



The Eastport Spire

“Inspire Us to Great Things”

January 2026

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

As we begin 2026 at EUMC:

The beginning of a new year is a natural moment to pause, not just to look ahead, but to notice what has already taken root among us.

Over the past year, I’ve seen this church lean into its calling in quiet, faithful ways: showing up for neighbors, creating spaces of welcome, and deepening the habits that ground us in God. Much of this work didn’t come with fanfare. It showed up in conversations, shared meals, acts of care, worship moments, and the steady commitment of people who love this community.

As we step into 2026, there are three simple movements that will continue to guide our life together. They’re not new, and they’re not complicated, but they help us stay oriented to what matters most.

Reach Out.

We continue to turn toward our neighbors and community with intention. This is about hospitality that feels human and personal, remembering names, extending invitations, making room at the table, and showing up beyond our walls. We’re listening for where connection is already happening and asking how we can meet it with generosity.

Reach In.

We continue to strengthen the bonds within our congregation. This means tending relationships across generations and life experiences, communicating clearly, and removing barriers that make participation feel difficult. A healthy church is not just active, it’s connected.

Reach Deep.

We continue to root ourselves more fully in God. Prayer, worship, service, and learning are not add-ons to church life; they are what shape us. In the year ahead, we’ll keep inviting one another into practices that nurture faith and help us grow, not just stay busy.

These three movements belong together. When we reach out, reach in, and reach deep, we become a church that is outward-facing, internally connected, and spiritually grounded.

My hope for 2026 is simple: that we remain attentive to where God is already at work among us and remain courageous enough to follow. I’m grateful to be walking this road with you.

Grace and peace,
~ Pastor Chris

Highlights

Our very special EUMC person for the month of January 2026 is Mary Jane Finkle.

Mary Jane was born in a blizzard, in Baltimore on January 15, 1935. She was raised in Catonsville MD. Mary Jane's parents were Roger Warren and Mary Eloise Lacy. Her paternal grandfather was a Methodist minister who was born in Wiltshire England. He was both a pastor and a postman, who traveled by horse and buggy, or in winter, in a one horse open sleigh.

Mary Jane's father attended St John's College, where he met her mother, an accomplished pianist who played at the Naval Academy and also at St John's.

Her mother also played piano for silent movies at a theater on Main Street.

Mary Jane grew up loving music. Her mother said Mary Jane could hum even before she could talk. Mary Jane's musical debut was a duet sung at Catonsville E.S. in second grade. By 7th grade, she sang with her school chorus on WBAL radio. In 9th grade, she joined an a cappella choir, and also accompanied the group on piano. She was singing in the adult church choir in Catonsville at 15. Mary Jane says she grew up surrounded by music, and it has carried her right along throughout her life.

After high school, she took a harmony and ear training class at Peabody, which she found to be extremely valuable. She attended business school and then taught typing and shorthand, including night school classes.

Mary Jane met Jimmy Finkle when he went off to boot camp for the Army. He was related to her Aunt Betty Jane, and she wrote him a "dear soldier boy" letter. She was 19. He wrote her back. He was expecting to ship out to Korea, but the truce intervened. When he was home on leave during his two years in the service, they went out on dates. He gave her an engagement ring on Christmas Eve, 1955. They were married at Eastport Methodist Church at Sixth St and Chesapeake Ave on April 7, 1956. Their 70th wedding anniversary is coming up in April.

Jim had grown up nearby, at the corner of Bay Ridge and Madison Street, one of eight children. Their first apartment as newlyweds was above the post office. Mary Jane took a secretarial job at the Naval Institute (Pud Schultz worked there too). Soon she was expecting, and Carol Ann was born in March of 1957. Mary Jane and Jim joined EUMC on May 12, 1957, the Sunday when Carol was christened by Rev. Donald Lewis.

Kathy Lee was born in November of 1960. Both daughters sang with her sometimes and took piano lessons. They eventually married (Albert and Steve) and each had two sons. Carol says being close to the whole extended family in and around Annapolis was part of their growing up. They knew all their cousins, aunts and uncles.

