



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

August 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,

A couple weeks ago, I went with Daniel to do some continuing education work in Seattle/Portland. For Daniel, it was part of a class he was taking for his Doctorate degree. I was able to go along and participate in the interviews and site visits to learn what I could as well. I wanted to use this newsletter article as a place to share some of our learning from our brothers and sisters in Christ in the Pacific Northwest. The directed study that Daniel is doing is called, “Missional Innovation in Contemporary Methodism.” The purpose of the class was to discover what new things God is up in the Pacific Northwest where Methodists are living in a society that is “post-Christian.” Allow me to explain:

According to Christopher James in his book, *Post-Christian Soil: Theology and Practice*, 40% of people living in Seattle have no religious affiliation. This is the highest percentage of religiously unaffiliated inhabitants among major metropolitan areas in the United States. In other words, Seattle is one of the most difficult places for Christian churches to survive. Furthermore, James believes that Seattle is foreshadowing trends growing around the country. However, that is not cause for despair, for he writes, “I am convinced that these first decades of the twenty-first century ought to be seen not only as a period of church decline but also, and more importantly, as a vibrant season of ecclesial renewal and rebirth. This book is about the future of church in the United States, a future that is already present in Seattle.”

So here’s what we noticed. In the Methodist world in particular, formerly vibrant, growing congregations are no more. These churches are giving birth to new church starts. The church restarts, even if they are

operating out of the same building, look very different from the church that used to be. Also the new churches being planted are deeply contextual, meaning, they look different from one another. They are rooted in reconnecting to the communities in which they are located and the people who live there.

For example, in Seattle, there is a church called Mountain and Valley. One of their missions is to be a church that supports and partners with local nonprofits and artists to help them showcase their art and causes. One of the ways they do this is by renting, at very affordable prices, their church facility as office space to them during the week. Mountain and Valley provides Wi-Fi, office equipment, meeting space, gallery space, just to name a few. They call this innovative space sharing ministry “The Collaboratory” and their aim is just that. This ministry has allowed the church not only to receive income but most importantly, the opportunity to connect with people doing great things and who are not members of the congregation. Through this, they have formed partnerships and work together to make their community a better place.

We also met with a dinner church, a pastor who created a folding laundromat ministry, a church who hosts open mic poetry slams on social justice issues, and a District Superintendent who lives in an intentional community called Peace House with 12 others where they pursue a shared rule of life through prayer, meals, and a ministry of presence in their community together. We saw new life being born in laity learning to do community organizing and a triad of pastors (Presbyterian, Methodist, and Reformed) coming together to begin a local coffee shop community gathering space and co-plant a church while working as baristas.

43rd Annual Peach Festival, Aug 4

What's also interesting is that although we were mostly focused on the Methodists, there were many different denominations we ran into who were doing the same kind of work and are partnering with Methodists. Erin Martin, the District Superintendent who we met with at the Peace House in Portland, Oregon, said that one sign that the Spirit is truly at work is that people from very different communities are dreaming the same dream. A dream of church renewal and resurrection, being reborn in new ways of life, ways that matter and bring meaning to people who have been very disconnected from the church.

Many of these churches that we visited have found that they must innovate or die, and currently are in experimental mode. They try something, pause, evaluate it, and either continue, tweak, or let it go so there is space to try something else.

What I began meditating on as we came back, is that as new as this is, it also really isn't new. This is who we are, or were, as Methodists. It is how we Methodists began our movement and spread throughout the world. Methodism began as a reform movement within a dying institutional church, and continued to crescendo outward through lots of social entrepreneurship and innovation, especially aimed at the marginalized, the poor, the neglected

I came back with a sense of hope for how God's work and mission is moving forward in new and surprising ways even in challenging places such as Seattle. As I close this article, I want to share with you some thoughts from Gregory Jones, former Dean of Duke Divinity School in his book, *Christian Social Innovation: Renewing Wesleyan Witness*. In it, he writes, "It is crucial for the Church's own internal integrity and witness that we rediscover a vision for social innovation and entrepreneurship. We need to recover this witness not so we might be relevant, but rather as an intrinsic part of our witness to the God who we believe is making all things new by the power of the Holy Spirit. Ironically, the best way we can become relevant is not by focusing on how to be relevant, but rather by rediscovering and renewing our own mission and purpose."

