



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

January 2025

We share our experiences of God’s Kingdom with all, through our faith, love, fellowship, and service. It is our vision to have each person engaged in worship that enriches, ministries that empower, and missions that embrace and affirm all people.

From the Pastor

Beloved of Eastport United Methodist Church,



Happy New Year! As we welcome 2025, I am filled with hope and gratitude for what lies ahead. The close of last year was marked by joy during our Christmas celebrations both at Oscar's Coffee and in the Sanctuary. It warmed my heart to see our community

come together in the spirit of love and celebration.

A standout moment for many was the children’s presentation on December 22nd. I extend my heartfelt thanks to Molly and Elaine for their dedication in preparing our young ones. Their talent reminded us of the wonder of the Christmas season, filling our sanctuary with warmth and joy—a true gift to all present.

Let’s also acknowledge the incredible compassion shown this past year. The United Methodist Women raised funds to support a local family recovering from a house fire. Your generosity has made a significant difference, showcasing our commitment to being the hands and feet of Christ in our community. Our food pantry served nearly 4,000 individuals in 2024—an astounding testament to the dedication of our volunteers and your continued support. Together, we’ve made a tangible impact in combating hunger and providing for those in need.

As we embark on this new year, I am reminded of my favorite hymn, “This is a Day of New Beginnings.”

“This is a day of new beginnings,
Time to remember and move on,
Time to believe what love is bringing,
Laying to rest the pain that’s gone.”

These words encourage us to embrace the fresh starts that God offers. The new year acts like a blank canvas, inviting us to paint it with hope and love. It’s a time for reflection while stepping boldly into the future with faith and confidence.

As we begin 2025, I invite you to reflect on what you wish to leave behind—disappointments, guilt, or grief. Let us instead seek new paths of opportunity to grow closer to God and to support one another.

“Then let us, with the Spirit’s daring,
Step from the past and leave behind
Our disappointment, guilt and grieving,
Seeking new paths, and sure to find.”

What new avenues might God be leading you toward this year? Perhaps deeper engagement in church ministries, reaching out to someone in need, or recommitting to your spiritual practices? Each decision to follow God’s calling not only transforms us but enriches our community.

“Christ is alive, and goes before us,
To show and share what love can do.”

Our call as followers of Christ is to embody love in all that we do. I encourage you to actively share this love with our families, friends, and wider community. Do it! Don’t doubt it! No amount of love given is offered. Remember, love can transform hearts and lives—never underestimate the power of a simple act of kindness or a listening ear. This year, let’s not be afraid to invite newcomers to our table and build relationships that foster community and support.

As we lean into the opportunities of the new year, I encourage you to think about your personal spiritual journey. How can you engage more deeply with scripture, prayer, or service? Aligning ourselves with God's purpose allows us to become vessels of love.



“This is a day of new beginnings; Our God is making all things new.”

Grace and peace,
~ Pastor Chris

A Different Take on Christmas

The sermon below was offered by Smith Broadwell at the Service for the Weary & Wounded on December 21, 2024 at Eastport United Methodist Church. Smith is a graduate of Washington College and completed both their Master of Divinity and Master of Social Work at Boston University. They currently work as a mental health therapist in private practice.



Sermon for the Weary & Wounded

Crows collect trinkets and they offer them to each other and even humans as a form of connection and bonding. Like a crow, I collect quotes and ideas and images and just spread them around the bed I sit in. I find a new one and arrange it in the semi-circle atop my bedding, hanging them on the interior walls of my heart so that when I hold my breath between inhaled and exhaled, I remember what I am learning to know.

As I sat to write for this evening, I didn't have a clear idea of what to share. I just had all of these quotes from my favorite artists and thinkers and feelers. I thought, ugh I wish I could just read these quotes that are propped up on all of the surfaces in my spiritual cave like knick knacks. And then I thought, wait a minute, that's pretty cute. And what else is writing if not a collection of trinkets collected from elsewhere

arranged to be in conversation with one another. So here's a little collection of trinkets arranged with some added commentary especially for you tonight because what our weary world needs is connection and bonding.