Mary Jane says she lost track but she has sung at over 100 weddings. She also sang at funerals and memorial services, using her musical talents to lift

someone's heart or spirits. She believes "God put me here" to share her music. Mary Jane has sung under many choir directors at EUMC, and she sings and plays with the Heavenly Bells, so she shares her joy of music freely.

Religion has always been an integral part of Mary Jane's life, and she says Jesus has been with her all along, from her earliest memory of her grandmother singing "Jesus Loves Me" as she rocked her rhythmically in a creaky rocking chair.

She also sees God in nature, in her garden, in the park on Spa Creek near her home, and at the ocean in the Outer Banks, where they once sang "How Great Thou Art" on the beach. She taught her girls all about nature when they were young; the names of all the flowers and plants, and how to tell the flowers from weeds.

Mary Jane says she has had an interesting life, a full life. It has been full of music, full of faith, and full of family. She shares her life with "her special guy" in the lovely home they moved into on Academy Street in 1974.

We are all so thankful that "God put her here," full of love and full of music, to share her stories and her songs with us.



Mary Jane & Jim



The Finkle Family

United Women in Faith

Meeting: The United Women in Faith will meet on Tuesday, January 6, at 5:30pm 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.



Christmas Mission: During December, the United Women in Faith delivered Christmas gifts to ten members of EUMC who are no longer able to attend worship services with us. Everyone was delighted with the gifts and the visits. Many thanks to all who contributed money to make this mission possible. Here are pictures of the United Women in Faith assembling the bags of gifts and of the blessing of the gifts during our worship service on December 7.



The data shows a congregation that is steady and faithful. Average Sunday attendance for the year was 53 people, with a high point in April, when attendance averaged 68, driven by Easter. The largest single-day gathering was 90 people on Easter Sunday, April 20. As expected, attendance dipped during the summer months, reaching a low of 34 on Labor Day weekend in August. Outside of these seasonal shifts, the remaining months stayed consistently in the mid- to high-50s. One Sunday in December was canceled due to weather and is not included in the averages.

One additional insight emerged as we reviewed the data: over a three-month period, if everyone who attended at least once during that time were present on the same Sunday, we would likely gather close to **100 people** for worship. This reminds us that our congregation is broader than any single Sunday snapshot suggests. Increasing attendance may be less about finding new people and more about helping our existing community gather more consistently.

Attendance is not about filling seats or keeping score. It's not even primarily about hearing Pastor Chris's thoughtful and faithful sermons (as wonderful as they are). Attendance matters because worship shapes us. When we gather regularly, we are formed by prayer, Scripture, song, and shared presence in ways that cannot happen alone.

In a culture where church participation is increasingly occasional, choosing to be present on Sundays becomes a meaningful act of commitment. Worship recenters us, strengthens relationships, and reminds us that faith is something we live together, not just something we hold privately.

As we look ahead, the invitation is not about pressure or guilt, but about intention. What might change if we treated Sunday worship not as an extra, but as a priority? Our hope is that, together, we continue showing up: for God, for one another, and for the shared life of our church.

Why Sunday Worship Still Matters

Over the past year, our SPRC took an important first step toward a long-term goal of increasing attendance by simply paying attention. Throughout 2025, we tracked Sunday worship attendance in order to understand our patterns before making assumptions or plans.



Sunday School

Sunday School had a snow day on December 14 when there was no church service. There were three kids for the December 28 session. We recalled the parts of the holidays that really made our hearts warm and happy. The kids made paper chains with those memories written on them. Our goal is to take some of that Christmas spirit with us into the next year.

~ Molly Estabrook



Special Pantry Item



For our January pantry collection, we're going to focus on **baby diapers (sizes 4-8)**. My birthday is also in January, so I'm going to use the opportunity to fundraise for this purpose. Here is the link to the GoFundMe: <https://gofund.me/55ebdc1b1>

My birthday is on January 9th, and for the past many birthdays I've chosen to celebrate by fundraising for a particular cause. This year I'm raising funds for the pantry I volunteer with at EUMC to stock up our diapers!

