

Spring 2023

STONEMAKER

Newsletter of Ebenezer Church

INSIDE THIS ISSUE

- 02 A Note From Pastor Jeff
- 02 Upcoming Sermon Series
- 03 A Note from the Governing Board
- 04 Counselor's Corner
- 04 A Note From Pastor Donovan
- 05 State of the Church Updates
- 06 Calendar of Events
- 08 Adult Ministries
- 09 Easter with Ebenezer
- 09 Missions & Outreach
- 10 Children's Ministries
- 10 Preschool
- 11 Student Ministries

A NOTE FROM PASTOR EMILY

What is our witness in the community?

Christ gave us our focus in the two most important commandments: love God with your heart, mind, soul, and strength, and love your neighbor as yourself. Christ said everything in the law and prophets hangs on these two. Getting this right – and doing this well – matters as we live faith together as disciples in the one body of Jesus Christ. Love is meant to mark who we are in this community. Our witness matters.

To that end, we are putting words and actions to loving God and others. 2023 is a Year of Prayer in which We Are Praying For You. We are lifting Stafford County in our prayers each week as a church. We invite you to put hands and feet to those prayers as we share practical ideas about how to do just that. Check out Prayer Tools and Prayer Works at ebenezerumc.org/year-of-prayer. Pray for our neighbors and support our community through your actions, interactions, and service. As the old saying goes, you may be someone's first experience of what Christ is like. What a privilege and what a mission. Let's do that well by the grace and guidance of God.

As we grow closer to spring, we also come

closer to the prayerful season of Lent and the joyful truth of Easter. We will delve into two new sermon series teaching about Jesus and genuine discipleship. This summer we'll explore Biblical leadership, spiritual gifts, and some favorite Old Testament stories about big faith. We pray that you are connecting and growing in faith through worship and ministry onsite, online, or offsite, through impactful mission opportunities, and through small groups as you do life and faith together. We would love to help you connect in these ways with God and others at Ebenezer.

Let us fulfill Jesus' commandment to love well with all that we are as we focus on *transforming lives through Jesus Christ as we connect, heal, and bring hope to the world.*

What a joy and privilege to serve Christ together with you as one,

Pastor Emily
pastoremilyp@ebenezerumc.org



FOCUS 2025

What will Ebenezer's future priorities be? Focus 2025 guides our long-range vision, helping us live into our mission together. Four teams are working to further develop Online Engagement, Mental Health Engagement, Neighborhood Engagement, and a Mission Hub Idea Bank. To increase online engagement during worship services, we recently created a new welcome and announcement time just for our online congregation.

Check it out this Sunday at live.ebenezerumc.org or visit ebenezerumc.org/focus-2025 to learn more about Focus 2025.

Ebenezer has a Strategic Planning Team working to discern ministry priorities and overall focus based on our core values and mission statement. We are addressing our projected budget deficit with a measured approach over time. For more information, visit ebenezerumc.org/state-of-the-church.

Upcoming
Sermon Series

I Am
(Lent & Easter - Feb 26-Apr 9)

Who do you say Jesus is? Though we might find that question hard to answer, Jesus describes himself in the gospel of John. He states repeatedly, “I am ...” and gives us ways to think about who he is and how he relates to us. Let’s examine Jesus’ self-description and how he summarizes his broad mission and the deep love within it. Many of our small groups will be studying Matt Rawle’s book *Jesus Revealed: The I Am Sayings* during this series.

I Like Jesus, But...
(Apr 23-May 28)

“I like Jesus, but I have questions.” Something holds us back. We’re not sure. We might be spiritual but not religious. We may have been hurt by a church in the past. Perhaps people who call themselves Christians haven’t seemed much like Jesus. We don’t want to quit on Jesus, but we don’t know what to do with our questions. This series is for people with questions. It’s also for people who want to learn how to share their faith with others in real and lasting ways.

Leadership
(June 4-July 2)

We all model leadership in different ways. Some are bold; others are reserved. Some are collaborative; others go it alone. Some are doers; others are thinkers. How is God inviting you to lead? We’ll explore different Biblical examples like Joshua, Mary, Martha, Peter, and more. Each of them sought to lead with their God-given gifts. We seek to do the same. What spiritual gifts do you have for leadership? Find out in this series. Let’s explore our gifts together.

