

STONEMAKER

Newsletter of Ebenezer Church

WE ARE FOR YOU



EBENEZER CHURCH

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 02 A Note From Pastor Jeff
- 02 Upcoming Sermon Series
- 03 Welcome and Farewell
- 04 A Note From Pastor Monica
- 04 Missions and Outreach
- 05 Gaga Ball
- 05 We Are For You
- 06 Calendar of Events
- 08 Empty Nest Ministries
- 09 Connections
- 10 Student Ministries
- 11 Children's Ministries

A NOTE FROM PASTOR EMILY

Grace and peace to you,


Oh, the beautiful colors and cooler temperatures of fall! What a blessing to be meeting many of you as you come for in-person worship and small groups. There is nothing like being together as the body of Christ. I've been driving around the community and praying for neighborhoods and people I see. It is a joy to get to know this community and see God moving in our midst. It is a joy to learn your names, hear your stories, and serve Christ with you. Ministry is beginning to grow again as we navigate COVID and see God's faithfulness carry us through this unique time in our lives and church. May we be faithful to the God who is always faithful to us.

Student ministries are strong as Axis and TNT are meeting weekly once more. Sunday School is growing with both in-person and online options. Small groups are beginning to gather again. Go For Bo is just around the corner as we support our brothers and sisters on the other side of the world and support those who live next door through Moncure Elementary, Micah Ministries, S.E.R.V.E. and Stafford Food Security.

In our current sermon series, we are encouraging everyone to practice "Neighboring" where we live and work, intentionally building faith-based relationships with those we see every day. In October, our next series is "Commitments that will Change Your Life." How is God using worship, prayer, service, small groups, giving, and more in growing you as a disciple? Hear the stories of how others are growing and discern how you would like to engage more deeply in these commitments as well.

Let us pray for our neighbors. Let us pray for our church. Let us pray for God's guidance, as we thank Christ for his grace.

Serving Christ with you,


Pastor Emily



Current & Upcoming
Sermon Series

NEIGHBORING

Jesus told us that loving God and loving our neighbors are the two most important things for Christians. What if we put some skin on that? What if we loved God so much that we let that love change and ground us? What if we loved our neighbors...our actual neighbors: the people who live beside us; the people we see at school; the people we see at ballgames; the people we see at the grocery store? What would it look like to be there for our neighbors and neighborhoods in new and practical ways – in ways that meet them where they are? And what if we did this not only as individuals but also as a church? Let’s see what scripture says about growing relationships right outside our door.

COMMITMENTS
THAT WILL CHANGE
YOUR LIFE

How do we grow in faith? We often grow through commitments we make in the vital ways we live out faith: worship, prayer, service, small groups, missions, and giving. Each week, we will hear personal stories about how individuals are growing in these ways. How will you commit to grow? How will God use that commitment to change you and change your life? Each person will receive a card of invitation to mark the commitments we make. A new small group this year? A commitment to local missions? Praise Band? Office volunteer? Daily prayer? Tithing? Weekly worship? To what is Christ inviting you? We will celebrate these commitments in worship in November. Watch the fruit that grows when we offer ourselves more deeply to Jesus.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR JEFF

Beautiful Sisters and Brothers of Ebenezer,

A new season is approaching—the season of autumn! Some of my fondest memories take place in this season, a time when the leaves are changing colors, the weather is turning colder, the aroma of apples is in the air, pumpkins are laying in the field, and houses are decorated with cornstalks and straw bales.

For some, a new season brings hopefulness, but for others, the stress of change is overwhelming. Are you starting a new school year or new job, or transitioning from working at home to commuting? Maybe you are getting ready to move to a new house, a new city, or a new part of the world. Possibly, you are entering a new season of life with or without a loved one. Whatever it may be, transition is actively upon each of us.

In the Gospels, Jesus taught by telling stories, usually ending with a tagline about needing the right “eyes to see,” or “ears to hear.” It’s as if Jesus was telling folks that life was happening all around them, but it was going overlooked.

Where are we focused during the changing season? Are we able to see and hear how God is working in, with, through, and around us? Or are we like Jesus’ audience, missing the fullness of life, even as it walks right past us?



