



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

May 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.

Eastport UMC is on the Rise!

This is a season of incredible growth and renewal at Eastport United Methodist. Since the pandemic, there's been a surge in new members, a renewed sense of purpose, and a vibrant community spirit. It's clear – God is working with us in powerful ways!

This growth is reflected in the generosity of our church family. Giving has increased these last few months, fueling our ministry. Your compassion and dedication empower us to serve!

However, with complete transparency, we want to acknowledge that, despite this progress, our budget still faces a deficit. This is a challenge we've been working to overcome for some time, even in the years preceding the pandemic. We maintain a barebones budget with most expenses (upwards of 75%) going to the necessary costs of personnel and facilities. Many of the improvements you've seen around the facility have been made possible by in-kind donations.

We want to extend our table and increase our impact, as a body of faith committed to following Jesus and improving the lives of others, but this is difficult to do relying on reserves. This is where good stewardship from each of us comes in. It allows us to extend our table and make a real difference. We have amazing ways to connect with our neighbors, fully funding the budget will help us continue that, but we have even bigger dreams!

When you give to Eastport UMC, your contribution directly supports our dedicated staff – from our full-time pastor providing spiritual guidance, to our part-time music director enriching services. It also supports our part-time administrator, community coordinator, and custodians who ensure a smooth operation and a welcoming space.

We believe in creating and maintaining an inclusive ministry so all know God’s enduring love. Whether you're a longtime member or just getting acquainted, we welcome you to join in this effort! Giving is personal, but we hope you'll consider joining our mission. There are many ways to contribute, financially, through volunteer work, or simply lending a helping hand.

To learn more, join our upcoming information sessions: May 19 @ 9am; June 9 at 11am; July 7 @ 11 am.

Discover how you can be part of something truly special.

Together, through financial gifts or acts of service, we can build a brighter future for our church and community.

~ Eastport United Methodist Church

General Conference Update



This week brought exciting news from the UMC General Conference, a giant leap forward for inclusivity that aligns with our core values here at Eastport UMC: radical welcome and love for all. Remember how discouraged we all felt after the 2019 conference's discriminatory decisions? Well, this year, we have much to celebrate!

Here's a glimpse of the positive changes:

- **Harmful Language Eradicated:** We finally said goodbye to discriminatory language that excluded LGBTQ+ individuals from ministry! This victory, decades in the making, removes a huge barrier to inclusion.
- **Clergy Equality:** Clergy who perform or officiate same-sex weddings can now do so without fear of punishment.
- **Local Church Autonomy:** Churches that choose not to perform same-sex marriages are still respected. This change allows individual congregations to follow their own faith journeys.
- **Funding Ban Lifted:** Remember the "mythical gay agenda" excuse used to block funding for suicide prevention among LGBTQ+ youth in 2016? That's finally over! This funding will make a world of difference in supporting young lives.
- **Traditional Plan Rejected:** The harsh penalties proposed for LGBTQ+ clergy and those officiating same-sex marriages were thankfully completely removed. This creates a more just and compassionate environment for everyone.
- **No More Restrictions:** Restrictions on LGBTQ+ clergy ordination have been eliminated! This opens doors for qualified individuals based on their faith and calling, not who they love.

These changes mark a historic moment for the UMC, moving us closer to a truly inclusive and loving church. Importantly, these updates allow individual churches and clergy to follow their faith journeys while respecting the beliefs of others. While much has been removed, we still have work to do in adding positive and affirming language. One bite at a time.

Here at Eastport UMC, we remain deeply committed to actively welcoming and affirming everyone, regardless of sexual orientation, gender identity/expression. I'm so incredibly grateful for all who've led us in this direction, especially my predecessor Pastor Michelle Mejia.

If you have any questions or want to learn more, please reach out to Pastor Chris, our Annual Conference Delegate Michael Keller, or Administrative Council Chairperson Jill Peddicord.

We'll celebrate this evening as the General Conference adjourns by **ringing the church bell, today, Friday May 3, 6:30pm**. Nothing too formal, but you are welcome to gather on the church lawn for prayer.

Grace and peace,
~ Pastor Chris



We're in need of Pew Angels. Don't know what that is? A Pew Angel sets the pews back in order to be ready for the next service...removes items left on the seats, straightens hymn books, refills cards and envelopes when necessary. It doesn't take very long and can be done during the week when the church office is open, or even after service on Sunday mornings. See Myrna Dobbs or Eunice Corse if you are interested in this ministry, or contact the church office at office@eastportumc.org.