A NOTE FROM PASTOR JEFF

Beautiful and Beloved People of Ebenezer,

Looking within ourselves is not something that is encouraged in our present culture. We are given every tool to look elsewhere. We validate this by saying that we are “staying connected,” but by staying connected, we gradually lose touch with ourselves. As Christians, looking inward means being attentive to the spirit of Jesus. It is when we compare our spirit to that of Jesus that we come to know the true state of our being. Sometimes we can see the “mess” that is before us and think, “Why bother?” but God is there, even in the messes of our lives. Through Christ, there is redemption and restoration for the mess.

At my first Ash Wednesday service in 2010, I was serving a small, rural congregation in Ohio. I received detailed instructions from my home church pastor about burning the palms and mixing oil with the ashes, but he left out one key detail...the amount of oil. After praying over and burning the palms, I slowly began to add anointing oil, but I lost track and added way too much. The result was an oily, soupy mess.

When the time came to impose the ashes, I dipped my thumb into the mixture and placed it on the forehead of each member of the congregation. Dark streams of ash soup flowed from their eyebrows to their noses and down onto the ground. Afterward, they all let me know that the ashes were exceptionally messy that year. However, one elderly man remarked that while the ashes were a mess, they were also a great reminder of how our lives can be when we don’t focus on Christ. He was right. When we don’t focus on Christ, our lives are a mess.

Friends, during this introspective season of Lent and the joyous season of Easter that follows, let us focus on the grace and love that God gives us even when we do not deserve it. Let us focus on how messy our lives are, and how much we need restoration by the One who restores all things. The Resurrection is God’s dramatic demonstration of His presence, power, and promise. It reminds us that death is not the end, but the entrance into a new dimension of life with holy God.



He is Risen! Alleluia! He is Risen!

Pastor Jeff
pastorjeff@ebenezerumc.org

WE ARE
Praying
FOR YOU

YEAR OF PRAYER

*"Rejoice always, pray without ceasing, give thanks in all circumstances, for this is the will of God in Christ Jesus for you."
(1 Thessalonians 5:16-18)*

Ebenezer is intentionally praying for our community and ministry partners throughout 2023. Each month has a different prayer topic, with a new prayer focus every week. Our church family will pray together on Sundays at all worship services, and we encourage you to pray on your own or with your family or small group throughout the week.

Visit ebenezerumc.org/year-of-prayer to subscribe to our Prayer Calendar, access Prayer Tools, and find ways to put your prayers into action through Prayer Works. You can also text YEAROFPRAYER to 84576 to receive a weekly prayer reminder by text or pick up a Year of Prayer bookmark, which includes our monthly prayer topics, at the Connection Desk.

This spring, we’re praying for:
March: Businesses
April: Mental Health, Addiction & Support Groups
May: First Responders



EBENEZER CHURCH

A Note from the Governing Board

This letter was emailed to the congregation on January 13 in response to denominational questions. The Governing Board and pastors are currently in conversation around these questions with small groups in the church. We received much positive feedback and a few negative comments about this letter. Some of that feedback is reflected in updated FAQ on the church website. We look forward to continued conversation and input as we move forward together, one body in Christ. Stay tuned for more opportunities for healthy discussion.

Dear Ebenezer Church Family,

As we enter 2023, we’d like to provide some important updates about our denomination and our church. As we have mentioned in previous communications, decisions made at the 2019 General Conference around LGBTQ+ issues have resulted in discord within United Methodist congregations, with a small percentage (around 6.6 percent) opting to leave the denomination.

Over the past year, the Governing Board and pastors have had the opportunity to discuss these issues with many members of our congregation, including through our Town Hall and Listening Sessions. Thank you to all those who participated in these forums and reached out to us. We truly appreciate your thoughtfulness and candor.

After prayerful consideration of these and countless other conversations, the Governing Board has determined that Ebenezer’s best course of action is to remain within the United Methodist Church. We will continue to follow the foundational Christian beliefs that are cemented in the doctrine of the United Methodist Church and follow the Book of Discipline. We firmly believe that this decision represents the position of the vast majority of our congregation and is in the best interests of Ebenezer.

We are aware that there are individuals within our membership who are advocating for Ebenezer to leave the United Methodist Church. However, we believe they represent a small minority of our congregation. As stated in Paragraph 2553 of the Book of Discipline, the Governing Board is the only body that can initiate the disaffiliation process, a responsibility we take very seriously. The disaffiliation process is not to be undertaken without the support of a vast majority (at least two-thirds) of the congregation. Per our continued engagements with people and information from both sides of this story, we feel that this is not the case at Ebenezer. To push forward would be imprudent and needlessly divisive.

