



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

January 2024

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.

The Pastor’s Corner

Friends of Eastport United Methodist,

As we turn our faces toward a new year, I invite you to revisit the familiar scene of Jesus’ birth with fresh eyes. Let’s peel back the layers of sentimentality and Hallmark imagery that often obscure the radical truth at the heart of the Nativity story.

Remember, dear friends, that night in Bethlehem was no fairy tale. It was an ordinary journey for Mary and Joseph, undertaken amid the drudgery of a required census. Taxes. The stable wasn’t a cozy tableau; it was a crowded, unlikely place where God chose to enter our world. And childbirth, let’s be honest, is rarely a moment of majestic serenity. It’s messy, vulnerable, and far from picture-perfect.

Yet, it is in this ordinariness, this vulnerability, that the true message of Christmas shines brightest. God doesn’t come to us in pomp and circumstance; God comes to us in the midst of our everyday struggles, our weariness, our pain. Emmanuel, God with us, is not just a comforting phrase; it’s a declaration of solidarity. God walks with us, not just on special occasions, but in the everyday, the drudgery, the grit of human existence.

This is good news, my friends, not because it denies the hardship, but because it offers hope within it. Just as Mary laid Jesus in a manger, finding a place for God even in the midst of limitations, so too are we called to make room for God in our lives.

This doesn’t mean building extravagant nativity scenes or forcing manufactured joy. It means choosing love, even when it’s hard. It means living with integrity, even when the world pushes us toward compromise. It means making space for the stranger, the neighbor, the one who doesn’t fit neatly into our circles. It means glimpsing God’s faithfulness in the

quiet moments, the unexpected surprises, the small acts of kindness that pierce through the darkness.

In this new year, let us move beyond the Hallmark images and embrace the radical ordinariness of the Nativity. Let us find God in the midst of our lives, in the joys and the struggles, the celebrations and the quiet moments. Let us make room for the good news, for the love, for the Emmanuel who walks beside us every step of the way.

May this year be filled with wonder and gratitude, and may the light of Christ continue to shine, illuminating the path ahead.

*Grace and peace,
~ Pastor Chris*

UMW/Women in Faith



January UMW Meeting: The United Methodist Women/Women in Faith will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, January 2, at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. We will have a short business meeting followed by devotions. You are welcome to bring a bagged meal and drink; dessert will be provided. All women of the church are invited to participate.

Thank You for Grocery Gift Card Donations for Bowman Place: Thanks to members and friends of EUMC, we were able to provide 57 grocery store gift cards to the residents of Bowman Place who signed up to receive them. The UMW extends heartfelt thanks to everyone who participated. Please know that your efforts helped brighten and bless the lives of the recipients. THANK YOU!

~ Kathy Duckett



The Poinsettias and Food Pantry Contributions are given

In Memory Of

Leonard and Vivian Keller by Michael Keller

Sally Colburn by Evie, Greg and Family

Carl D. Corse, Jr. by Eunice Corse

Charles Grayston by Eunice Corse

Sara Kurtz by Eunice Corse

Our beloved sister, Suzie Finkle,

by Jim and Mary Jane Finkle

Lee Bergsman by Valerie and Neil

Ethel and Joseph Olszewski by Joanne Christofel

Robert Gibbons Jr. by Ruth

Lyndsay Valentine by Nana

Mary Jones by Ruth

Catherine Lynn Schwarz by her mother, Barbara Schwarz

Grandma Sinclair by Will Cunha

Jean Harper by Garrett Harper

In Honor Of

Pastor Chris and his family by Eunice Corse

Kathy and Steve Duckett, our daughter and "son,"

by Jim and Mary Jane Finkle

Carol and Al Stevens, our daughter and "son,"

by Jim and Mary Jane Finkle

Our Grandsons: Brian and Brady, Jamie and Andrew,

by Papa and Mimi Finkle

Shirley Devaris by Valerie and Neil

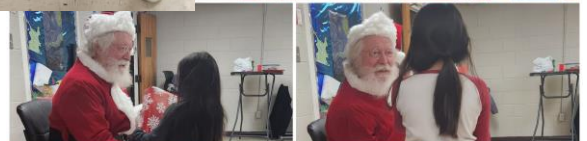
Emily Jelassi given by Mom and Dad (Reg and Jane Barss)

Homework & Reading

The Homework and Reading Program concluded a successful fall term with a fun-filled Christmas party. All of the eleven children who are enrolled in the program attended, along with several parents. The kids enjoyed puppet-making, cookie decoration, and a visit by Santa (aka Les) who distributed gifts that were on their "wish lists." ~ *Mike Keller*



Many thanks to all the volunteers who made this happen!



Faith in Action

The Faith in Action Team is reviving the outreach and advocacy ministry of EUMC this month. Of course, you are already part of this important ministry by being a witness of Christ Jesus in your community. EUMC does not thrive without you. God brought you to us for a reason – to be loved and made whole. And through us, that includes you, God wants to love and make whole our neighbors. We invite you to be part of intentional outreach and advocacy.