As the leaves begin to change color and fall to the ground over the next couple of weeks, I am reminded of one of my previous neighbors, John, who daily would break out his leaf vacuum and suck up all the leaves in his yard, and even some that fell in ours. Every day throughout the summer, John would always tend to his yard, by either watering his lawn, pulling weeds in his flowerbeds, or mowing his grass.

Now, as we enter the season of autumn, I imagine he will be outside yet again, vacuuming the hundreds of leaves and countless sticks that have fallen in his yard. The funny part is, he has no trees in his yard! The leaves and sticks are all carried onto his property from nearby yards thanks to the bustling wind. Rather than blowing the leaves and sticks back into the surrounding yards, he picks them up.

A couple of years ago, after coming home to find that our grass had been cut and leaves picked up, I went over to his house to thank him. John’s response was, “That’s what neighbors do.” But it wasn’t just an act of being neighborly for John, it was an act of being a good steward. His caring, meticulous, and neighborly nature is all grounded in his stewardship.

What does stewardship mean to you? How do your interactions with your neighbors flow from your call to be a good steward? Do they come naturally, or are they still works in progress? Loving our actual neighbors—the ones who live directly around us, and the folks we interact with daily, is one of the simplest things we can do to impact our communities and our world. Plus, loving our neighbors is what Jesus told us to do. “Love God with everything you’ve got, and love your neighbor as yourself.”

Over the next couple of weeks, I hope you’ll make a commitment to be more neighborly, to stop and take in the crisp autumn air, to pray for your neighbors and your church, and reflect on how we can more deeply, and more fully, live out our call from Jesus to Love God and Love Our Neighbors.

In Service of Christ and Community!

Jeff

Pastor Jeff



Congratulations to the Harrison family on the birth of baby Naomi on August 12.



We’re thrilled to introduce our new Director of Worship!

Greetings! My name is Preston Hardage and I am honored and grateful for this opportunity to be a part of the Ebenezer family as your new Director of Worship. My wife, Heather, our children Parker (10) and Madison (8), and I are excited to meet everyone and serve our community alongside you. We are originally from Missouri, but have been in the D.C. area for 17 years while I’ve served in the Marine Corps as a trombonist in the “The President’s Own” U.S. Marine Band. We have spent nine of those years right here in Stafford! I’ve served as the worship leader at a Methodist church in Falls Church for the past four years and am now looking forward to following God’s plan to serve a little closer to home.

A very warm welcome to the Hardage family. Preston will be leading worship along with the Praise Band beginning Sunday, October 3.

FAREWELL TO VICKI & TINA

Ebenezer recently said farewell to two longtime staff members, Vicki Stones and Tina DeBoeser.

Vicki began volunteering in the Main Office in 2003, then was hired as the Office Assistant the following year. In 2006, she became the Office Manager and remained in that position for 12 years, helping to build and guide the staff through a period of incredible growth at Ebenezer. Vicki had a gift for recruiting, training, and encouraging volunteers, many of whom later became staff members themselves. In 2018, her family moved to Alexandria, and she took on a new role as the Director of Empty Nest Ministries. Vicki is now the Communications and Office Manager at the Old Presbyterian Meeting House in Alexandria, a 15-minute commute from her home. We feel certain that great things are about to happen there.

One of the volunteers that Vicki mentored was Tina DeBoeser. Tina’s eyes and heart were opened to service during her time as a volunteer, particularly while leading the Cold Weather Shelter. She joined the Ebenezer staff in 2010, first as a wedding coordinator and member of the KidzCare team, before moving over to the Main Office. For the past seven years, she has worked tirelessly to share God’s love in our community as Ebenezer’s first Director of Missions and Outreach. Tina has stepped down to devote more time to her family, but we hope to convince her to return as a volunteer as her schedule allows!



Missions and Outreach



In-Person October 9
Virtual October 2-9

It's Go Time!

The 2021 Go For Bo 5K, 1-Mile Fun Run, and Tot Dash is coming to Ebenezer on Saturday, October 9! Whether you prefer to run, walk, skip, or jog, get your friends and neighbors together to make the most of this fun family event. Little racers will find lots of engaging activities in our children's area. Four-legged runners are also welcome; register your dog for just \$5! Can't join us in person? Run with us in spirit. Our virtual race is open October 2-9. Run anywhere and upload your time using the RaceJoy app. All proceeds support the lifesaving work of our mission partner Helping Children Worldwide in Sierra Leone.