As you may know, individuals and organizations promoting disaffiliation have circulated reports about a small number of United Methodist churches not following the Book of Discipline. Please know that these are highly atypical, isolated incidents and are not reflective of the 36,000 United Methodist congregations in the United States, including Ebenezer. We are and will continue to be a Bible-based church, committed to Biblical teaching.

For transparent, reliable information about denominational developments, please visit the official Ebenezer Church website at ebenezerumc.org. New information is regularly added to our Denomination News page. Click the FAQ button to view the latest updates. In addition, Governing Board members are always available to answer questions by email at ebenezerinfo@ebenezerumc.org. Please note that Ebenezer will never release your contact information to anyone without your permission.

We continue to live out our mission to “transform lives through Jesus Christ as we connect, heal, and bring hope to the world.” Our church is growing, with 67 new members and 37 baptisms in 2022.

We look forward to doing even more to make disciples, love others, and serve our community in the coming year, starting with our intentional commitment to a Year of Prayer, and continuing with compassionate service at Micah Ministries’ Cold Weather Shelter and Biblical teaching at Disciple Fast Track: New Testament.

As always, the Governing Board values your input. Please reach out to us with your questions and comments. We look forward to working together in 2023.

In Christ,

Your Governing Board

Vicki Brooks
Sarah Chapple
Andy Garlington
James Kenkel
Tim Manning
Micheal Russ
Gayle Thyrring
Pastor Emily Moore-Diamond
Pastor Jeff Harrison
Pastor Donovan Archie
B.J. Priest, Secretary



<https://ebenezerumc.org/denomination-news/>

Scan the QR Code to visit the Demonimation News page on our website

Counselor's Corner



Boundaries are one of the most important gifts we can give ourselves. Well-thought-out boundaries help insulate – not isolate - us from exposure to the troubling or even toxic behaviors we experience in a fallen world. Boundaries require time to identify and effort to enforce. Studies have shown that people who establish boundaries are more content and at peace than those who live without them. In fact, Proverbs 22:4 declares “The prudent sees danger and hides himself, but the simple go on and suffer for it.”

I recognize establishing boundaries with loved ones is a difficult task to undertake, but as Christians we are called to do so. By establishing boundaries, we can heal fractured relationships and begin loving each other in a healthier manner. Even God demonstrated boundaries with those He loved. One example is seen in Genesis when God explains to Adam, “but of the tree of the knowledge of good and evil you shall not eat, for in the day that you eat of it you shall surely die.” God provided Adam a clear boundary; he also provided a result if that border was crossed. God understood the impact of Adam breaking that boundary, which I believe is one of the reasons he placed it there in the first place. God gave Adam that restriction out of love, to preserve the perfect relationship that he had with Adam prior to the fall.

If establishing boundaries is something that seems foreign to you, or if you’ve had problems enforcing the boundaries you’ve created, please feel free to contact me. I would be excited to see where the Spirit will lead as we address this together.

Keith Priest, Christian Counselor
kpriest@ebenezerumc.org

A NOTE FROM PASTOR DONOVAN

Fellow Disciples,

2023 is the perfect time to ask Jesus, “How would you like me to intentionally make a difference in the lives of others this year?” Each week, I hear from many of you that God is moving in your life mightily, but you’re still trying to determine the next faithful step. Welcome to the process of discernment, the spiritual practice of identifying what God is doing and how He is calling you to participate.



We use a similar process to figure out how to begin a neighborhood church - a local and contextualized community that intentionally gathers for worship, spiritual formation, and missional impact. This is a system I've adopted from Luke Edwards, a fellow neighborhood church planter and author of *Becoming Church*:

- Listening and Praying: What is God up to in my life and in my personal network?
- Loving Others: Who and what has God placed on my heart?
- Building Community: How is God calling me to connect and grow with others?
- Exploring Discipleship: How can we, as a community, begin growing spiritually?
- Church Taking Shape: What impact can we make as a gathered community?

I believe this process is useful for both neighborhood churches and spiritual journeys. I challenge you to be valiant and courageous about living out your faith in a radical way this year. You can help create a community where people are given words of hope and encouragement, are assured of Jesus' unfailing love, receive gentle teaching based on the Bible, grow in their faith via community, and develop a closer relationship with Jesus and others.

So, let's begin. As Jeremiah 29:7(MSG) says, “Make yourselves at home there and work for the country's welfare. Pray for Babylon's well-being. If things go well for Babylon, things will go well for you.” Pray about where Jesus is sending you. Go and make peace with them, work there, build them up, and pray for their well-being. All this in Christ. Amen

Let's explore your call together!

