Hall for you to fill in the coming weeks, as well as a list of suggested gift items to fill them. We usually deliver the gifts on the Sunday before Christmas.

UMW Christmas Social



The Eastport United Methodist Women invite you to come and be a part of this mission-oriented group of women. Our next meeting will be our Christmas Social, which will be a pot luck meal – just bring a side dish to share (fried chicken will be provided), and take pot luck with the UMW! In the past we have enjoyed a crazy gift exchange involving a fast-paced hysterical game, and we plan to continue that tradition. Bring a \$10 gift to exchange and join the fun! Plan to join us – whether you're there for almost every meeting, or you've never attended before – ***you are welcome!*** Wednesday, December 12th at 5:30 in Fellowship Hall. Be there with bells on! ~ *Wendy Edstrom*

Attention: Heavenly Bells Busy December Schedule

12/2 Bells perform with AVAS at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church 3:00pm
12/3 No bells rehearsal
12/9 Perform with AVAS at Galilee Lutheran Church 6:30pm
12/10 No bells rehearsal
12/14 Play at Severna Park Community Center 4pm
12/17 Bells Rehearsal
12/23 Play during Cantata
12/24 Play at 9:00pm service
12/31 Play at New Year's Eve Service

Worship Team Activities



Orders for Poinsettias/Food Pantry

Donations can be made during the first three Sundays in December. A dedication will appear in the Christmas bulletin either by your purchase of a poinsettia (\$10) or your donation to the food pantry.

Cookies with Santa takes place after the service on December 16th. Santa wants to meet your children, grand-children, and their friends! And, could you bring a plate of cookies for the fellowship table?

Our sincere thanks to all who showed up to help decorate the church for the Christmas season!

~ *Audrey Howard*

Christmas Music

Arundel Vocal Arts Holiday Concerts:

Dec. 2nd, 3:00 p.m. at Gloria Dei Lutheran Church, 461 College Pkwy, Arnold, MD 21012

Dec. 9th, 6:30 p.m. at Galilee Lutheran Church, 4652 Mountain Rd, Pasadena, MD 21122.



The Heavenly Bells of EUMC will be playing with AVAS on the opening number for both concerts, "Christmas Hosanna," which will also be a part of our Christmas Cantata...The title of the concert is 'C is for Christmas'. All of the pieces in the first half will start with the letters of the word 'Christmas.'

Kathy Troccoli Concert:

Comfort by Candlelight at Christmas, Dec. 12th, 7:00 p.m. at St. John the Evangelist Church, 689 Ritchie Highway, Severna Park. Contemporary Christian music with some pop and folk. Doors open 6:15 p.m. *No charge, but you must order tickets in advance:*

<https://www.itickets.com/events/407138>

EUMC Christmas Cantata:

Our combined choirs and hand bells will perform on Sunday, Dec. 23rd, during the regular 10:00 a.m. service.



A Word from Missions

Many, many thanks to all those who volunteered for this year's Winter Relief Homeless Shelter. We hosted and served 26 men. It was a quiet and successful week and could not have happened without you, the members and friends of EUMC.

We continue our monthly food pantry on the third Wednesday of every month, from 12 to 2:00 p.m. If you can't volunteer, think about bringing non-perishable food for the green container in Fellowship Hall.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to all!

~ Jackie Cunningham

Winter Relief Homeless Shelter

We just finished up another week of Winter Relief Homeless Shelter here at EUMC. The Arundel House of Hope runs the program with the help of more than 75 churches in Anne Arundel County. The House of Hope's mission statement explains their goals:

For our Guests: To keep those experiencing homelessness in the Baltimore/Annapolis corridor from freezing to death during the winter months and to show them the Divine's love in simple practical ways during our time together.

For our Volunteers: To share with them the blessing of a broader, deeper faith through serving society's least, last, and lost.

For the week of November 19-26, we transported, fed and provided a safe, warm bed for 26 men. Volunteers arrived at 5:00 a.m. to make a hot breakfast and a bag lunch for the men to take with them as they returned to the intake center in Glen Burnie. Many have medical issues or jobs that they go to during the day; some walk the streets. They return to the church for a hot dinner and fellowship with our volunteers. Most nights, church members were here until 10:00 p.m. and a few stayed overnight with the men until the next day when we started all over again. Some of our volunteers actually take vacation time during this week so they can help with this mission.

