



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

June 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

Friends of Eastport United Methodist Church,

Summer is (nearly) here and its beauty is scattered everywhere, but how we overlook it! We rush past it without noticing, or we simply forget to name it when we encounter it. A dandelion, a carefully set blanket on the lawn, an old photograph, the shade tree in your yard, a weathered face, clouds drifting by, a tune that becomes an earworm, a new friend, a significant moment in history, lasting commitments, or even the face in the mirror: beauty is all around us, waiting to be noticed, cherished, pointed out, and shared. As the days grow longer and the world seems to burst with new life, there's an invitation to simply observe. "Every experience of beauty points to infinity," as one thinker put it.

Why is there so much beauty in our world? This place could have been just dirt, rock, efficiency, and pure function. Yet, the world was shaped with what seemed unnecessary, even inefficient.

Some believe that the universe was made beautiful to reflect its own inherent splendor. The world is many things, but at its core, it seems to be deeply beautiful. Our role is to notice, to be awed, and to be delighted.

We've all heard that "beauty is in the eye of the beholder," but it's not just a matter of personal preference. When we reduce things to a list of what we individually like or don't, we miss out. As we allow ourselves to explore beauty, we learn to see better. We'll notice how every person and every thing participates in a deeper goodness and beauty. We're surrounded by it.

Of course, beauty can also be distorted and damaged, and there's so much destruction. Isn't most ugliness really beauty that's been hurt or fallen on hard times?

And aren't we often quick to pinpoint what's ugly when there's actually beauty present? There can even be a profound beauty in difficult times. Or consider the stunning array of colorful leaves in autumn: what you're looking at is a natural process of decline, yet it's breathtaking.

This focus on beauty, especially as summer invites us to slow down, might seem inefficient and unproductive. Perhaps we can all take a moment to consider these things. The world is full of beauty. Given to us to appreciate and enjoy with wonder and awe. The least we can do is notice.

~ Grace and peace, Pastor Chris

Ecumenical Pride Worship Service

We are honored to host this year's Annapolis Ecumenical Pride Worship Service on June 1st right here in our sanctuary! The theme for this special gathering is "Growing in Pride. Growing in Community." Join us for a time of prayer, reflection, and celebration alongside members from at least 14 other area churches. It's a powerful opportunity to come together in faith and fellowship.

Prayer Time



Join us for a new weekly time of prayer, **Thursdays from 7:30 to 8:30 AM**, designed to help you connect before work and daily routines begin. We'll gather in the **Sanctuary**, a space for silent reflection and stillness, while the **Chapel** will be open for more movement or audible prayer. All are welcome to come and dedicate this hour to connecting with God.



Bragging Time!

If you have just graduated, or a member of your family has, we'd love to share your pride in this newsletter. Send a picture and information to corseec@msn.com and we'll post it in the July Spire.



Samuel Jacob Newquist graduated from Broadneck High School and will attend Anne Arundel Community College in the fall, studying early childhood education. Sam is the grandson of Harriet (Peanuts) and Tom Newquist.

Open Mic Night

Join us June 7 at 7pm for an evening of stories, songs, and shared laughter at our open mic night! Whether you're a seasoned performer or just want to share a piece of your heart, all are welcome. Come listen, connect, and enjoy the diverse talents within our community. Refreshments provided.



Interested in performing? sign-up at eastportumc.org/open-mic



We'd love to hear about your travels this summer. Send a picture and a little description and we will share it in the Spire.

email: corseec@msn.com

Garden & Maintenance News

Frequently people will ask me why we spend so much time at church doing all the repairs. My short answer is always because of all the wonderful work that all the other volunteers do in the church and community. But of course, the long answer is that if there is no longer a church building or so much money must be spent on repairs, then the church does not have the funds to do the other church work. Which makes me think of the gospel about the woman who was complaining to Jesus about her sister not helping with chores. I do not think the response from Jesus was complete. Yes, it is good that the one sister spent her time listening to Jesus's teaching but she was only able to do so because someone else was doing the chores. So, when we are cutting grass and doing repairs at church, I always think that we enable members of our church to do the bible study, tutoring, food pantry, and other charitable work. So, keep it up everybody!