New This Year

Our new race route for the 5K and 1-Mile Fun Run is an out-and-back that takes runners from the start line at Ebenezer down through the Embrey Mill neighborhood, then south on Mine Road to the turnaround point. Runners will then retrace their steps back up Embrey "Hill" to the finish line at Ebenezer. Note: we will be timing the in-person 1-Mile Fun Run this year.

Let's Go!

Go For Bo is open to all ages and abilities, and strollers are welcome. All participants will receive a performance race shirt. Register today at goforbo.org. 5K - \$22; 1-Mile Fun Run - \$20; Tot Dash - \$10; Dogs - \$5.

GoForBo.org

A NOTE FROM PASTOR MONICA

The Northern Virginia Missional Hub, functionally known as the Love Your Neighbor Network, is off to a great start! I have much gratitude and appreciation for our leadership team and the microchurch members, who have committed themselves to being church where life happens and loving neighbors as God commands. I invite you to join me in praying for and over them and this ministry.

Because a small number of disciples could see a vision for church outside of the walls and are taking a risk to put flesh around the Gospel in these contexts, we are witnessing the planting and watering of seeds, as well as God birthing fruit. It is a true labor of love that will take time, patience, commitment, and an investment in relationships.

And the work has only just begun!

Over the next two months, we will be seeking to identify and train a handful of potential "Dinner Church" leaders or those interested in supporting a Dinner Church. What is Dinner Church? It is an expression of church that commits to meeting weekly or regularly around the table. In traditional church settings, we gather in a sanctuary. However, Scripture is full of stories and lessons that occur around tables. Jesus was often found eating and drinking.

Breaking bread. Washing feet. Sharing stories. Learning God's Word. Seeing God in a new way. Seeing our neighbor in a new way. Confession. Forgiveness. Mercy. Prophecy. Feasting. Remembering God's goodness. All things that happen around tables!

Life happens around tables, and our thought is that church should happen around tables too. We would love to add a few Dinner Churches (or Breakfast Churches if that's your thing) to our Love Your Neighbor Network.

The meal doesn't have to be fancy. You could rotate homes or tables. You could even meet in a local diner. The main idea is to gather regularly around a shared meal, and in that space you will be invited to share real life together. Not just your own lives, but the life of Jesus which was broken and poured out for us.

We will provide training and equip you with resources such as prayer, Scripture, liturgy, music, or any other "church" elements you would like to include. Dinner Church can be contextualized to your preferred setting. It could be more liturgical or more conversational, but at its heart it will be inherently relational. Just like God!

If the thought of sharing a meal and sharing life together sounds warm or inviting to you, perhaps God is calling you to be part of the movement. Could this be you? I would love to connect and see how we can work together to share God's love around some tables.

Blessings and Peace,

Monica

Pastor Monica



GOLD AWARD BRINGS GAGA BALL TO EBENEZER

When Kait Priest began bouncing around ideas for her Girl Scout Gold Award project, a gaga ball pit immediately came to mind. Ask anyone in Student Ministries: this twist on dodgeball is a favorite activity at the Axis Fall Retreat, but there aren't many places to play in Stafford. Building a gaga ball pit at Ebenezer would fill that gap and provide a way for fans of the game to share it with the community.

A senior at Colonial Forge High School, Kait began scouting in first grade and is now an Ambassador in Troop #5033. Her scouting career has had many highlights, including her leadership of the Northern Border Day Camp, but the Gold Award has been in her sights since entering high school.

The Girl Scout Gold Award is the highest award a girl scout can earn and requires approximately 80 hours of research, planning, and execution. To support her proposal for a community recreation opportunity at Ebenezer, Kait investigated not only the nuts and bolts of constructing a gaga ball pit, but also the benefits of physical activity, delving into exercise patterns among high school students and how COVID has affected them.

Ebenezer Church member Elise Pailthorpe became Kait's Gold Award Guide after her project was approved by the Girl Scout Gold Award Review Board. Kait then made a presentation to the Ebenezer Board of Trustees, which greenlighted construction of the pit on church property and allocated funding for necessary building materials from the Bridge to Tomorrow Fund.