Stay missional and on call,

Donovan

Pastor Donovan
pastordonovan@ebenezerumc.org

We had such a positive response to our January Wellness Workshop that Christian Counselor Keith Priest will lead an updated, extended version on Saturday, May 6 from 9:00 AM-3:00 PM. Join us for information and open conversation about anxiety, depression, and stress. Open to ages 12 and above. Cost: \$10. Lunch and childcare included. For more information, contact Keith Priest at kpriest@ebenezerumc.org

WELLNESS WORKSHOP

UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION & STRESS

MAY 6

9:00 AM - 3:00 PM

CHILDCARE & LUNCH INCLUDED

COST: \$10

EBENEZERUMC.ORG/EVENTS

Live Webinar Series with Pastor Donovan Archie

Love Your Neighbor Network

March 8th: MISSIONAL CHRISTIANITY: LIVING INTO AND OUT OF FAITH

April: 12th: HEAR FROM NEIGHBORHOOD CHURCH LEADERS

May 10th: HOW NETWORK CHURCHES WORK

ebenezerumc.org/events

DENOMINATIONAL UPDATE

As our United Methodist denomination prepares for the next worldwide General Conference in 2024, we will continue to share information and updates. Please check the Denomination News page on our website at ebenezerumc.org/denomination-news to find all communications from our Governing Board, in addition to Frequently Asked Questions and Resources. We welcome your questions and feedback at ebenezerinfo@ebenezerumc.org.

Rev. Sue Hauptert-Johnson became the new bishop of the Virginia Conference on January 1. Visit vaumc.org to learn more. Our District boundaries have also changed; we are now in the Mission Rivers District, which includes 136 churches and stretches from Stafford to the Yorktown area. Our next Virginia Annual Conference will be held June 15-17 in Roanoke. More information is available at vaumc.org or missionriversdistrict.org.

FINANCE UPDATE

We finished 2022 with a shortfall of approximately \$374,000. However, the final year of government assistance and 2022 investment income combined to cover the deficit in the general fund. It's also true that with the significant drop in the stock market in 2022, the market value of the church's investment portfolio dropped by about 7%. More information about 2022 expenses, income, and giving are available on our 2022 Annual Report at ebenezerumc.org/state-of-the-church.

We started 2023 with a budgeted shortfall of \$499,799, but we are working to reduce that amount through prayer, God's guidance, and sound financial management. Watch for ideas and requests from the Finance Committee throughout the year. We will keep you informed on our progress through regular communication.

Our church has survived and thrived for 167 years. Let's make sure we continue to do so in the future. Please remember that every gift makes a difference. Thank you in advance for your stewardship.

Finance Committee
ebenezerinfo@ebenezerumc.org

On April 13, we'll begin a 9-week book study on boundaries. Understanding how to establish and maintain healthy boundaries can help you find balance in challenging relationships and thrive in all areas of life. Based on *Boundaries: When to Say Yes, How to Say No to Take Control of Your Life* by Dr. John Townsend and Dr. Henry Cloud, this study explores what the Bible says about boundaries and how to implement them. Not sure if this class is for you? Ask yourself these questions: Do you have problems saying no? Can you set limits and still be a loving person? Are you in control of your life? Do others take advantage of you? If you're not at peace with your answers, consider joining us. In community, we'll address these concerns so we can reflect more of Jesus' love into the world, while learning that it's okay to love ourselves by establishing boundaries. For more information, contact Keith Priest at kpriest@ebenezerumc.org

Spring Book Study
with Christian Counselor Keith Priest
Thursdays, 7:00 - 8:30 PM
April 13 - June 8

Learn more at ebenezerumc.org/events

Night of Worship

March 4, 7:00 PM, Room B01
ebenezerumc.org/events

We're looking forward to bringing our congregation and community together for a Night of Worship on Saturday, March 4! Invite your friends and neighbors to join us in the back parking lot at 5:00 PM for food and fellowship with the La Empanada Sabrosa truck. At 7:00 PM, we'll move into Room B01 for a dynamic evening of spirit-filled worship, featuring the Ebenezer Band. We're excited to see where the Night of Worship will lead, and we hope to see you at our inaugural event! Visit ebenezerumc.org/now for more information or contact Preston Hardage at phardage@ebenezerumc.org



Sunday Worship

In Person | 8:15 AM (Traditional)
9:45 AM & 11:15 AM (Modern)
Join us at The Bridge Café between
services in the Gym.