Thanks to Mike Keller for raking mulch in the playground and Tyrone Brown for painting the white cross for Greenscape day, picking up trash, and trimming low branches from tree. Jerry and I moved 2100



lbs of mulch and 200 lbs of sand into the playground and gardens. We planted 18 plants, put down grass seed, trimmed bushes and trees, and dug out a dead bush in the playground. Thanks to Sam Coates for disposing of boxes after the food pantry so there was room to put all the tree branches that came down in the dumpster. Thanks also to Rusty Mack for helping us cut the grass and Barbara Krebs for helping pull weeds in the playground again. Jerry repaired the piping that was leaking on the back of the ice machine in the kitchen. We started spraying weed

killer on the walkways and playground. We received an estimate for trimming the trees near the playground. Roof repairs were completed. New scuppers and slate shingles above hallway window and flat roof over Fellowship Hall was sealed around seams and edges.

~ Joanne Christofel

Food Pantry

We are very grateful for all the many folks that make our community food pantry a success. Whether you're dropping off diapers during the week, sorting clothing, folding sweaters, stacking cans, baking cookies, setting up tables, or breaking down boxes, remember it is no small task when done with great love.



This month our collection item is deodorant/antiperspirant. Please pick-up an extra stick or two and bring them by the church office or on Sunday morning.

Methodist Women News

The United Methodist Women/United Women in Faith will hold their next meeting on Tuesday, June 3, at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. There will be a short business meeting followed by devotions. All women of the



church are invited to participate. You are welcome to bring a bagged meal and drink; dessert will be provided. The group will not meet in July or August, but will reconvene in September.

At our April meeting, the United Methodist Women voted to donate a total of \$3,900 to the following missions:

- Chrysalis House in Crownsville, a residential addiction treatment program for women and their children;
- The Blue Ribbon Project, which supports victims of child abuse and supports those in foster care;
- Mirah's Closet, a local foster care closet dedicated to providing children and teens in foster care with essential items, such as clothing, toiletries, school supplies, and other needed items (under the umbrella of the Blue Ribbon Project);
- Seeds 4 Success, which provides local children with the skills and support to achieve success in school and life;
- the YWCA of Annapolis and Anne Arundel County, which provides a safe house and support services for domestic violence and sexual assault survivors;
- Charting Careers, which inspires youth to discover their power and reach their goals through transformative mentoring, life-enriching opportunities, and family partnership;
- Faith House, which consists of two employment-focused programs in Frederick, Maryland, that include housing and a safe place for women and women with children. These programs provide opportunities for residents to heal from trauma while developing the skills necessary to secure & maintain employment, establish housing goals, and build a life of resiliency;
- the Susanna Wesley House in Baltimore, which provides women and their children with group living in a home-like setting as well as schooling, job training, and counseling; and
- Missions supported by the Baltimore-Washington Conference United Women in Faith.



In May, the United Methodist Women in Faith volunteered at the Blue Ribbon Project in Crownsville. The Blue Ribbon Project offers a

variety of programs that directly serve abused and neglected children in our community, youth in foster care, as well as adult survivors of abuse and neglect. The group received an introductory briefing about the organization, toured the facility, and then performed a variety of tasks, including filling backpacks for children entering the foster care system; folding, counting, and storing blankets and stuffed animals that will be put into the backpacks; sorting hangers for Mirah's Closet; and making up name tag lanyards for a Blue Ribbon Project event. ~ Kathy Duckett



Homework & Reading kids enjoying end of season activities. They decorated the cookies themselves!



Sunday School children carefully crafting Mother's Day surprises!

EUMC Missional Action Project

We have made progress in achieving our objectives, but would like your input and help. What are your ideas and talents?

Reach Out: We continue to strengthen the ways we serve the community. In these times of rapid change, EUMC is mindful to maintain support and services to our neighbors, especially the most vulnerable and marginalized.

Reach In: We are developing plans for several small groups. It's still too early to announce the topics, dates, or times. We welcome any suggestions. Who knows your idea might be one that is in the works and you could take part in creating the opportunity!

Reach Deep: We are starting a weekly time of prayer beginning June 5. In the mornings before work and other responsibilities, you are welcome to come to pray. Each Thursday 7:30 – 8:30am.

~ David Emenheiser

We Are Called as Christians

Why is our church so excited about Annapolis Pride? Why is it so involved with the Anne Arundel Affirming Alliance? Eastport United Methodist Church is called to be a beacon of hope and a place of profound welcome – a lighthouse guiding all people, without exception, to the transformative love of Jesus Christ and providing a nurturing community for discipleship. In a world where many still experience marginalization and hurt, this calling compels us to be explicitly and actively affirming, particularly towards the LGBTQ+ community. This is not merely a matter of



social trend; it is a matter of life and faith, underscored by heartbreaking data and a deeper understanding of the Gospel.

