



August - September 2019

# Stonemaker

Newsletter of Ebenezer Church

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## A NEW SCHOOL YEAR

Like many of you, my family moved to Stafford for the home values and, more importantly, for the highly rated school system. A Virginia community with reasonable home prices and quality public schools? Jackpot! It was an easy sell in the early 2000s.

Since then, Stafford has experienced tremendous growth bringing with it both blessings and challenges. Like many communities, we wrestle to find enough funding for our schools and have experienced various rounds of redistricting.

However, I remain hopeful. I am hopeful because I worship in a church alongside county and school board members, school administrators, teachers, and staff. I watch them do their jobs with boundless dedication and passion. I am also hopeful because I have a front row seat for Ebenezer's developing relationship with local schools.

Ebenezer has always been in the business of supporting education. After participating in the program at Margaret Brent Elementary School, we launched Stafford Junction's Brain Builder program at Hampton Oaks Elementary School. The program is a great way to serve students, but we wanted to do more. Our goal was to develop a relationship with Hampton Oaks, listen to their needs, and determine how best we could support teachers and students alike.

You and I, as part of Ebenezer Church, have had a real impact on our students and community. In the last few years we have provided after-school tutoring, funded the Phoenix Award for an outstanding graduate at the county's Alternative Education program, underwritten the Cooking Class for the autism program at Hampton Oaks, supported Challenge Day at North Stafford High School, provided over 300 filled backpacks to under-resourced students, hosted Family Literacy Nights for the county's Head Start program, and helped teachers and staff move in to new classrooms during the summer.

*continued pg. 3*



## upcoming SERMON SERIES

### GIANTS WILL FALL

We all face giants. In this series we'll discuss the way that God can whip them for us. Whether our giant is 9 feet tall, an addiction, a fear, a comfort, or anger, God can take them down. Throughout this back to school series we'll talk about some giants and the power of our giant God.

### THE ROCK: FLAWED BUT FAITHFUL PETER

He is lovable, frustrating and fiercely effective. Peter is one of the most well-known characters in the Bible. Through this series we will talk about Peter's background, flaws, gifts, successes and death to help us better understand the way God uses our successes and failures to draw us close to Christ and accomplish the vital mission in front of us.



### A NOTE FROM PASTOR ROB

"See, I am doing a new thing! Now it springs up; do you not perceive it? I am making a way in the wilderness and streams in the wasteland." Isaiah 43:19

In January we shared Ebenezer's Focus 2025 Vision to help guide our congregation into the future. Each area of vision was accompanied by one or more strategic goals, and I want to give you an update on our progress.

Several strategic teams have been created to help shepherd this vision. First, we have developed a strategy team to deepen our connections and support of Stafford schools. With recent rezoning, Moncure Elementary emerged in our community with some of the greatest needs. As an early step in fulfilling our vision, Ebenezer is working with Moncure's amazing staff to address those needs.

We have created a launch team for our new Hope Night ministry to help folks in Stafford who need support and healing. We will begin sharing those details this fall with the hopes of launching Hope Night early in 2020.

Closer to home, we've seen the advent of a Young Adult Ministry Team to help create the most amazing young adult discipleship and fellowship possible. We have a team tasked with creating a plan for extending our parking and adding a new entrance to our campus. We hope to have that plan ready for the congregation to review and approve by the middle of next year.

Further away from Stafford, I cannot wait to share the developments on the horizon with Helping Children Worldwide, our partner organization in Bo, Sierra Leone. That is a conversation we'll have this fall in worship.

There are more initiatives to launch and much work to be done. If any of this tickles your soul, and you'd like to join one of our teams, please contact the church office or visit our website at [ebenezerumc.org/focus-2025](http://ebenezerumc.org/focus-2025). I invite all of us to continue to join together as we thank God for all God has done and ask for providential guidance while moving into Christ's intended future for a people called Ebenezer.

In Christ,  
Pastor Rob



Together, we've also provided food and personal care items to high school students in need, fed counselors lunch while they were dealing with tragedy in their high school, hosted homeschool groups and graduations, funded outreach events in communities, assembled and distributed 2,500 fun exam stress-relief kits for high schoolers, provided A/V equipment and support for elementary schools' field days, and hosted numerous staff appreciation breakfasts and lunches. Plus, we financially support organizations like Stafford Junction and Stafford Food Security who are serving Stafford students.