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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www.ebenezerumc.org

@ebenezerumc

March Events

- 3-4

IF: GATHERING WOMEN'S CONFERENCE
- 4

CHILDREN'S COMMUNION CLASS
9:30-10:30 AM

NIGHT OF WORSHIP
7:00 PM
- 4&11

COLD WEATHER SHELTER
5:30-8:00 PM
- 5

GO TO BO: MISSION TRIP INFO MEETING
1:00 PM
- 12

GIRL SCOUT SUNDAY
- 18

BRISBEN SHELTER MEAL
4:00-7:00 PM
- 21

LUNCH AND LEARN
UNDERSTANDING ALZHEIMER'S AND DEMENTIA – 12:00 PM
- 25

4TH SATURDAY MEAL
FREDERICKBURG UMC, 2:30-5:30 PM
- 26

SPRING KIDZCHOIR BEGINS
11:15 AM
- 28

PRESCHOOL BOOK FAIR & SILENT AUCTION BEGINS

April Events

- 2

PALM SUNDAY SERVICES
8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 AM
- 7

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE
7:00 PM (SEE PAGE 11 FOR INFO)
- 9

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES
6:30, 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 AM (SEE PAGE 11 FOR INFO)
- 13

SPRING BOOK STUDY: BOUNDARIES
6-WEEK STUDY BEGINS 7:00-8:30 PM
- 15

BRISBEN SHELTER MEAL
4:00-7:00 PM
- 22

UNITED METHODIST MEN YARD SALE
7:00 AM-12:00 PM

4TH SATURDAY MEAL
FREDERICKBURG UMC, 2:30-5:30 PM
- 23

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH SPRING TEA
2:30-4:00 PM

May Events

- 6

WELLNESS WORKSHOP: UNDERSTANDING ANXIETY, DEPRESSION & STRESS
9:00 AM-3:00 PM
- 10-11

RED CROSS BLOOD DRIVE
- 14

UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH MOTHER'S DAY SOCIAL
9:00 AM-12:00 PM
- 16

LUNCH AND LEARN
EBENEZER 411 – 12:00 PM
- 20

BRISBEN SHELTER MEAL
4:00-7:00 PM

STEP PRETEEN GATHERING
(SUPER TERRIFIC EBENEZER PRETEENS) 6:00-7:30 PM
- 27

4TH SATURDAY MEAL
FREDERICKSBURG UMC – 2:30-5:30 PM

Looking Ahead to June

- 6-9

STELLAR VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL
- 22

FORGIVENESS BOOK STUDY BEGINS
- TBA

AXIS HIGH SCHOOL SUMMER MEETINGS

Recurring Events

- Men's Basketball

Sundays, 7:30–9:30 PM
- TOPS

Mondays, 9:00–11:30 AM
- Exercise Group

Mondays & Thursdays, 9:15–10:15 AM
(Free Child Care)
- Caregiver Support Group

3rd Monday, 1:00 PM
- Active Older Adult Exercise

Tuesdays & Fridays, 9:15–10:15 AM
- Empty Nester Game Club

2nd & 4th Tuesdays, 1:00 PM
- MOPS

2nd & 4th Wednesday, 9:30–11:30 AM
- Nar-Anon

Every other Wednesday, 6:30 PM
- Cancer Support Group

1st Wednesday, 7:00 PM
- Spirituality in Nature Group

Thursdays, 1:00 PM (March); 10:00 AM (April & May)
- United Methodist Men Meeting

2nd Saturday, 9:00 AM
- Adventurers' Guild

3rd Saturday, 12:00–4:00 PM

Kidzcare Nursery

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

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 children age 3-5th grade,
text KIDZROCK to **84576**

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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STONEMAKER | 7

ADULT MINISTRIES

UMM: CHOOSE TO SERVE

Ebenezer United Methodist Men is looking for a few (more) good men! We’re identifying opportunities to serve our church, each other, and the community in 2023, and we invite all men to engage in fellowship and service with us this year. Our goal is to create an environment where men can grow together in faith, support each other in life’s challenges and responsibilities, and serve God and others. EUMM meetings are held on the second Saturday of each month at 9:00 AM in the Gym.

Our Spring Yard Sale is coming up Saturday, April 22 from 7:00 AM-12:00 PM in the Gym. Donations may be dropped off on Friday, April 21 from 6:00-8:00 PM.