Data from organizations like The Trevor Project reveals a challenging reality: LGBTQ youth experience significantly higher rates of anxiety, depression, and suicidal ideation compared to their non-LGBTQ peers. Their surveys consistently highlight that discrimination and lack of acceptance, including within religious contexts, contribute directly to these devastating outcomes. For example, recent data shows that LGBTQ youth who reported feeling high social support from their family and communities reported attempting suicide at significantly lower rates. This underscores the life-saving power of acceptance and belonging.

It's important to understand that there's a meaningful difference between being "welcoming" and being "affirming." A *welcoming* church opens its doors and treats all who enter with hospitality and respect. It's a good and necessary starting point, offering a basic level of acceptance. The welcoming church offers a smile, it accepts an offering, it extends a hug, it invites you to participate. However, an *affirming* church goes further. An affirming church doesn't just welcome LGBTQ+ individuals; it celebrates their identities as gifts from God, intentionally includes them in all aspects of church life and leadership, blesses their relationships, and actively works for their dignity and equality both inside and outside the church walls. Being affirming means confessing the harm that has been done, where they have been complicit, and actively pushing back against the forces of exclusion and declaring that LGBTQ+ people are not just welcome guests, but fully belonging and valued members of the body of Christ.

As Christians, we are called to embody the radical love and welcome of Jesus, who consistently reached out to those on the margins of society. A careful and honest look at Scripture, through the lens of God's unwavering love and desire for covenantal relationships, supports the full affirmation of LGBTQ+ people. That one must choose between fidelity to the Bible and affirming LGBTQ+ individuals is a false choice. A truly biblical sexual ethic is centered on covenantal love, not on outdated or misinterpreted prohibitions.

As traditionalists practice it, the "fruit" of exclusion is damaged lives and alienation from God and community, while the "fruit" of affirmation is

wholeness, belonging, and flourishing. By this measure, the call to be affirming is a call to bear good fruit, as Jesus commands.

Our being an *affirming* church, and our active partnership with Anne Arundel Affirming Alliance, is a direct response to this. Anne Arundel Affirming Alliance is a vital coalition of faith communities in our area committed to being openly and unequivocally welcoming and affirming to LGBTQ+ individuals and their families. Our involvement with them is a powerful statement and a vital avenue for action.

Our connection with Anne Arundel Affirming Communities means that we are not standing alone in our commitment to be a place where LGBTQ+ individuals are not just tolerated, but celebrated and empowered. Together, we are:

- **Creating Safe Havens:** In a world that can be hostile, our collective efforts create faith communities where LGBTQ+ individuals can find refuge, healing, and a place to explore their faith without fear.
- **Offering Authentic Christian Community:** We are working to ensure that LGBTQ+ individuals know they are wanted, valued, and have a place to belong within a Christian context, pushing back against the spiritual harm caused by exclusion.
- **Amplifying a Message of Hope:** By visibly living out our affirming faith alongside other congregations in the Anne Arundel Affirming Alliance, we send a clear and consistent message that God's love is for everyone, helping to counteract the damaging messages of rejection that contribute to the struggles faced by LGBTQ youth.
- **Strengthening Our Witness:** Our commitment to affirmation, lived out in community with other congregations, strengthens our collective witness to a more just and inclusive expression of Christianity, one that is so very needed in our world today.

Some churches, based on their interpretations of Scripture and tradition, hold non-affirming views regarding LGBTQ+ inclusion. Some churches have sought to leave the United Methodist Church, even suing the denomination because of it. That's how strongly they feel. For individuals who hold these

beliefs and are seeking a faith community that aligns with that perspective, there are churches that will be a better fit for them, and we trust that they are delightful communities for those who share those views.

We believe that our call to be a lighthouse compels us to shine the light of God's unconditional love into the places where exclusion has prevailed. It is a commitment rooted in the Gospel, supported by the urgent needs revealed by data, and lived out in collaborative action.

You can learn more about the vital work of Anne Arundel Affirming Communities at <https://www.annearundelaffirms.com/>. We also extend a heartfelt invitation to experience the radical welcome and affirming love that awaits you by participating more deeply at Eastport United Methodist Church.