EUMC has agreed to match ALL donations, up to 100% of our funding goal! That means your donation amount & impact will be DOUBLED!

\$500 = \$1,000 to stock up our community pantry with much needed larger sized baby diapers!

~ Rachel Goad



December's hats & gloves were received happily.
Thanks for giving!!

Church Council Corner

All questions go to David Emenheiser, Administrative Council Chairperson.



The 2026 Eastport UMC Church Admin Council was selected during the Annual Charge Conference on November 15. Your Admin Council includes Tracy Alexander (Membership), Neil Bergsman (Treasurer), Tonya DeMedici (Recording Secretary), David Emenheiser (Faith In Action Team Lead and Council Chair), Elaine Fors-MacKellar (Finance Chair), Ruth Gibbons (Finance Secretary), Michael Keller (Lay Leader and Lay Representative to Conference), JoAnn Kulesza (Music Director), Jill Peddicord (Head Trustee), Jean Strucko (EUMC UMW), and Tim Williams (SPRC Chair).

Upcoming meetings: The Admin Council Meeting will be 7pm on January 13. All are welcome to attend.

~ David Emenheiser

A Note from Pastor Chris

Communication – I want to share a quick word about how and when I'm most reachable.

I keep Mondays as my Sabbath, which means I step away from church email and messages that day. Messages sent on Mondays will be returned beginning Tuesday.

My regular office hours are Tuesday–Friday, 8:30 am–4:00 pm. That's the best time to reach me by email or phone, and when you can expect the quickest response. Outside those hours, replies may be slower, but I will respond as soon as I'm able. These boundaries help me stay present, rested, and attentive in the work we share.

The church office is open Tuesday–Friday 9:30 am–2 pm, Theresa can be reached in that timeframe. Thank you for your understanding and for helping create a culture of healthy communication in our church.

Pastoral Care – Please contact the [church office](#) and let us know your/your loved one's name, the hospital and that you or your loved one wishes to have a visit with the Pastor. If someone you know

needs a pastoral visit (at the home or hospital) it is necessary to inform the pastor a visit is needed. Please inform the office even if you think someone else has done so. Privacy laws prohibit hospitals from notifying us of your or your loved one's admittance.

~ Pastor Chris

We Said Goodbye



Lawrence "Marty" Dobbs
August 3, 1936 – December 13, 2025

Marty was a beloved, long-time member of Eastport United Methodist Church. Please lift Myrna and the Dobbs family to the Light.

Faith In Action

Reaching Out with the Charting Careers' Innovation Hub – Beginning on January 17, Charting Careers is opening their Innovation Hub to our neighbors prior to the Community Pantry. The Innovation Hub consists of several computers with Internet access. Their staff will be onsite to assist scholars in completing homework and developing interests as well as support family members developing digital skills and seeking employment.



EUMC Volunteers are also needed to share their talents and compassion in welcoming and helping our neighbors. Let us know if you are available from 9 to 11 am before the Community Pantry.

Reaching Out to our Unhoused Neighbors – Martin Luther King Jr. holiday is a day of reverence

and service. On January 19, we will gather for a brief time of thanksgiving and prayer followed by assembling compassion bags. Participants will be able to take them and hand them out to our neighbors in need. The bags will be filled with hats, gloves, snacks, along with warmth, hygiene, and other items. We need your help. Donate items for the compassion bags and join us at 10:30am on January 19 in the Fellowship Hall.

Reaching In with Christmas Festivity – Our second quarterly Church Party on December 7 was another beautiful time together. Although many were absent due to colds and flu and such, the small gathering was warm with Advent generosity. The next Church Party will be in March. Look for more details closer to the date.

~ David Emenheiser

Learn and Play Christmas Party

The children who had been regular participants in the Learn and Play 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 Musical Chairs and Christmas Bingo. The children decorated cookies and dispatched them as snacks along with special punch. When the time approached to welcome Santa's arrival, the youngest kids rang bells with enthusiasm. It was explained to the kids that Santa, a merry elf, can make an appearance if he hears bells rung by children. The children shrieked with joy when Santa (aka Les Johnson) entered the classroom. Santa presented each child with gifts that reflected "wish lists" prepared by the kids and obtained by the Learn and Play volunteers. One of the mothers attended the party as did several older kids most of whom were "graduates" of the program.