Engage in fellowship and service with us this year - Christian Men Choose to Serve. For more information, contact Bob Skewes at skewcrew1@outlook.com



EASTER WITH EBENEZER

You’re invited to celebrate Easter with Ebenezer Church! Please join us for worship on Palm Sunday, Good Friday, and Easter Sunday. Church Online is available at live.ebenezerumc.org. For more information, please visit ebenezerumc.org/easter

PALM SUNDAY SERVICES – APRIL 2 | IN PERSON: 8:15 AM | IN PERSON & ONLINE: 9:45 & 11:15 AM

Let’s start Holy Week together. We will hand out palm leaves during all in-person worship services. Nursery will be available for children ages 0-3 during all services. Sunday School will be available during the 9:45 & 11:15 AM services.

GOOD FRIDAY TENEBRAE SERVICE – APRIL 7 | IN PERSON & ONLINE: 7:00 PM

Tenebrae is a Latin word meaning “darkness”. During a Tenebrae service, the story of the Crucifixion from the Gospel of John is divided into 16 readings. After each reading, a candle is extinguished. Worshipers leave in silence to ponder the impact of Christ’s death and await the celebration of the upcoming Resurrection. Nursery will be available for ages 0-3.

EASTER SUNDAY SERVICES – APRIL 9 | IN PERSON: 6:30 & 8:15 AM | IN PERSON & ONLINE: 9:45 & 11:15 AM

Christ’s resurrection gives us hope for the future, healing for right now, and a deep connection to God’s love and each other. Celebrate with us in the back parking lot at our Sunrise Service at 6:30 AM or in the Sanctuary at 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 AM. Sunday School Easter celebrations will be held during the 9:45 & 11:15 AM services. Nursery will be available for ages 0-3 during all services.



Ebenezer Church is excited to once again be a host site for the IF:Gathering Women’s Conference on March 3 & 4. IF:2023 is a two-day event that gathers women from all over the world to get equipped, be inspired, and discover the next step in their calling. Join us Friday, March 3 from 6:30-10:30 PM and Saturday, March 4 from 9:30 AM-5:00 PM. The cost is \$30. Invite your friends and prepare to be uplifted and challenged by an all-star panel of speakers. For more information, visit ebenezerumc.org/if or contact Dana Czzowitz at dczzowitz@ebenezerumc.org

CONNECTIONS: WANT TO GET CONNECTED AT EBENEZER?

Worship: If you’re in person, visit the Bridge Café in the Gym after services and meet someone new. If you’re online, get to know the pastor and other worshipers in the chat.

Study Scripture: Join a small group and grow in faith together.

Volunteer: Serve alongside others at Ebenezer, virtually from anywhere, or in the community with our ministry partners.

We can’t wait to meet you! Contact Director of Connections Crissy Sharon at csharon@ebenezerumc.org

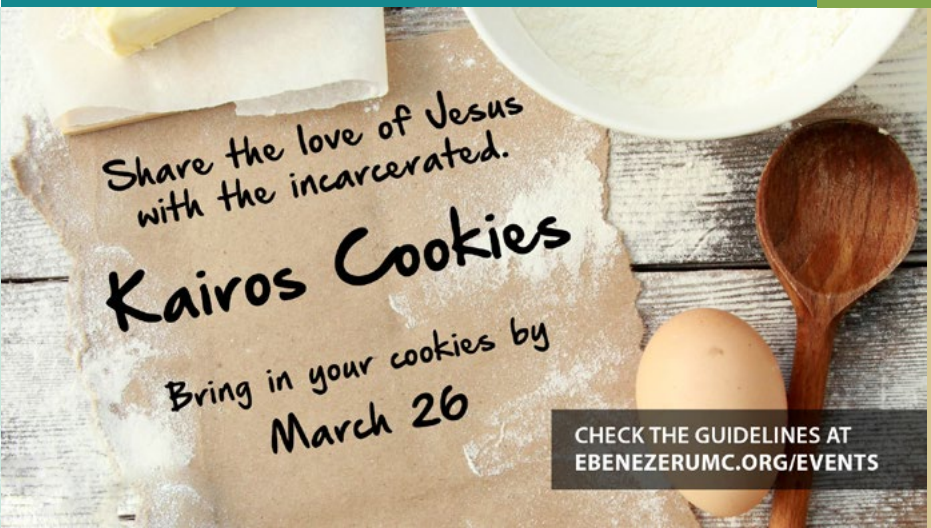


Ready for the experience of a lifetime? We’re planning a mission trip to Bo, Sierra Leone with Helping Children Worldwide October 16-29, 2023 and we invite you to join our team. This is an opportunity for hands-on ministry with the people of Bo, alongside HCW staff members. An Interest Meeting will be held on Sunday, March 5 at 1:00 PM in Room 203. For more information, please contact Amy Miller at amiller@ebenezerumc.org