Come and be a part of an imperfect community that believes that everyone means everyone, and that in Christ, there is a place of belonging for all.

~ Pastor Chris

On the Road Again



Yessirree...the wheels are turning, only this time it's not the bicycle. I will be in New York from June 1 through 9th, as one of the pianists for a week's intensive for the Denyce Graves Foundation. The singers in the Shared Voices program will be getting one on one coaching/teaching in breathing, acting, career preparation, all culminating in a public recital on the grounds of the Wetherfield Estate and Gardens. These aspiring professionals are in a two year program, guided by Ms. Graves, given access to high-level professionals in the field, a visit to the Metropolitan Opera and numerous performance opportunities to further develop and hone their craft. Ms. Graves is still a performer, but has begun this foundation to 'pay it forward' and help those with lesser resources, monetary and education. I greatly admire her and her mission and feel honored to be a part of her projects. (A side benefit of this trip is getting to spend some time with friends of ours who live in the area, whom we have not seen in years! Bill is MY accompanist this time!)

After a brief two weeks interval, I go to Prague to mentor and coach another intensive session, this time eight days of rehearsals culminating in two performances of a Puccini opera, Suor Angelica. This is an organization I worked for in the first year of their existence; I'm delighted to return to oversee this project and enjoy the beautiful city of Prague once again. I leave on June 24th and return July 6th. This is a solo trip; I'm sure Bill would welcome any phone calls, texts, dinner invites, etc.

Both of us will be taking a much anticipated vacation in early September to the Canadian Rockies: Banff, Lake Louise and environs, followed by a brief visit to Missoula, MT, to my first piano teacher in undergraduate studies. We've had a standing invitation and since we were going to be in the West anyway, it seemed like the perfect time. We are very much looking forward to both legs of the journey.

Bill will continue breaking in his recently acquired mobility scooter, which will make this traveling much more enjoyable for both of us. We are taking advantage of good health and opportunities to travel while we still can. Carpe Diem is the mantra...and we DO! ~ JoAnn Kulesza

Highlights of the 2025 Annual Session of the Baltimore/Washington Conference of the United Methodist Church

"Rejoice in the Lord. Dwell in Joy" was the theme of the 241st session of the Baltimore/Washington Conference May 13-15. Throughout the opening worship, the themes of joy and pain were woven together as the church stands at a crossroads where civil rights and justice are threatened. "Let the world see a church unshaken, not because we are blind to pain, but because we are rooted in a deeper promise," said Bishop Latrelle Easterling.

Ministry and Structure as Joy. The BWC's Advocacy and Action Ministry unveiled a new "Hate Divides, Love Unites" campaign. The BWC introduced a new structure designed to help churches grow through collaborative ministry. It will consist of six districts and 64 "collaborative Hubs". Eastport UMC is in the new Two Rivers district and the

Downtown Annapolis hub. Representatives of the hub churches which were present at the Conference have expressed interest to change the name.

Young People's Ministry received a \$1.25 million grant to create a Constellation Project to help bring children ages 3-12 into weekly worship. IGNITE, a retreat for youth in Ocean City and the growth of campus ministries now engage more than 400 students.

Signs of Joy in Worship and Bible Study.

- Two deacons and three elders were commissioned as provisional members and two deacons and nine elders were ordained.
- In a Bible study on Philippians 4:4-9, Bishop Cynthia Moore Koikoi embraced the idea of trauma-informed job and how it affected her life following the death of her brother.
- Rev. Kris Sledge, author of *Under Forty: The Journey Away from Church for Millennials, Gen Z and Gen Alpha*, spoke at the Laity Session and shared statistics about the aging of churchgoers. Six percent of clergy are under 35 years of age, and 53 percent are over 55. Seventy percent of the U.S. churches have fewer than 100 members. Forty million Americans have left the church in the past 25 years. Why are many youths leaving? The church does not act upon their shared values and therefore has limited impact on their daily lives. What needs to happen: belonging, safety, space for curiosity and doubt, relevant discipleship, reclaimed spiritual foundation, and the celebration of diversity.

Signs of Joy in Stewardship

- Members adopted an \$18.2 million budget. The benevolence factor was reduced from 17.4 percent to 17.24 (easing the burden of local churches), and the collection rate assumptions for 2026 were set at 85 percent.
- The Equal Compensation Commission increased the base minimum salary for clergy by 2.5 percent to \$52,692 and the housing allowance was set at \$23,151.
- After debate on clergy's professional and business expenses, members tied

reimbursement to 10 percent of a pastor's cash salary.