Hear this poem by Andrea Gibson: “This year everyone I know had a broken heart, everyone I know cried in private on their way home from a party, and not everyone I know woke up the next morning, and not everyone I know wanted to even though they did. And this year I stood inside of a redwood tree and thought, “This is the sweetest day of my whole life,” and two months later I was sobbing in a parking lot, thinking, “This is the worst day of my whole life,” and a few months later I was dancing in my living room, saying, “This is the best day of my whole...” Have you ever seen the seed of a redwood tree? So tiny. And all of that everything inside of it. All of this everything inside of us.”

All of this everything inside of us... In our full human experience, we come with so many feelings that don't fit neatly with the stories we tell in our current take on the Christmas season. What is tricky is that these stories should fit together inside of us but in our current moment, we have been so impacted by the gospel of capitalism, genocidal collecting of power, that we are fed the idea that joy and pain cannot exist together in the same pursuits. That in order to accept and live with pain, we must be redeemed from it. The idea that pain and suffering must somehow be squashed or ignored or turned around in order to experience joy. But our bodies know even if we don't have words for it that that kind of joy isn't evoked through connection. It comes in the unwrapping of the gift we've been convinced we need in order to experience our value, which is actually shame given a misleading name tag.

Of course we have come to need an entire service set apart from the rest of the advent activities to honor grief and pain. We have been steadily escorted into a simulation of existence that estranges our multiplicities of humanness from one another. Our bodies know deeply that something is off, something is wrong with the dominating philosophic truth of our moment in history. We've been left to cope by compartmentalizing our experiences as what we're supposed to be feeling and what we're not supposed to be feeling at this time of year. This dissonance just becomes louder and louder and louder. We're anxiously exhausted and screaming ‘how can I celebrate at a time like this?’ and lamenting, ‘I don't have time to grieve’ and questioning ‘I don't understand how anyone can feel *insert literally any emotion here* right now.’”

Joy and grief become antagonists of one another in the simulation when in actuality, they are inextricably linked. The poet Rumi writes, "Your grief for what you've lost holds a mirror up to where you're bravely working. Expecting the worst, you look and instead, Here's the joyful face you've been wanting to see. Your hand opens and closes and opens and closes. If it were always a fist or always stretched open, you would be paralyzed. Your deepest presence is in every small contracting and expanding The two as beautifully balanced and coordinated As bird wings."



Theologian Willie James Jennings wrote, "I look at joy as an act of resistance against despair and its forces." Poet and activist, Andrea Gibson, writes, "I have never felt awe and shame at the same time."

Artist and activist, ALOK, writes, "repressed grief is the most fertile ground for hatred to bloom...and that's what's happening across the world right now, repressed grief that becomes militarized."

Joy pulls grief toward her, not to silence grief but to give it a microphone.

Awe shines the light on expansiveness when shame's constriction twists the truth that grief is trying to tell. Joy and awe form a beloved community to bow in reverence when oppression wishes to muffle grief's vibrations.

It is vital that we learn to feel the vibrations of joy and grief and where they are located. We must ask ourselves if it's painfully easy to find where they are or are not? Are they a hum or a whisper? A blaze? A roar? A rumble?

What do joy and grief say about one another?

At times, the truth of our grief changes something for us. It shows us something we no longer believe or that we can no longer hold. It can illuminate what we need more of or what we have valued beyond measure. Sometimes the grief shows up or shows us parts of ourselves we want but don't know how to comfortably fit into quite yet.

Our awe and joy can show us something we've always known but haven't quite figured out how to show others, something that was always there but wasn't

obvious until now, not obvious yet but we want it to be. We want to grow it, cultivate it. What do we no longer want to hold space for? What do we no longer need? How do we say thank you for what those things meant to us at the time so we can continue to move?

So, we listen to the rumble of our grief, the rhythm of our awe, and the echoes of our joy. Let's notice the spaces where these emotions reside within us. Considering what they reveal about ourselves, our needs, and our desires. With these insights we get to cultivate a life that adores the full spectrum of human experience, an advent where joy and grief not only coexist but open us up to a fuller experience of one another. Maybe we get to go from here, thinking about how we can bring one another trinkets of our truth, knick knacks that show our pain, our love, our regret, our delight, what we yearn for.