On September 4, members of Kait's small group pitched in to help install the gaga ball pit on Ebenezer's rear parking lot, and it was the main attraction at the Student Ministries bonfire the following night. Its 30-inch octagonal walls are made of pressure-treated lumber, held together by metal brackets, and topped with protective plastic covers. The rules of the game are posted on the side, and balls are available in a nearby bin.

A grand opening is in the works, and Kait also plans to contact the homeowners' associations of the Autumn Ridge and Embrey Mill neighborhoods to let them know that the gaga ball pit is available.

Looking back, Kait recalled that the most enjoyable part of the project was sharing the news with the superfans in Student Ministries. "Everyone said, 'Thank you so much!' There's a lot of joy and excitement about being able to play this game here at the church."



WE ARE FOR YOU

What's it all about?

We Are For You sprang from a desire to be good neighbors, to meet people where they are, and to put our mission into action outside our church building.

The most important thing about We Are For You is reaching out and building relationships. We want our neighbors and members of our community to know that we are not just "here" to support them, but we are "out there" to support them where they work, play, and go through daily life.

We've already put this into practice as we welcomed new teachers to Stafford County and delivered backpacks to Moncure Elementary, but We Are For You is not just something that Ebenezer Church is doing. We want to equip YOU to go and do likewise: to go out into your neighborhood, your workplace, or your playground and start building the relationships that will enable you to share God's love and your faith with our community.

So, stop by the Connections Desk and pick up a New Neighbor Bag for the family who moved in down the street. Sign up to get a S'more Starter Kit and host a neighborhood campfire gathering in your driveway. Volunteer to help us get acquainted with our community at National Night Out.

We Are For You...and we're excited to be on this journey with you!

Sunday Worship

In Person | 8:15 AM (Traditional)
9:45 AM & 11:15 AM (Modern)

Livestream | 9:45 AM & 11:15 AM
or anytime at live.ebenezerumc.org

Event Registration

To learn more about our upcoming events or to register to attend, scan the QR code below or visit ebenezerumc.org/events



ebenezerumc.org/events

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@ebenezer.umc

@ebenezer.umc

www.ebenezerumc.org

October Events

- 2

FAMILY MOVIE NIGHT
6:00–9:00 PM
- 5

NATIONAL NIGHT OUT
5:00–8:00 PM, LOWE'S PARKING LOT
- 9

GO FOR BO 5K, 1-MILE FUN RUN AND TOT DASH
8:00 AM, VIRTUAL RACE OCT 2-9
- 12

EMPTY NESTER GAME CLUB
1:00-3:00 PM
- 13

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS
9:30-11:30 AM
- 16

ADVENTURERS' GUILD
12:00-4:00 PM
- 16

BRISBEN SHELTER MEAL
4:00-7:00 PM
- 19

EMPTY NEST LUNCH AND LEARN
FAMILY LEGACY WEALTH PLANNING, 12:00 PM
- 20

AXIS SUMMER MISSION TRIP INFO MEETING
7:00 PM
- 26

EMPTY NEST GAME CLUB
1:00–3:00 PM
- 27

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS
9:30-11:30 AM

- Recurring Events**
- Men's Basketball**
Sundays, 7:30–9:30 PM
- TOPS**
Mondays, 9:00–11:30 AM
- Exercise Group**
Mondays & Thursdays, 9:15–11:30 AM (Free Child Care)
- Active Older Adult Exercise**
Tuesdays & Fridays, 9:15–10:15 AM
- Floor Hockey**
Tuesdays, 7:00–9:00 PM
- Nar-Anon**
Wednesdays, 6:30 PM
- Spirituality in Nature Group**
Thursdays, 10:00 AM

November Events

- 9

EMPTY NESTER GAME CLUB
1:00–3:00 PM
- 10

MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS
9:30-11:30 AM
- 13

BRISBEN SHELTER MEAL
4:00–7:00 PM
- 14

DIVORCECARE SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS
2:00-4:00 PM
- 14

EXPLORE EBENEZER
5:00 PM
- 16

EMPTY NEST LUNCH AND LEARN
THE MICROCHURCH EXPLAINED - 12:00 PM
- 20

ADVENTURERS' GUILD
12:00-4:00 PM
- 23

EMPTY NEST GAME CLUB
1:00-3:00 PM

- Looking Ahead to December**
- 15

EMPTY NEST: MEET ME IN SAINT LOUIS
12:45 PM, RIVERSIDE CENTER
- 19

LESSONS AND CAROLS WORSHIP SERVICE
- 21

LONGEST NIGHT WORSHIP EXPERIENCE
- 22

LIVING NATIVITY WORSHIP EXPERIENCE
- 24

CHRISTMAS EVE CANDLELIGHT WORSHIP SERVICES

Kidzcare

Available for ages 0-3 during Sunday Worship Services and for infants, toddlers, and school age children during on-campus group meetings.