Planting season is just around the corner! Ebenezer Acre yielded more than 1,100 pounds of produce for S.E.R.V.E. last year, and we can’t wait to get out in the fields this spring. Visit ebenezerumc.org/volunteer to find out how you can help fight hunger through kNOw Hunger and Ebenezer Acre. For more information, contact Director of Missions and Outreach Amy Miller at amiller@ebenezerumc.org

The United Women in Faith are selling Bunny Cake Kits just in time for Easter! Each kit includes a delicious bunny-shaped cake, along with all the supplies you need to decorate it: vanilla icing, licorice whiskers, shredded coconut and jellybean eyes. Bunny Cake Kits are approximately the size of a 9”x13” pan and are available in yellow or chocolate cake. Each kit is \$18 or \$20 for gluten free. Quantities are limited, so pick up an order form in the Main Office or between worship services in the Gym on March 19 & 26 or April 1. An online order form is also available at ebenezerumc.org/events. Kits can be picked up April 7 from 1:00-6:00 PM and April 8 from 9:30 AM-12:00 PM in the Main Kitchen. For more information, contact Dana Czzowitz at dczzowitz@ebenezerumc.org



When is a cookie more than just a cookie? When it’s an expression of love and generosity for those who are incarcerated. Twice each year, Kairos Prison Ministry volunteers visit Sussex State Prison, bringing dozens of homemade cookies along. Each visit includes talks, meditations, and activities, culminating with an invitation to develop a personal relationship with Christ. Many prisoners come to a Kairos event for the cookies but leave with a changed heart. You can support Kairos by baking and donating cookies by March 26. Find complete guidelines at ebenezerumc.org/kairos. For more information, contact Amy Miller at amiller@ebenezerumc.org

CHILDREN'S MINISTRIES

VBS is going to be out of this world!

5, 4, 3, 2, 1...blast off! VBS returns June 6-9, and we're going to have a Stellar time learning how to shine Jesus' light! Children will explore a new theme each night, as they learn songs and visit activity stations with their crews. It's going to be a BLAST! VBS is open to age 3 (potty trained) through completed 5th grade. Elementary VBS will meet from 6:00-8:30 PM; Preschool VBS will meet from 6:00-8:15 PM. Registration opens May 7. Spaces are limited, so sign your kiddo up to reserve their seat on the rocket ship this summer. We can't wait to take off!

How can you help make VBS a BLAST?

- Volunteer: Be a crew leader, preschool leader, games leader, imagination station leader, snack helper, decorator, and more!
- Sponsor a supply pack or donate supplies.

Find more information at ebenezerumc.org/events



STUDENT MINISTRIES

PARENTS, DON'T QUIT!

"Love the Lord your God with all your heart, with all your soul, and with all your strength. These commandments that I give you today are to be on your hearts. Impress them on your children. Talk about them when you sit at home and when you walk along the road, when you lie down and when you get up. Tie them as symbols on your hands and bind them on your foreheads. Write them on the doorframes of your houses and on your gates." Deuteronomy 6:5-9

Well, there you have it. The key to parenting and raising our children up in the Lord. If only it were that simple, right? Because it's super easy to talk about God all the time with a human who has air pods in and acts as though they would rather be anywhere but in the same room as you.

Parents, hear this very clearly: Don't quit. Here are some things to keep doing:

Model It. If you hunger to be in God's presence and you take steps to be there, they will see it. Be in His Word and spend time worshiping Him. It is evident when people are in the presence of God, and the greatest thing your child needs to see is you walking with Jesus.

Pray. Remember the Holy Spirit is the one doing the work. Pray that the Spirit would be at work in mighty ways and that your child's eyes would be opened to Him.

Talk. Yes, still talk about God! Ask questions, encourage honesty, and give them space to ask questions in return. There will be rare, random moments when your teenager opens up and wants to go beyond "it was fine." Be prepared: most of these times will happen when you are distracted, busy, or ready to go to bed. But when they occur, be ready, and carpe diem!

Trust Others. You are not alone. Students need peers and other adults to help them navigate life. We have designed Student Ministries so that students are plugged into consistent small groups with adult leaders who want to mentor and guide students on their journey with Jesus. It takes a village!