January UMW Dinner



The United Methodist Women/United Women in Faith will have a pot luck dinner and a gift exchange (\$10 limit) at our next meeting on January 7th at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. All women of the church are invited to participate.

THANKS FOR YOUR HELP WITH THE UMW CHRISTMAS MISSION

Thanks to your help, we collected \$1,780 to help a single mother of four children (ages 5, 8, 11, and 20) who recently lost all of their belongings in a house fire. We bought them some Christmas presents and provided a check to help with necessities. This single mother was overwhelmed by EUMC's generosity and asked that her heartfelt appreciation be passed on to you. Thanks to all who donated! ~ *Kathy Duckett*



Homework Christmas Party

All of the children who had been regular participants in the Homework and Reading Program enjoyed their traditional Christmas party as the first half of the academic year drew to a close.

The festivities got underway with several rounds of Christmas Bingo with the winners promised an ice cream treat in the New Year. When the time approached to welcome Santa's arrival, the youngest child (first grader Claudio) rang a bell with enthusiasm. Excitement grew with the sound of "Ho Ho Ho" echoing in the corridor. The children shrieked with joy when Santa (aka Les Johnson) entered the classroom. Santa revealed wrapped gifts hidden



behind the classroom curtain and presented them in turn to each of the children. The presents reflected "wish lists" prepared by the kids, with the gifts obtained by the Homework volunteers. After Santa departed, the children enjoyed cookies and punch. One of the mothers

attended the party as did an older brother who had been a "graduate" of the Homework program (attending since kindergarten) and is now in high school.

Many thanks to those who helped to make the party a success: Amaza (Scottie) Reid, Anne Heald, Judy Gonsalves, Les Johnson, Mike Mullins, MiMi Schaffer, Neil Bergsman, Therese Borchard, and Siole and Skye Bailey. ~ Mike Keller

Garden & Maintenance News

We will have a winter cleanup day on Sunday, February 16th, after church service. We hope to clean the church carpets, clean out window wells, dust, etc. All help will be greatly appreciated.

Jerry and I are still bagging up lots of leaves. Some of our trees drop their leaves very late. So, if you missed our fall cleanup day, please let us know if you can help sometime. We cleaned out the front stairwell, cleaned out cob webs inside and outside, changed time on clocks, put new batteries in the sump pump alarm and cleaned out the clogged tubing. We tried to repair



the lawnmower and light in the chapel but need to do some more work on them.

Please keep all our workers and volunteers in your prayers to stay safe while they do repairs on our church. If anyone has any extra time and can help with church gardens, lawns, and maintenance, we would greatly appreciate it. Please contact Joanne or Jerry Christofel at msjohara@yahoo.com or 410-703-0159.

Mark your calendars: Church Winter Cleanup Day, Sunday, February 16, after the service.

January Pantry Focus: Diapers!

We're collecting diapers for the January 18th food pantry. Since new baby sizes are usually plentiful, we are specifically looking for sizes 4 to 7. You can bring them to church Sunday morning, drop them by the office, or use Rachel's easy way: <https://tinyurl.com/januarypantrycollection>.



Here Mae and Rachel show off your December sock donations. As always, many thanks for your participation and generosity.

All are welcome to help at the pantry anytime. Set-up is at 10am. Or just hang out and be a friend.

The Morning at Oscar's

EUMC and the community gathered at Oscar's on Christmas Eve morning for coffee, cocoa and joyful holiday singing. Thanks to all who participated, and special thanks to **Oscar's Coffee!**



Lessons and Carols

What a blessing it is to have people who step up and carry on when the pastor and music director take a much deserved end-of-year break.