That seems like a lot, but it is just the beginning. Our vision for the future is bigger! As part of Ebenezer's Focus 2025 Transforming Stafford initiative, we plan to continue to build relationships with our current partner schools and develop new ones. Our goal is to positively impact local students and provide resources to teachers and school staff, ultimately creating an environment of success, value, and support. As Director of Missions & Outreach at Ebenezer Church, my job is to find opportunities for our people to practice their faith by serving in the community. To that end, I would love to offer you the opportunity to be part of this ministry. In early

August, we will help staff move-in and set-up classrooms. We could use your help! Choose a shift at **[ebenezerumc.org/events](http://ebenezerumc.org/events)**. In September, we will follow our Brain Builder students to their new school and launch the afterschool program at Moncure Elementary. Please consider becoming a tutor or snack provider. Find out more at **[ebenezerumc.org/brain-builders](http://ebenezerumc.org/brain-builders)**. Additionally, Moncure is looking for some weekday mentors to work with their youngest students on basic skills during the school day.

Finally, if you are a teacher, support staff member, administrator, bus driver, board member, food services provider, educational specialist, or school counselor, please know that Ebenezer Church believes in you and values the work you are doing. If there is any way we can help support you, we would love to hear from you. Feel free to contact me at **[tdeboeser@ebenezerumc.org](mailto:tdeboeser@ebenezerumc.org)**.

As we close out the shortest summer ever, we wish you all a great school year!

**- Tina Deboeser**  
Director of Missions & Outreach



*"Ebenezer has supported the Hampton Oaks staff and students in many ways over the years. All of these things have been very much appreciated by the staff and children. The most valuable way we have been supported is by the positive and caring relationships developed over the years. As a principal, I feel that Ebenezer is like family."*  
- Allan Hick, Principal of Hampton Oaks Elementary School



## get to know PASTOR MONICA

Pastor Monica joined us as our new Associate Pastor on June 30. Many have had a chance to meet her and hear her first sermon at Ebenezer Church. Here's a few fun facts to get to know her a little better.

### IF YOU COULD TRADE LIVES WITH ONE PERSON FOR A DAY WHO WOULD IT BE AND WHY?

Maybe Simone Biles. I love watching her gymnastics routine and like to imagine that perhaps in another life, I may have been a gymnast. If not her, then Billy Joel. I love the unintentional theology present in his music, and love that he writes his own songs. It would be fun to know what that process feels like.

### WHO IS A CHARACTER FROM A TV SHOW OR A BOOK THAT YOU'VE ALWAYS RESONATED WITH?

I feel I'm either Elaine from Seinfeld or Monica from Friends. I would like to be Rachel, but I'm just not. My husband tells me I'm Kristina Braverman from Parenthood.

### IN YOUR OPINION, WHAT IS THE BEST DISNEY MOVIE?

Zootopia. It provides a great lesson that things are rarely what they seem on the surface.



### IF YOU WERE GOING TO GO TO THE MOVIES ALONE, WHAT WOULD BE THE PERFECT FILM FOR YOU TO WATCH BY YOURSELF?

I love Grumpy Old Men. I just watched Ms. Congeniality. Because ministry and the busyness of life can get hectic, I like anything that is light, and you can pull a quote from.

### WHAT ACCOMPLISHMENTS ARE YOU MOST PROUD OF?

Being brave enough to follow where God was leading, both in seminary and in our family, even and especially when others thought we were crazy. It taught me Jesus cares more about our allegiance than our comfort and even our safety.

### IS THERE A DOCUMENTARY OR BOOK THAT CHANGED THE WAY YOU THOUGHT ABOUT SOMETHING?

Mitch Albom's, *The Five People You Meet in Heaven* and *The Next Person You Meet in Heaven*. Mitch is Jewish, so I don't think his intent was to share the Gospel, but he did anyway! Sometimes we don't understand how we impact people and how they impact us. We often doubt our significance. Both these books are works of fiction, but they teach us an invaluable lesson that there is deeper meaning in our everyday interactions with others.

### WHAT'S YOUR GO-TO SNACK?

That's easy. Plain, rippled potato chips. Shared with my dog after everyone else is asleep.



## MISSION POSSIBLE: BRISBEN CENTER MEALS

Named for the late Ms. Thurman Brisben, whose example of love and devotion for the homeless in Fredericksburg was a driving force in establishing the Brisben Center Homeless Shelter. The Brisben Center provides a place of refuge along with services aimed at helping residents return to independent living. The members of Ebenezer Church have a long relationship supporting the Center especially because it is one of the only shelters in the area that provides emergency shelter and support to the entire family.

Brisben's food and nutrition program is wholly provided by community donations. As part of this, a group of volunteers from Ebenezer Church prepares and serves a Saturday evening meal each month. At Brisben, we find no strangers, only new friends and family. It's an Ebenezer tradition to make the meal special through both a great menu of options and an investment of love in the preparation and serving. Our goal is to make dinner feel like you're attending a family reunion. This kind of fellowship is a blessing to all involved.