We'd love for you to brag in our newsletter about your graduates. Send us their full name, a little blurb, and a picture if you have one.
corsec@msn.com

A Look Ahead

- June 1 Annapolis Pride Parade & Festival 12-5pm, downtown; sign up to stay in the loop: <https://forms.gle/XrQQZSj2osqRoTHz6>
- June 2 Annapolis Ecumenical Pride Worship Service 3pm, at EUMC
- June 7 *Secret Best Friends* album release concert, 7pm, at EUMC; award-winning barbershop quartet sbfquartet.com
- June 9 Preparing for your future, housing options for senior citizens, 1:30pm at EUMC
- August 3 The Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival Fundraiser Concert, 4 pm, at EUMC
- November 1-3, 8-10; The Annapolis Jazz & Roots Festival Concert Series at EUMC

Join Us for This Performance

"If you could know for one moment how it is to live in our bodies within the world, if you could know..."

This is one line of text from the cantata **CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD**, to be performed on **May 17th (7:30) and 19th (3pm)** at the Kauffman Theater on the campus of AACC. (see flyer). I will conduct an instrumental ensemble of eight and a chorus of 50-55 members, joined by numerous soloists and enhanced by staging and projections. This is a piece describing Matthew, his life, his dreams and the events of that fateful day. The text is by many different authors and includes thoughts of those who were the locals, who viewed the place of execution, who feared they might be like those men who murdered Matthew Shepard. It is a poignant piece in which four members of our own choir – Charlotte Kerns, Mae and Les Johnson, Bill Riggs – will sing.

In conjunction with these performances, a Townhall will take place on Thursday May 16 at 7pm in the Kauffman Theater—25 Years after Laramie: Considering Matthew Shepard and Our World. [Cathy Renna - National LGBTQ Task Force \(thetaskforce.org\)](http://thetaskforce.org), Communications Director for the National LGBTQ Task Force, will be joined by Dr. Heather Rellihan (AACC Gender Studies) and Dr. Forrest Caskey (AACC Faculty Adviser to LGBTQ Student Group) to be the panel/facilitators for this event. Some short excerpts from the show as well as

pictures (projections) of Matt that are used in the show will be shared. This is a FREE event

Tickets for the cantata can be purchased by reading the QR code on the flyer below, or at the door. (Please specify that you are supporting AVAS.) There will be a talkback after the performances. This is not the type of presentation that people usually get up immediately and leave. I encourage you to attend this event and get inside the feelings of Matthew, his parents and those who felt the sting of this heinous act that extinguished a young life. Hopefully, humanity will keep evolving into an accepting society, respectful of the value and uniqueness of each person and their contribution to the ethos of the world. ~ JoAnn Kulesza

CONSIDERING MATTHEW SHEPARD
By Craig Hella Johnson
Presented by **AVAS** (ARUNDEL VOCAL ARTS SOCIETY) and **AACC** (ARUNDEL COMMUNITY COLLEGE) OPERA
Featuring the Arundel Vocal Arts Society with the AACC Concert Choir, Chamber Singers and Chamber Orchestra
JoAnn Kulesza, Music Director of AVAS and Conductor
Douglas Brandt Byerly, Producer and Stage Director

Friday, May 17, 7:30 p.m.
Sunday, May 19, 3 p.m.
Robert E. Kauffman Theater in the Pascal Center for the Performing Arts
Anne Arundel Community College, 101 College Parkway, Arnold MD

Tickets: \$25 General Admission
\$15 for Students, Military, Seniors over 60 and Groups of 10 or more
<https://arundelvocalarts.org/upcoming-concerts-performance/purchase-tickets>

Arts Council logo

Discretion warning: Considering Matthew Shepard is a musical depiction of the actual events surrounding Matthew's murder and therefore includes images, videos, and props that reference violence, death, hate, and trauma connected to queerphobia. Some audience members may find this content disturbing. The creative team believes that in acknowledging the existence of violence and hate we can better resist it, promote healing and lift up the deep worth of every human being. Anne Arundel Community College will host a "talkback" session after each performance for questions and discussion on this performance.

Garden & Maintenance News

Thanks to everyone who helped with our Greenscape day: Mike Keller, Anne Heald, Sam Coates, Donald Cooney (who carried about 50 bags of heavy mulch!), Tyrone Brown, my husband Jerry, and Tonya DeMedici. We didn't get everything done so if you have some time to help, please contact us.

This month we had a leak from a dehumidifier which damaged part of the floor in the basement. Pastor Chris cleaned it up and Jerry and I installed new drip

pans and water alarms under the 5 dehumidifiers. We cleaned out the tubing and water reservoirs too. This is the second time this has happened. Some floor tiles still need to be replaced. We reinstalled a toilet paper holder, fixed accordion wall in sweater room, put dirt in hole near downspout, touched up nicks and paint on new wall, picked up trash and cut the grass several times (we now have a yard service once a month when we are out of town. Yah!), filled low spots with dirt in yard, cleaned out pop up drains in yard, replaced Easter banner outside with regular one, and watered plants.