Mike Keller
David Emenheiser
Jill Peddicord
Carolyn Sonnen

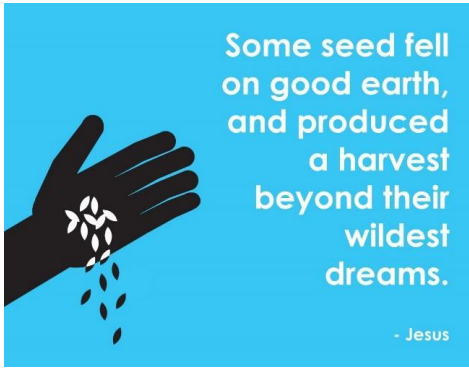
Our Sunday School

In December the Sunday School kids made tree ornaments and Advent wreaths. The group also worked together to plan a performance, assign roles and choose costumes. They practiced at home and showed up on December 22 to read and act out a charming version of The Christmas Story. Special thanks to Alicia O'Brien and Elaine "Mrs. Mac" Fors for helping support the children and Molly! ~ *Molly Estabrook*



EUMC's Resolutions

In the Parable of the Sower, Jesus described the ways people might receive the message by likening them to soils. As gardeners know, most plants thrive in earth cleared of rocks, weeds, brambles, and clods. This good earth allows the seed to root and grow producing abundance. Now is the time for each of us to prepare ourselves for what is upcoming in 2025 and beyond!



To tend the soil of our church's life, we are going to be asking a number of folks to fill out a survey. It will help us understand our people's opinions and experiences in a variety of areas, so that we can determine our readiness as a group to step out into significant new mission endeavors.

We value your answers.

We want you in the conversation!

~ David Emenheiser

The Spire is published monthly by Eastport United Methodist Church, 926 Bay Ridge Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403. 410.263.5490
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January Birthdays



Jan 4 Mae Bergsman
Jan 7 Lauren Moyer
Cyndi Councill
Jan 9 Rachel Goad
Jan 11 Eunice Corse
Devin Clary
Jan 12 Eric Edstrom
Jan 13 Charlotte Kerns
Jan 14 Nathan Somers
Jan 15 Mary Jane Finkle
Jan 18 Mike Wurst
Wendy Edstrom
Jan 21 Ed Owen
Jan 22 Smith Broadwell
Jan 23 Steve Duckett
Jan 24 Rusty Mack
Jan 26 Kim Wilcox
Jan 27 Matt Ficca
Jan 28 Virginia Schultz
Jan 31 Jaden Vasquez

January Anniversaries



Jan 1 Mitch & Barbara Krebs
Jan 3 Jerry & Joanne Christofel
Jan 12 Bill & Susan Schneider
Jan 30 Marty & Myrna Dobbs



Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 Happy New Year	2 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	3	4
5 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am	6	7 Homework & Reading 4pm UMW Dinner 5:30pm SPRC 7pm	8	9 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	10 Small Group with Rachel 8:30am	11
12 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School	13	14 Homework & Reading 4pm Divine Diners Lunch 12pm @Sammy's	15	16 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	17	18 Community Food & Diaper Pantry 11am (Setup 10am)
19 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am	20	21 NO Homework	22	23 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	24	25
26 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School	27	28 Homework & Reading 4pm Divine Diners Adams 5:30pm Admin Council 7pm	29	30 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	31 Small Group with Rachel 9am	

WEEKLY EVENTS

SUNDAY



CONVERSATIONS IN FAITH 9:15 AM
SUNDAY MORNING WORSHIP 10 AM
CHILDREN'S SUNDAY SCHOOL 2ND/4TH 10:15 AM
COFFEE HOUR 11 AM

MONDAY



AFTER SCHOOL W/ CHARTING CAREERS 3PM
NARCOTICS ANONYMOUS 7 PM

TUESDAY



ESL CLASSES W/ CENTRO DE AYUDA 10 AM
HOMEWORK & READING PROGRAM 4 PM
DIVINE DINERS 2ND TUES, 12 PM;
DIVINE DINERS 4TH TUES, 5:30 PM.

WEDNESDAY



ESL CLASSES W/ CENTRO DE AYUDA 10 AM
AFTER SCHOOL W/ CHARTING CAREERS
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 8:30 PM

THURSDAY



ESL CLASSES W/ CENTRO DE AYUDA 10 AM
HOMEWORK & READING PROGRAM 4 PM
ARTS & ROBOTICS W/ MD HALL 5 PM
EUMC CHOIR REHEARSAL 7 PM

FRIDAY



SMALL GROUP W/ RACHEL 9 AM
EUMC BAND REHEARSAL 10 AM
ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 7 PM
MY BROTHER'S KEEPER MENTORING 6 PM

SATURDAY



COMMUNITY FOOD PANTRY 3RD SAT, 10 AM

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