This is a year-round need. If you have a passion for serving the homeless or just love to cook, we could use your help. Learn more and sign up at [ebenezerumc.org/brisben](http://ebenezerumc.org/brisben)

**-Bob Hagen**  
Ministry Leader





# August EVENTS

## EVENT REGISTRATION

To learn more about our upcoming events or to register to attend, please visit [ebenezerumc.org/events](http://ebenezerumc.org/events)

## GROUPS & CLASSES

Share life together and grow in your faith.

- Small groups
- Short-term Classes
- Recreation Groups
- Support Groups
- Special Interest Group
- Kids & Student Groups

Free KidzCare is available for all groups who meet on campus.

Visit [ebenezerumc.org/groups](http://ebenezerumc.org/groups) then click Groups/Classes to learn more.

## FIND US ONLINE

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**VOLUNTER - HEAD START TEACHERIFIC DAY**  
*MELCHERS AND NORTH STAR LOCATIONS*

5

**EXERCISE CLASSES RESUME**

6

**VOLUNTEER - HAMPTON OAKS TEACHERIFIC DAY**  
**NATIONAL NIGHT OUT**

8-9

**GLOBAL LEADERSHIP SUMMIT**

10

**UMM YOUTH FISHING & BBQ**

11

**SUMMER READING PRIZE REDEMPTION**

12

**STAFFORD COUNTY FIRST DAY OF SCHOOL**

17

**SPLASH BACK AT THE YMCA**  
**MUSEUM OF THE BIBLE TRIP - EMPTY NESTERS**  
**MILITARY WIVES CONNECT FAMILY PICNIC**

18

**NEW SERMON SERIES BEGINS**  
**JUST A PHASE SUNDAY**  
**TRANSITION SUNDAY**  
**DISCIPLE I, II, III CLASSES START**

19-20

**FIRST DAY OF PRESCHOOL**

20

**LUNCH & LEARN - EMPTY NESTERS**

21

**DIVORCECARE SUPPORT GROUP STARTS**

24

**VOLUNTEER - EBENEZER ACRE HARVEST**

25

**TNT YOUTH GROUP RESUMES**  
**SUMMER READING PRIZE REDEMPTION**

28

**RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE**

29

**GAME DAY - EMPTY NESTERS**



# September EVENTS

**S.E.R.V.E. FOOD COLLECTION ALL MONTH - DROPOFF IN GYM**

- 2** LABOR DAY, OFFICE IS CLOSED
- 7** JOIN THE SCOUTS EVENT  
MEMORIES OF ELVIS - *EMPTY NESTERS*
- 8** EXPLORE EBENEZER
- 11** LAST DAY TO REGISTER FOR AXIS RETREAT
- 15** NATIONALS BASEBALL TRIP - *EMPTY NESTERS*
- 17** LUNCH & LEARN - *EMPTY NESTERS*  
FINANCIAL PEACE UNIVERSITY BEGINS
- 18** FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
- 21** NEW SERMON SERIES BEGINS
- 27-29** AXIS RETREAT
- 28** UMM YARD SALE

## WEEKLY & MONTHLY RECURRING EVENTS

### Nar Anon Meetings -

Wednesdays 7:00 PM

### Basketball -

Women - Sundays, 3:00 PM

Men - Sundays, 7:00 PM

### Exercise Classes -

Mondays - Friday, 9:15 AM

### Indoor Hockey -

Mondays, 7:00 PM

### Active Older Adult Exercise Group -

Tuesdays & Fridays, 10:30 AM

### Community Meals -

August 3, September 7, 9:00 AM

### 4th Saturday Meals -

August 25, September 28

1:00 PM & 3:15 PM

### Gaming Club -

August 17, September 21, 12:00 PM

### Brisben Center Meals -

August 24, September 28, 3:30 & 5:45 PM

## SERVICE TIMES

**Traditional** | 8:15 AM

**Contemporary** | 9:45 AM, 11:15 AM,  
6:00 PM

**Church Online** | 9:45 & 11:15 AM

Watch at [live.ebenezerumc.org](http://live.ebenezerumc.org)

## KIDZCARE

Available for infants and toddlers during Sunday Services and for infants, toddlers, and school age children during most events and studies.

*Check-in at the KidzRock Kiosk.  
Please note, during the week, KidzCare is closed when Stafford County Schools are closed.*

## KIDZROCK SUNDAY SCHOOL

Available during all Sunday Services for children age 3 through 5th Grade.

*Check-in at the KidzRock Kiosk and classes in the Ministry Center.*

## TNT MIDDLE SCHOOL

**Sundays** | 9:45 -11:00 AM

*Meet in Room B01*

## AXIS HIGH SCHOOL

**Wednesday** | 7:00 - 9:00 PM

Specific Studies

**Sunday** | 9:45 -11:00 AM

*Meet in Room 216*



## VISITATION TEAM

Vicki Stones, *Director of Empty Nest Ministries*

Whether visiting people in their homes, in the hospital, or at the local coffee shop, the simple act of connecting with others is filled with powerful possibilities. The act of love and friendship is an inroad to someone's heart, creates trust, and provides incredible potential for ministry.