The program is headed up by Jackie Cunningham, (*go put your feet up Jackie, you deserve some rest!*) with assistance from Jill Peddicord (bus driver) and Sam Coates (who stayed every night as a chaperone and assisted in all aspects of the program). Many, many other people helped with meals and clean up! We also had help from our community partners including: the Community Services Division of the Annapolis Police (provided food, served, and cleaned up while providing positive company for the men); Mt. Zion UMC in Lothian (loan of their church bus); and donations from the Mayor's office (Thanksgiving goodies). The Colonial Nursery, that operates in our basement, assists with securing all of their space (where the men actually sleep and watch movies at night) closing their school for the week and then staying closed an extra day to clean the space and reset their school.

We have undertaken this program for over 20 years and are grateful to all the members and friends of this church who give so willingly to this important mission. ~ Jill Peddicord

Thanksgiving Basket Ministry

Heartfelt thanks to all of you who contributed food or money to this project. Forty-three baskets were distributed to grateful families of local elementary school children. In case you missed it, there was a nice article about this on the front page of the Capital Gazette on Thanksgiving Day. Our special thanks to Kevin and Sally Hight for this yearly effort.

10th Annual New Year's Eve Interfaith Service

EUMC will again host the New Year's Eve Interfaith Service where many varieties of faith groups gather to celebrate peace, unity and hope. The Rev. Dr. Carletta Allen, Asbury United Methodist Church, Annapolis, will give the message this year. Your favorite singers will be back! Pre-service music begins at 6:30 p.m. The service starts at 7:00 p.m. and ends by 8:15. You will have time to take in the local party scene, or join us for fellowship in the church hall. All are welcome – we hope you will spread the word about this special event. Flyers are available.



Exercise Class for You

Do you want / need to exercise, but don't want to pay the high cost of a gym membership? Many of you may not know that we have an exercise class that meets in our fellowship hall each Monday and Friday, from 10:15 to 11:15 a.m. This class is for men and women and is geared to senior citizens, but is adaptable quite easily to any level of exercise you desire. It is led by Carol Emory's daughter, who is a fun and understanding leader. It consists of 15 minutes of cardio, 15 minutes of weights or resistance bands, and 15 minutes of stretching and relaxation at the end. One important focus is improving / maintaining core strength and BALANCE. The cost is \$60 for fall session and the same for spring & summer sessions. If you have any questions, please call the church office and speak to Wendy.

December Birthdays

- Dec 1 Leela Wurst
- Dec 5 Valerie Devaris
- Dec 7 Andrew Stevens
- Dec 8 Margie Hughes
- Dec 9 Sharon Owen
Sherrie Ugolini
Lynn Rittenberg
- Dec 11 Lynn Goddard
Kristen Stevens
- Dec 15 Joanne Christofel
Addie Parrish
- Dec 18 Ernie Mutschler
- Dec 19 Jonathan Wilcox
Anita Andrews
- Dec 20 Russ Parrish
Mark Goodnow
Leona Bergsman
- Dec 21 Michelle Anderson
Brian Duckett
- Dec 22 Audrey Howard
- Dec 23 Ryleigh South
Ryan Standiford
- Dec 25 Chris Pulley
- Dec 27 Lorraine Crouch
- Dec 31 Richard Strucko



December Anniversaries

- Dec 8 Carol & Bob Emory
- Dec 27 Donna & Bob McWilliams



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
						1
2 Discussion 9am Worship 10am	3	4 Homework 4pm	5 Advent Small Group 6:30pm	6 Seeds 4 Success 2pm Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	7	8
9 Discussion 9am Worship 10am	10	11 Homework 4pm Admin Council 7pm	12  UMW Christmas Social 5:30pm Advent Small Group 6:30pm	13 Seeds 4 Success 2pm Homework 4pm Choir 7pm	14	15
16 Discussion 9am Youth-led Service 10am Cookies with Santa 	17 Bells 7pm	18  Homework & Reading Christmas Party 4-6pm Trustees 6:15	19 Food Pantry 12-2pm Advent Small Group 6:30pm	20	21	22
23 Discussion 9am Worship 10am Prayer Team CANTATA 	24  Family Candlelight Service 5:30pm Candlelight Communion Service 9pm	25 	26 Lunch Bunch 12:15pm	27	28	29
30 Discussion 9am Worship 10am	31  New Year's Eve Interfaith Service 6:30 music 7:00 service					