How do I reach our neighbors? How do we raise our voices to reduce inequity? Together we know the unmet needs of our community and we have ideas about how to meet them. Please come to one of our Congregation Community Conversations as we uncover these answers with one another. We will meet in the Chapel:

- January 3 at 7pm
- January 9 at 9am
- January 14 at noon

~ David Emenheiser
emenheiserde@gmail.com, 410-302-6844



camp and I will drop off the outside games to the PE department at a local school. Molly will use the craft items for our Sunday school children. Lightbulbs were replaced in the women's bathroom and a plumber was hired to replace the leaking hot water heater, expansion tank, and pump.

On Sunday, January 21st we will have an indoor work session for about an hour after church service. If you can spare a bit of time to help with some cleanup, we will be ever so grateful.

Please keep all our workers and volunteers in your prayers to stay safe while they do repairs on our church. A big thanks to Mike Keller for donating the funds needed for the new wall and doors between the hall and chapel. 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 410-295-5474.



Garden & Maintenance News



We continue to mulch leaves as they continue to fall. Thanks to Peanut's husband who has offered to fix the leaf blower. New batteries were installed in the thermostat in Homework and Reading classroom. The church top row of 32 shutters were washed, sanded, primed, and painted this time. Jerry took down the ones that needed a lot of work so I could move them down to the basement to fix. We did 64 shutters altogether! The tiny nursery school toilet was replaced with a standard size one. The children's rug in church was washed. The donated conference table and chairs (that Jill was able to get donated from the police department) were moved to the pastor's office. Thanks to Sam for helping Jill deliver them. I organized all the leftover toys and school supplies from the summer camp and gave them away at our last pantry day. That was a big hit. Jenna took some of the bigger toys for the Methodist



Bring your small gifts to church
for the January 20th Food Pantry:
SCRUB BRUSHES and SPONGES



Sunday School Happenings

The Sunday School class heard the story of Mary learning she would have Baby Jesus. We drew our own Annunciation pictures.



coordinator. **Erin Snell, from Charting Careers, a community partner supporting young people with academics and employment.

When we share our gifts with the church, our abundance represents so much more. The work we enable with these resources by reaching out into the community is the true measure of our faith, and it exemplifies our motto, "You Are Loved."



Lisa Lutz



Mike Keller

Ministry Moments

Eastport United Methodist Church is a vibrant, active community of members who believe that church occurs not only within our own sanctuary, but that we must "be" the church outside of our own doors. During November and December, we included brief "Ministry Moments" into our services, to highlight all of the many ways we support Eastport community ministries.

Our speakers included: **Kevin & Sally Hight, Thanksgiving food drive **Kathy Duckett, UMW's Bowman Place Christmas gift cards, **Lisa Lutz, from "Just One Sweater" **Mike Keller, on behalf of the EUMC Homework & Reading Club **Paulina Phillips, Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival **Tony Fowler, speaking on the 12 step groups that meet in our church **Rachel Goad, on behalf of Diesha Contee, our Community Navigator and food pantry



Paulina Phillips



Erin Snell



Tony Fowler



Rachel Goad for Diesha Contee

January Anniversaries



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

January Birthdays



- Jan 4 Mae Bergsman
- Jan 7 Cyndi Councill
Lauren Moyer
- Jan 11 Eunice Corse
Devin Clary
- Jan 12 Eric Edstrom
- Jan 13 Charlotte Kerns
- Jan 14 Nathan Somers
- Jan 15 Mary Jane Finkle
- Jan 16 Gerald Crouch
- 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

*I offer you peace.
I offer you love.
I offer you friendship.
I see your beauty.
I hear your need.
I feel your feelings.
My wisdom flows from
The Highest Source.
I salute that Source in you.
Let us work together
For unity and love.*

(Gandhi's Prayer for Peace)

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
	1	2 Homework & Reading 4pm UMW/Women in Faith 5:30pm	3 Faith in Action Team 7pm	4 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	5	6
	7 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am	8	9 Faith in Action Team 9am Divine Diners Lunch 12 noon @ Sammy's Homework & Reading 4pm	10	11 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	12
14 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School Faith in Action Team 12noon	15 MLK, Jr National Day of Service 	16 Homework & Reading 4pm	17	18 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	19	20 Community Food & Diaper Pantry 11am (Setup 10am)
21 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am *Cleanup help needed after church*	22	23 Homework & Reading 4pm Divine Diners Supper Club 5:00 Adam's Admin Council 7pm	24	25 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	26 	27
28 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School	29	30 Homework & Reading 4pm	31	UMW/Women in Faith Next meeting: February 6, 5:30pm		

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**Eastport United Methodist Church
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Sunday Worship Service 10:00 a.m.
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