Many thanks to those who helped to make the party a success: Amaza (Scottie) Reid, Anne Heald, Elaine Fors, Judy Gonsalves, Les Johnson, Mike Mullins, MiMi Schaffer, and Neil Bergsman.

~ Mike Keller

Our Learn & Play Children



Diesha in the News

Rick Hutzell, columnist for the Baltimore Banner, wrote an article about our own Diesha Contee in The Banner following her election as the new Ward 6 Alderperson.

Here's the link:

<https://www.thebanner.com/opinion/column/city-council-diesha-contee-annapolis-B37QQWWJPRGOHPBNDJODDE6XPM/>

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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



Church Merch

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/>



January Birthdays

Jan 4	Mae Bergsman
Jan 7	Lauren Moyer
Jan 9	Rachel Goad
	Debbie Chambers
Jan 11	Eunice Corse
Jan 12	Mae Johnson
	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 30	Philip Kaplan



Write it on your heart
that every day is the best day in the year.
He is rich who owns the day, and no one
owns the day
who allows it to be invaded with fret and
anxiety.

Finish every day and be done with it.
You have done what you could.
Some blunders and absurdities, no doubt
crept in.
Forget them as soon as you can,
tomorrow is a new day;
begin it well and serenely, with too high a
spirit
to be cumbered with your old nonsense.

This new day is too dear,
with its hopes and invitations,
to waste a moment on the yesterdays.

ralph waldo emerson

January Anniversaries



Jan 1	Mitch & Barbara Krebs
Jan 3	Jerry & Joanne Christofel

May there be
Peace in our hearts
Peace in our homes
Peace in our country
Peace throughout the world

HAPPY NEW YEAR!

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Sunday	Monday	Tuesday	Wednesday	Thursday	Friday	Saturday
				1 	2 Friday Group 9am	3
4 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am	5	6 Learn&Play 4pm	7	8 Prayer Time 7:30-8:30am Learn&Play 4pm Men's Group 7pm Choir 7pm	9 Friday Group 9am	10
11 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School	12	13 Divine Diners Lunch 12pm @Sammy's Learn&Play 4pm UMW 5:30pm Admin Council 7pm	14	15 Prayer Time 7:30-8:30am Learn&Play 4pm Choir 7pm	16 Friday Group 9am	17 Community Food & Diaper Pantry 11am (Setup 10am)
18 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am	19 *Assemble Compassion Bags 10:30am*	20	21	22 Learn&Play 4pm Choir 7pm	23 Friday Group 9am	24
25 Conversations in Faith 9:15am Service 10am Sunday School	26	27 Learn&Play 4pm Divine Diners Adam's 5:30pm	28	29 Learn&Play 4pm Choir 7pm	30 Friday Group 9am	31

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 NAPTOWN PHILHARMONIC CHOIR 7 PM
TUESDAY →	ESL CLASSES W/ CENTRO DE AYUDA 10 AM AFTERSCHOOL LEARN & PLAY 4 PM DIVINE DINERS 2ND TUES, 12 PM DIVINE DINERS 4TH TUES, 5:30 PM ACADEMY BALLET 4-9 PM
WEDNESDAY →	CHAIR CARDIO EXERCISE CLASS 9 AM AFTER SCHOOL W/ CHARTING CAREERS ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS 8:30 PM ACADEMY BALLET 4-9 PM
THURSDAY →	MORNING PRAYER 7:30 AM ESL CLASSES W/ CENTRO DE AYUDA 10 AM AFTERSCHOOL LEARN & PLAY 4 PM ARTS & ROBOTICS W/ MD HALL 5 PM EUMC CHOIR REHEARSAL 7 PM ACADEMY BALLET 4-9 PM
FRIDAY →	BUILD A BETTER YOU BOOTCAMP 8 AM SMALL GROUP 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 LA IGLESIA ADVENTISTA DEL SÉPTIMO DÍA 9 AM

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