We are very pleased to have been awarded a big grant by the Methodist Church B-W Conference for a new ramp to the lower level and some equipment for the basement rooms. It will be wonderful to have access for those with mobility issues. We are getting estimates for this work.

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. Contact Joanne or Jerry Christofel at msjohara@yahoo.com or 410-703-0159. ~ Joanne Christofel



UMW/Women in Faith



May UMW Meeting:

The United Methodist Women/Women in Faith will hold its next meeting on Tuesday, May 7, at 5:30 in the Fellowship Hall. We will have a business meeting to vote on which missions we will support this year, 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.

Bus Trip to Sight & Sound Theatre to see "Daniel" in June 2024:

Please join us on June 27, 2024 (Thursday) on a bus trip to the Sight & Sound Theatre in Strasburg, Pennsylvania, to see the brand-new, original stage production of "**Daniel**," one of the Bible's most epic sagas. After the show, enjoy a delicious smorgasbord lunch at Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant in Bird-in-Hand, Pennsylvania. Tickets cost \$175 per adult or \$120 per child (ages 5 - 12) and include transportation, reserved seats for the show, smorgasbord lunch, and all taxes and tips.

Itinerary:

- 8:00 AM Depart Annapolis, MD...PARKING LOT OF EUMC
10:15 AM Arrive Strasburg, PA, at Sight & Sound Theatre
11:00 AM Showtime! **"DANIEL"**
1:45 PM Depart Strasburg, PA
2:00 PM Arrive Bird-in-Hand, PA, at Bird-in-Hand Family Restaurant
2:15 PM Smorgasbord Lunch
3:45 PM Depart Bird-in-Hand, PA
6:00 PM Arrive Annapolis, MD

For more information, contact Jean Strucko (410-268-7175 or jeanstrucko@gmail.com). Ticket availability is first come, first served. Jean will collect cash or checks (checks should be made payable to Carol Emory) and asks that you provide your email and phone number along with your ticket request. ~ *Kathy Duckett*

We Said Goodbye



Shirley Mae Ford
May 1, 1932 – April 9, 2024



Jerry Dale Wilhoit
January 22, 1936 – April 19, 2024

Youth Mental Health First Aid

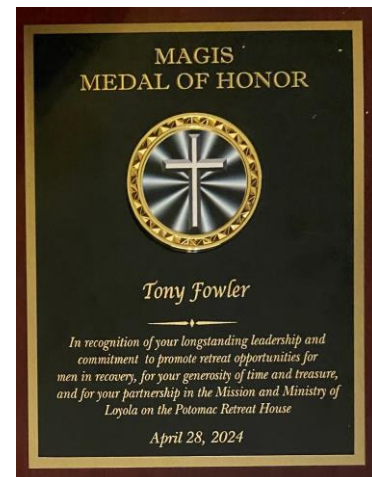
On April 14th and 21st, EUMC hosted a training funded by a grant from the UMC Board of Childcare called Youth Mental Health First Aid. There were participants from as far away as Upper Marlboro, MD, and everyone agreed it was really good information.

First Aiders do not diagnose illnesses but we learned how to recognize when youth need help or are in crisis. There were real world examples of how we can help. One of the biggest factors in the positive mental health of our youth is one stable adult presence. There was a lot about how that person matters.

We have been offered another opportunity to host the same training. Please let Pastor Chris or me know if you are interested and when you would be available. peddicorse@msn.com; office@eastportumc.org

Thanks to Tommy and Elizabeth Eicher for supplying snacks and water for the participants. The chapel was a comfortable and welcoming place of learning about helping our youth. ~ *Jill Peddicord*

Service to the Recovery Community



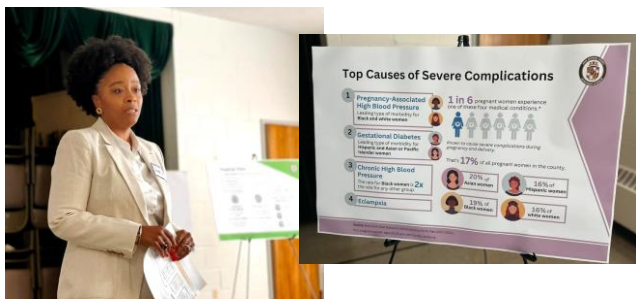
On April 28, Tony Fowler received the acknowledgement of his more than 20 years of service to the Men's Thanksgiving Retreat by accepting the Loyola Retreat House "Medal of Honor." Tony's name and picture will be included in the retreat center's "Wall of Honor." The Loyola Retreat House is in Faulkner, Maryland. <https://loyolaonthepotomac.com/>

Busy Sunday School



Hosting in Our Community

As part of our commitment to the health and well-being of our community, we hosted a Maternal Health Listening Session in collaboration with the Anne Arundel County Department of Health. Led by Health Officer Dr. Tonii Gedin, the session aimed to address health disparities and ensure access to quality care for all mothers and babies. Together, we can make a difference in the lives of those who need it most.