May we pray for the Spirit to help us discern how we are to be Christ's church in Eastport faithfully in this time and place.

~ Love & Light,
Pastor Michelle

It's that time again! If you're reading this electronically, the big work week has begun. Furniture has been moved out of the chapel. The bake table is shaping up. Kitchen is getting prepped. As the week goes on we will see more and more of each other, slicing, peeling cutting, boxing, labeling, etc. Saturday is the big day – starting at 7:30 a.m. as the tent goes up, the grill is prepped, corn is shucked.... We serve at noon.



AUGUST 4, NOON TO 5 PM
\$15 ADULT, \$7 CHILD
SEE YOU THERE!

I'll Be Missing You

There are some very special seasons in our lives and some very special seasons in the life of the church. One of the special seasons at Eastport is Peach Festival season. It's a season where every hand is welcomed, and indeed, needed. Sometimes, the special seasons in our lives conflict with those seasons of the church. Two years ago that happened when I had Eli. Eli was barely two weeks old when Peach Festival happened, and I was out on maternity leave still recovering from surgery and missed it. Those who were working the day before did get a quick surprise visit from Eli and I, our first time out of the house. This year coincides with one of the most significant life changes for my best friend Holly. She is getting married on the day of Peach Festival, and I am her matron of honor. Just as she supported me on my wedding day by being my maid of honor now it's my turn. So I will miss the Peach Festival this year and the week of the work leading up to it since we will be dropping Eli off at the beach to spend time with his cousins and grandparents. Please know that, even from afar, you all will be

thought of and prayed for, and that I will miss being there. I know, with as many years as Peach Festival has been running under the fine laity of EUMC, that all will go smoothly. I appreciate all the hard work you all will be putting in and I sure hope you save me some of that delicious spiced peach jam!

~ *Pastor Michelle*

United to Love: Standing Together in
Love and Resisting Hate
Sunday, August 12, 2018 | 11 am- 3 pm
| National Mall-4th Street NW | DC

A National Call from Bishop
Easterling:

*"It is my belief that the way to
respond to negativity is not by
silencing it; rather, the outpouring of
love should be so strong as to
overwhelm it. In that spirit, our
numbers should completely
overwhelm and drown out any
messages of hate, exclusion, or
division." – Bishop LaTrelle
Easterling*

United to Love Rally

August 12 marks the first anniversary of the Unite the Right rally in Charlottesville. Unfortunately, organizers hope to recreate the white supremacist rally in Lafayette Square in Washington, DC. As a prayerful response and call to action, the Baltimore-Washington Conference of The United Methodist Church will host a United to Love: Rally for Love, Peace, and Justice on Sunday, August 12, from 11 a.m. to 3 p.m. on the National Mall.

EUMC folks will carpool to DC after church to join the United to Love Rally at 1 p.m. Contact the church office 410-263-5490 if you would like to go with us.

Our Town, Our Faith

On Thursday, June 28, life in Annapolis changed forever. Our small town joined the unfortunate list of Columbine, Aurora, Orlando, and Sandy Hook. Towns that will always be linked to mass shootings. And even as our community reeled from the news of the tragedy at the Capital Gazette newspaper, the remaining staff put out a paper the next day.

During Worship the following Sunday here at Eastport, we lit candles and prayed for the victims and survivors. Later that



night, about 150 United Methodists from more than a dozen Annapolis area churches came together at Calvary UMC for a prayer vigil. Rev. Wilkins-Arnold welcomed worshippers saying “There’s really something powerful that happens when God’s people pray. I’m sorry that we’re here, but I’m proud that we’re here.”