By the numbers alone, in a church our size, there are likely many people who have unmet needs for a variety of reasons. Illness or age may compromise a person's ability to get around. Sometimes, medical conditions leave people on a short tether to their home or hospital. Our pastors visit and call many people during the week, but wouldn't it be wonderful if a well-trained group of volunteer visitors can spend extra time and check-in more regularly with our friends?

Those who want company will be loved and cared for in a special way. Most importantly, we ensure our friends don't become isolated. Jesus set the example when it comes to love. He calls on us to love as He has loved, symbolically giving our lives for others. That is precisely what we want to accomplish in Visitation Ministry.

The Visitation Team needs spirit-filled and Christ-centered people who are committed to the long-term ministry of loving and caring for others. Ebenezer Church is looking for volunteers who will make monthly visits to anyone who could benefit from encouragement, comfort, or a sense of belonging.

You could visit in homes, hospitals, nursing homes, a coffee shop, in church, or anywhere convenient. Ebenezer's Visitation Team members will be asked to make visits once a month. Team members will receive training and support materials to use during their visits.


Are you wondering if this would be a good fit for your talents?

- Do you have a heart for people?
- Do you have time to conduct at least one visit per month?
- Do you have time to attend a 1-hour training class?
- Do you have time to attend visitation team meeting?
- Are you supportive of the church's vision and mission?
- Do you have spiritual gifts or talents suited to this ministry? (encouragement, hospitality, compassion, etc.)

If you've answered "yes" to all or most of these questions, contact Vicki at [vstones@ebenezerumc.org](mailto:vstones@ebenezerumc.org). We'd love to have you on our team.

## INTERESTED IN JOINING SCOUTS?

Cub Scout Pack 907, chartered by Ebenezer United Methodist Church, is holding its annual Join Scouting event, Saturday, September 7 from 9:00-11:00 AM in Room 101. We'll have games and food for kids interested in Scouts. Parents will have a chance to get information and ask questions. Pack 907 is open to students in grades K-5 for the current school year. For questions, contact Ken Todd at [aquiacsrtc@gmail.com](mailto:aquiacsrtc@gmail.com) or 202-714-6484.



# BE Teacherific

Help our local teachers prepare for the new school year by volunteering a couple of hours this summer.

Register and learn more at [ebenezerumc.org/events](http://ebenezerumc.org/events)



## BACK TO SCHOOL IN STAFFORD COUNTY

As I write this, I am remembering what it was like to send my two sons back to school each year. There was the excitement of new clothes and backpacks, the wonder of who would be in their classes, would they like their teachers, and what would their schedules look like.

Always wanting to give them something to remember about this special day, I created some memory makers for our family. There were the obligatory back-to-school photos each year, but I wanted to do more. I started two traditions when they were small, and we did

them until they left for college (okay, so I sent them some in college, too). The first was to bake back-to-school cookies to give them when they got home on that first day. The other thing I did, was to give them a blessing the night before they went back to school. I would say a prayer with each of them as I kissed them goodnight and ask God to watch over them throughout the year. If they had a worry or concern about what was coming, it was addressed in this moment. Through this, they were assured they could go to school confident God was going with them.

As you prepare your children for back-to-school, think about ways you can create memories for this special day. Perhaps add a special prayer or blessing to your family's routine. Back-to-school is just one occasion that you can do this for your child.

For more info on blessing your children, I recommend the book, *The Family Blessing* by Rolf Garborg.

May your children have a wonderful school year!

- **Shari Parsons,**  
Director of Children's Ministries

## 2019 VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL







## AXIS MISSION TRIP | JULY 6 - 13

AXIS students and their leaders served the community of Birmingham, AL. Here's a glimpse of their week.







# TNT

MIDDLE SCHOOL MINISTRY  
OF EBENEZER UMC

## YOUTH GROUP RESUMES

August 25, 2019

9:45-11:00 AM

Location: B01

# AXIS

HIGH SCHOOL MINISTRY  
OF EBENEZER UMC

## FALL RETREAT

September 27 - 29

Registration Deadline: Sept. 11

Early Bird Rate: \$90.00

(register by Sept. 1)

Standard Rate: \$110.00







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# Free Splash BACK

 **HIGH SCHOOL  
MIDDLE SCHOOL students**  
*and their families*

**08.17.19**

**6:30-9:30 PM**  
YMCA Water Park

Visit [ebenezerumc.org/events](http://ebenezerumc.org/events) for info