Please note that on weekdays, KidzCare is closed when Stafford County Schools are closed.

Kidzrock Sunday School

Available during Sunday Worship Services at 9:45 AM & 11:15 AM for children age 3 through 5th grade.

Find virtual Sunday School resources at ebenezerumc.org/bulletin

TNT Middle School
Weekly Gathering

Sundays, 5:00-6:30 PM, Room B01

AXIS High School
Weekly Gathering

Sundays, 7:00-9:00 PM, Room B01

Connect With Us:

To receive text updates
about our ministries:

Parents of middle school students, text TNTParent to **84576**

Parents of high school students, text AxisParent to **84576**

High school students, text AXIS to **84576**

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@axis.eumc

@eumc_axis

STONEMAKER | 7

ADULT MINISTRIES

Our Ebenezer Empty Nesters continue to learn, explore, and grow in all seasons! The Empty Nest Lunch & Learn series returns this fall with a program on Family Legacy Wealth Planning with attorney Gaby Coronado on October 19, followed by a guide to Medicare and Tricare For Life updates with Mark Ellis on November 16. On December 15, the Empty Nesters head to Riverside Center for a matinee performance of Meet Me In St. Louis. For more information about Empty Nest socials, events, and fitness groups, visit ebenezerumc.org/empty-nest

EMPTY NESTERS

LUNCH & LEARNS

Oct 19

Family Legacy Wealth Planning

Cost: \$5

Nov 16

Medicare and Tricare For Life

Cost: \$5

VISIT EBENEZERUMC.ORG/EVENTS FOR MORE INFO & REGISTRATION

Connect With Us:

To learn more about Empty Nest socials, events, and fitness groups:

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f

@EmptyNestOlderAdults

globe

ebenezerumc.org/empty-nesters



December 15 | 12:45 PM | Riverside Center
Cost: \$55 | Show Only | Register by November 1
Learn more at ebenezerumc.org/events

The holidays can be difficult following a divorce. DivorceCare Surviving the Holidays provides tips and encouragement for navigating the season in a two-hour seminar on Sunday, November 14 at 2:00 PM. Register and find more information at ebenezerumc.org/events. For more information about support groups, please visit staffordhope.org.

DIVORCE Care

Surviving the Holidays

November 14 2:00-4:00 PM

REGISTER AT EBENEZERUMC.ORG/EVENTS

explore EBENEZER

GET TO KNOW OUR CHURCH AND PASTORS
NOVEMBER 14 | 5:00 PM
REGISTER AT EBENEZERUMC.ORG/EVENTS

MEET YOUR NEIGHBORS!

In our very transient community, people are moving in and out all the time. What a great opportunity we have to be good neighbors! Being hospitable to newcomers is a time-honored tradition. Whether you are welcoming the new household on the block or you are the new household on the block, we all want to make a good first impression.

Calling on new neighbors is one of those rare instances when dropping by unexpectedly is considered friendly and thoughtful. So, if you see your new neighbor in their yard, go on over and say "hello" or knock on their door and introduce yourself. The goal is simple: to welcome them, exchange names and perhaps phone numbers, and form relationships where you are. If you become aware of new neighbors weeks or even months after they move in, you can still knock on the door and introduce yourself; there's no statute of limitations on being a neighbor.