Signs of Joy in Discipleship

In partnership with annual conferences around the world, members voted on four constitutional amendments that were passed at the General Conference last May. The amendment addressed:

- Regionalization that would be achieved with a package of legislation that gives the geographic regions of the United Methodist Churches equal decision-making.
- Add "gender" and "ability" to the list of characteristics that do not bar people from membership in a United Methodist Church.
- Strengthen the denomination's longtime stance for racial justice.
- Clarify who can elect clergy delegates who serve at a General Conference and U.S. jurisdictional and central conferences.

To be adopted, two-thirds of the aggregate vote on each amendment from every annual conference needs to be attained. The results of the balloting will be announced in November by the Council of Bishops.

Members approved eight resolutions germane only to the Baltimore/Washington Conference:

- Adopting an African American Statement of Faith, written and presented by Rev. Kwame Abayomi, a retired elder.
- Revising the Consent Calendar of the Conference.
- Bringing equity to the paid vacation standards for part-time clergy.
- Creating a comprehensive paid parental leave policy.
- Encouraging awareness and thoughtful conversation about how to live faithfully in the era of Artificial Intelligence.
- Advocating for peace with justice for the people of Sudan, where an estimated 25 million are in dire need of humanitarian assistance.
- Opposing all forms of religious nationalism.
- Actively supporting and embracing LGBTQ+ people.

The Conference also launched a mission project among the six new districts. The goal is to collect

10,000 hygiene kits by Thanksgiving Day for the United Methodist Committee on Relief to use in disaster relief efforts and for the poor.

Please contact David Emenheiser, Pastor Chris, Julie Wilson or me if you have questions.

~ *Michael Keller, EUMC Laity Representative to the Annual Conference*

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We will donate \$500 to Eastport United Methodist Church on your behalf for any Real Estate transaction that results in a sale



@EUMC Fellowship Hall

Join Leandra from Dancing Feet Fitness for a gentle *Cardio Chair Workout* on Wednesdays 9 - 9:45 am, or challenge yourself with the *Build a Better You Bootcamp!* Fridays from 8 - 8:45 am. Classes are \$8 each, or get a 5-class pass for \$30. EUMC members enjoy a free class during the last week of every month!

Email Leandra at:

dancingfeetfitness@gmail.com

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EUMC T-Shirts

Let your faith shine wherever you go with our church T-shirts! We have several unique options to choose from, all featuring uplifting messages and inspiring imagery. Whether you're looking for a classic design to wear to a festival or something suitable for everyday wear, we have something for everyone.

<http://bonfire.com/store/friends-of-eumc/>



June Anniversaries



- June 4 Pam & Chris Pulley
- June 11 Wendy & Eric Edstrom
- June 22 Holly Green & Matt Ficca

June Birthdays



- June 1 Jerry Lesley
- June 9 Pam Pulley
Shelly Wilcox
- June 10 Teresa Keller
- June 17 Vaughan Parrish
- June 21 Noah Somers
Lynn Swanner
Randi Aaliah Savoy
- June 22 Jan Hopping
- June 23 Alaina Ugolini
- June 24 Darcey Schultz
- June 25 Sharon Stevens
- June 27 Ginny Davidson





| Sunday | Monday | Tuesday | Wednesday | Thursday | Friday | Saturday |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 1 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Ecumenical Pride Worship Service 3pm | 2 | 3 Homework & Reading 4pm UMW Meeting & Dinner 5:30pm | 4 | 5 Prayer Time 7:30-8:30am Homework & Reading 4pm | 6 Friday Group 9am | 7 Open Mic Night 7pm  |
| 8 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Sunday School Service 10am | 9 | 10 Divine Diners Lunch 12pm @Sammy's Homework & Reading End of Year Party 4pm | 11 | 12 Prayer Time 7:30-8:30am | 13 Friday Group 9am | 14  |
| 15 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am  | 16 | 17 | 18  | 19 Prayer Time 7:30-8:30am  | 20 Friday Group 9am | 21 Community Food & Diaper Pantry 11am (Setup 10am) |
| 22 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School | 23 | 24 Divine Diners Adams 5:30pm Admin Council 7pm | 25 | 26 Prayer Time 7:30-8:30am | 27 Friday Group 9am | 28 |
| 29 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am | 30 | |  | | | |

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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