Gratitude for Small Blessings



Each month on food pantry day (3rd Saturday) we try to offer our neighbors necessary items that aren't provided by the county food bank. For the month of May we're asking for donations of deodorant. So while you're at the grocery store, add a couple of these items to your cart – any variety – and bring them to church on Sunday morning.



YOUR APRIL DONATIONS – THANK YOU!

Did You Know...

Our **community food pantry** is on the third Saturday of the month. We gather at 10, distribute food at 11, and usually wrap up around 12:30. The special item we're collecting this month is deodorant.

Each Sunday morning at 9:15 we offer **Conversations in Faith**, a time in which we gather to study scripture and learn from one another. Following each Sunday service you are invited to **join us for coffee and snacks**. This is a sweet time to meet and chat.

Sunday School: 2nd & 4th Sundays. Kids exit during “passing the peace” & return for communion. Contact Molly Estabrook to pitch in. (estabrook120@icloud.com)

We're Looking for Ongoing Support: Do you have a knack for handiwork or odd jobs? We're also seeking volunteers to lend a hand with occasional indoor tasks throughout the year. This is a great way to contribute your skills and connect with the EUMC community. Contact Joanne at msjohara@yahoo.com

EUMC T-Shirts

Let your faith shine wherever you go with our new church T-shirts! We have several unique options to choose from (see attached page), all featuring uplifting messages and inspiring imagery. Whether you're looking for a classic design to wear to a festival (Pride Parade is June 1) or something suitable for everyday wear, we have something for everyone.



<https://www.bonfire.com/store/friends-of-eastport-united-methodist/>

May Anniversaries



- May 14 David & Kathy Moreland
- May 16 Tom & Harriet Newquist
- May 18 Curtis & Vicki Clary
- May 21 Dallas & Brenda Jones
- May 23 Joe & Sue Nasatka
- May 24 Butch & June Stevens
- May 27 Neil Bergsman & Val Devaris

May Birthdays



- May 1 Louis Bergsman
- May 6 Cindy Macey-Mayhew
- May 10 James Stevens
- May 12 Tyler Johnson
- May 13 Braden Clary
- May 15 Caitlin Peddicord Holt
- May 16 Brenda Jones
- May 18 Abigail Wilcox
- May 19 Ruth Gibbons
- May 24 Gene Swanner
- May 25 Mike Keller
- May 26 Ashlyn Hughes
- May 30 Mitch Krebs
- May 31 Kathy Volz



Share a Meal and Good Company



Divine Diners will be at Sammy's for lunch on 5/14 at 12 noon, and then at Adam's on 5/28 at 5:30 for dinner, both located in the Eastport Shopping Center. We just show up, no reservation necessary, and everybody's welcome.



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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
			1 	2 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	3	4
5 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Cinco de Mayo	6	7 Homework & Reading 4pm UMW 5:30pm	8	9 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	10	11 0.05K RUN Eastport Bridge 
12 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School Mother's Day	13	14 NO H&R Divine Diners Lunch 12pm @Sammy's	15	16 NO H&R Choir 7pm	17	18 Community Food & Diaper Pantry 11am (Setup 10am)
19 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am	20	21 Homework & Reading 4pm Blue Angels Practice 10:30am 	22 Blue Angels Show 2pm	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 Supper Club Adam's 5:30pm Admin Council 7pm	29	30 Homework & Reading 4pm Choir 7pm	31	May 29-31: The 240th session of the Baltimore-Washington Conference

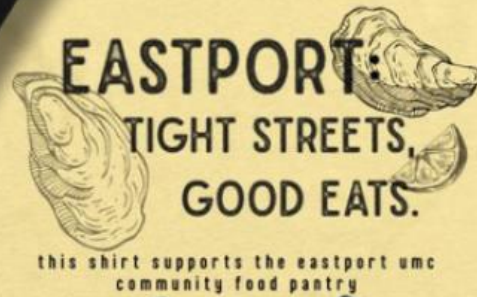


Church Spirit Wear!
5 different designs,
endless colors & styles.

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bonfire.com/store/friends-of-eumc

Love
Delight
Inclusion
Liberation

eastportumc.org



THIS SHIRT
HELPED A
FRIEND



You are loved.

Eastport United
Methodist Church
eastportumc.org

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