A welcome-to-the-neighborhood gift will brighten your new neighbor's day and ease the stress of settling in. Ebenezer is here to help. We have New Neighbor Bags available for you to pick up and give to your new neighbor at any time throughout the year. The bags consist of some items they may need in their new home as they move in, as well as a tag to write your name and address so they can remember who dropped by. This is a great way to welcome them to the neighborhood and invite them to be a part of the Ebenezer Church community. To pick up a New Neighbor Bag, stop by the Connections Desk on Sunday mornings or email Chrissy at crichardson@ebenezerumc.org



MOTHERS OF PRESCHOOLERS

If you're a seasoned mom with wisdom to share, we invite you to become a Mentor Mom for Ebenezer MOPS (Mothers of Preschoolers.) Our members gather for meetings on the second and fourth Wednesday of the month from 9:30-11:30 AM and would benefit from your valuable experience. To find out more, email Mopsebenezer@gmail.com



Axis Summer Mission Trip

In July, 42 teens and adult leaders traveled to Wilmington, NC for the Axis Summer Mission Trip. Thanks to the incredible generosity of our church family, the students were able to participate at a reduced rate and have a wonderful experience growing in their faith.

To prepare for the trip, participants were assigned to small groups with three to four other students and an adult leader. The groups met four to six times to study the Bible and get to know each other, a process that was vital to building community and ensuring that students were focused and ready to serve upon arrival.

Our theme for the week was Neighbors, with a scripture focus on the Good Samaritan in Luke: Go and Do Likewise. Throughout the week, we put this into practice by opening our eyes to see the needs around us and having the courage and willingness to help meet those needs.

Students and adults were divided into four work groups: one group worked with Habitat for Humanity and a food bank; the other three groups worked with Wilmington Area Rebuilding Ministry (WARM) to provide free home repairs to those in need. Students learned carpentry skills and installed flooring, while building relationships with those they served. Groups were challenged to pray for homeowners and others at their work sites and were blessed as they watched hearts open.

The 2022 Axis Summer Mission Trip is scheduled for June 19-25. Eighth graders, high school students, and their parents are invited to find out more at an informational meeting on Wednesday, October 20 at 7:00 PM in Room B01. For more information, please contact Michelle Paquette at mpaquette@ebenezerumc.org

In their own words: Participants Reflect on the Mission Trip

How have you seen God this week?

"In our work group when we prayed for the homeowner and we prayed for her father. She seemed so happy and loved."

"I saw God working when I saw how dedicated my work group was when doing work on the house. They all tried something new without complaining and didn't stop until they were done."

"I've been able to find God in the people we have met. Although we may be different on the outside, we are all united under God."

How has God worked in you this week?

"He has changed me and given me confidence, inspiration, and motivation to help others."

2022 HIGH SCHOOL MISSION TRIP

Info Meeting

October 20
7:00 PM

In-Person or Virtual
Parent or guardian must attend with student
[EBENEZERUMC.ORG/EVENTS](https://ebenezerumc.org/events)

"God has really taught me to love everyone fully, regardless of who they are."

"This trip has made me want to focus on being a good neighbor to those around me and to look for more opportunities to help people when I get home."

CHILDREN AND FAMILY

Fall is for families at Ebenezer!



On Saturday, October 2, KidzRock and Ebenezer Preschool are teaming up to host Family Movie Night from 6:00-9:00 PM. Invite your friends and neighbors and join us on the front lawn for an outdoor family movie. Bring along your blankets, chairs, and a picnic supper. We'll have free popcorn and water bottles ready.

As the weather gets cooler, we want to help you reach out to your neighbors and have S'more Outdoor Fun. Register to pick up a free starter kit and host your own neighborhood campfire gathering. Each kit contains s'mores fixin's, skewers, and suggestions for some fun activities that will help you forge relationships around the firepit.

For more information on activities for children and families visit ebenezerumc.org/kidzrock or find us on Facebook @EUMCKidzRock.



We are so thankful for the talented and caring members of our preschool staff! Ebenezer Preschool offers classes for 3-year-olds, 4-year-olds, and 5-year-olds in a safe, loving, Christ-centered environment. For more information, visit ebenezerumc.org/preschool or find us on Facebook @EUMCPreschool



 EBENEZER CHURCH

161 Embrey Mill Road
Stafford, Virginia 22554

Change of address service requested

Non-Profit Organization
U.S. POSTAGE PAID
Stafford, VA
Permit #16



Go For Bo

5K • 1 Mile Fun Run • Tot Dash



In-Person: Oct 9
Virtual: Oct 2-9

GoForBo.org