Five white candles flickered on the altar as prayers were offered for the victims, for the first responders, for those suffering for mental health issues, for the community and more. Pastor Michelle was tasked with praying for the perpetrator, an incredibly difficult prayer. She did an admirable job and reminded us that “Jesus, in the place of Golgotha, even on the cross, spent one of his precious dying breaths to speak words of loving-kindness over those who crucified him.”

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling gave the reflection and offered words of hope and comfort to our grieving community. She spoke from Isaiah 2:2-5 and reminded us that how we are treating each other right now matters. The Bishop said, “We cannot claim this passage of Scripture to assuage our grief and comfort our wound and then leave this sanctuary and return to lives of cruelty and cursing one another out. We cannot claim this Scripture and try to hold to the promises that it has for us and then still live like people beneath the dignity of the almighty God.”

It was a very moving and powerful service and I’m proud to be a part of this community of faith.

~ *Jill Peddicord*

A Labyrinth in Eastport



St. Luke's, our neighbor in Eastport, has labyrinth walks on the third Saturday of each month at noon. Each month, there is a special focus. On August 18 they will have their annual Fun Walk: an opportunity to approach prayer with a sense of playfulness and delight.

Labyrinth walks take place rain or shine; they're free of charge and everyone is welcome. A hand held labyrinth is available as an alternative to walking.

The labyrinth is an ancient pattern for walking meditation or prayer shared by many faiths and cultures. A journey to the center of the labyrinth and back out again can be a source of healing, joy, and peace.

Serenity Prayer

God grant me the serenity
to accept the things I cannot change;
courage to change the things I can;
and wisdom to know the difference.

Living one day at a time;
Enjoying one moment at a time;
Accepting hardships as the pathway to peace;
Taking, as Jesus did, this sinful world
as it is, not as I would have it;
Trusting that He will make all things right
if I surrender to His Will;
That I may be reasonably happy in this life
and supremely happy with Him
Forever in the next.

Amen.

--Reinhold Niebuhr

August Birthdays

- Aug 2 Adam Valentine
Aug 3 Marty Dobbs
Aug 8 Bill Malamphy
Aug 17 June Stevens
Angela Krebs
Aug 18 Isaiah Smith
Aug 19 Carole Williams
Aug 20 Ruth Bowen
Aug 23 Rawle Green
Aug 26 Daniel Mejia
Aug 28 Lisa Parish
Erin Connor
Aug 29 Albert Stevens
Tegan Kopp
July 20 Megan Wurst
Molly Parrish
Aug 30 Linda Harrison
Aug 31 Jean Strucko

August Anniversaries

- Aug 5 Richard & Margie Hughes
Aug 7 John & Debbie Morgan
Aug 14 Bill Riggs & JoAnn Kulesza
Aug 21 Tom & Elizabeth Eicher
Aug 22 Ed & Sharon Owen

The Spire is published monthly by Eastport United Methodist Church, 926 Bay Ridge Ave., Annapolis, MD 21403. 410.263.5490
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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1	2	3	4 43 rd Peach Festival 
PEACH FESTIVAL WORK WEEK						
5 Discussion 9am Worship 10am	6	7 Bible Study 7pm	8	9	10	11
12 Discussion 9am Worship 10am	13	14 Bible Study 7pm	15 Food Pantry 12-2pm	16	17 	18
19 Discussion 9am Worship 10am WORSHIP TEAM MEETING	20	21 Trustees 6:15pm Bible Study 7pm Admin Council 7:15pm	22 Lunch Bunch 12:15pm SPRC 7pm	23	24	25
26 Discussion 9am Worship 10am CONFIRMATION Prayer Team	27	28	29	30	31 	

**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 10:15 a.m.
Office Hours 9:30-3:30 Monday-Friday
Office Closed 12-1 p.m. for Lunch**



www.eastportumc.org