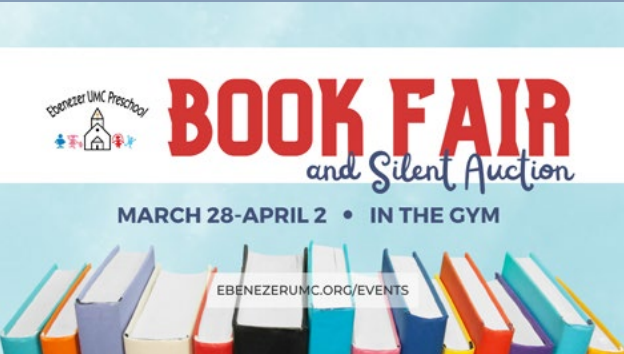
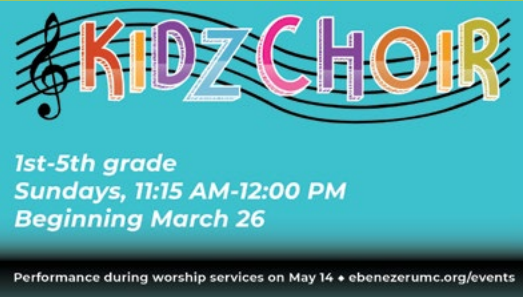
Trust God. God has placed you as their parent or guardian for a reason. You are the right person for the task at hand, and He is with you. Draw close to Him. Don't quit - God won't!

Michelle Paquette, Director, Student Ministries, mpaquette@ebenezerumc.org



This spring, Ebenezer will bring Easter fun to area children with Easter Kits for Kids. Along with KidzRock Sunday School students and local ministry partners, we're assembling supplies for community Easter celebrations, including Easter eggs, crafts, activities, and more. Our friends at Stafford Food Security, Empowerhouse, Mary's Shelter, Stafford Junction, Moncure Elementary, and the Brisben Center will deliver them to the families they serve. We hope to collect 350 dozen filled plastic Easter eggs. Can you help? Donate plastic Easter eggs filled with candy in the Lobby by Sunday, March 26. If you'd like to make your own Easter Kit at home, you'll find a complete list of materials and resources on our website. For more information, contact Children's Ministries Director Chrissy Richardson at crichardson@ebenezerumc.org

Children in 1st-5th grade are invited to join our Spring KidzChoir! Beginning March 26, they will rehearse each Sunday from 11:15 AM-12:00 PM in preparation for Mother's Day performances at the 9:45 and 11:15 AM services on Sunday, May 14. Come make a joyful noise with us. Register your child at ebenezerumc.org/events



Book Fair and Silent Auction Hours of Operation:

- March 28: 12:30-1:30 PM (Book Fair only)
- March 29-31: 8:30 AM-1:30 PM
- April 2: 8:00 AM-12:30 PM

PRESCHOOL

Ebenezer Preschool's Scholastic Book Fair and Silent Auction is coming to the Gym March 28-April 2. Bring the whole family to browse hundreds of engaging selections for children and adults. Your support will help raise readers and raise funds for our preschool. While you're there, check out the array of themed gift baskets donated by local businesses for our Silent Auction. Winners will be notified April 2, and all proceeds will go to the preschool operating fund to enhance curriculum. For more information, contact Preschool Office Manager Teresa Cole at tcole@ebenezerumc.org

Calendar of Events:

- | | |
|------------------|---------------------------|
| March 10 & 13-17 | Spring Break |
| April 7 & 10 | Easter Holiday |
| April 27 & 28 | Spring Fling Performances |
| May 18 & 19 | Last Days of School |



STEP is back! Do you have a 4th or 5th grader? Encourage them to invite their friends and join us for our next Quarterly Gathering on May 20 from 6:00-7:30 PM. We'll take a giant STEP in faith together as we dive into the Word through large group games, activities, and fellowship. At our May gathering, we'll honor our 5th graders as they prepare to move on to middle school. Register your child and their friends at ebenezerumc.org/events.



MISSION TRIP SPONSORS

Students going on the Axis Summer Mission Trip are seeking sponsors! Each student is responsible for the cost of their trip, and your support will help them get there. Sponsors don't have to know the students personally, and any amount helps greatly. We will be serving the needs of the community in Wilmington, NC June 25-July 1. In preparation for the trip, students commit to being in small groups and doing various service projects. We would love for your support not only financially but also in prayer as we prepare over the next few months. For more information, visit ebenezerumc.org/events



 EBENEZER CHURCH

161 Embrey Mill Road
Stafford, Virginia 22554

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A dramatic landscape image featuring a dark, jagged mountain peak in the foreground. The sky is a vibrant mix of purple, pink, and orange, suggesting a sunrise or sunset. The word "EASTER" is written in large, white, serif capital letters across the top, and "Holy Week" is written in a smaller, white, cursive script below it.

EASTER

Holy Week

Palm Sunday Services: April 2, 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 AM

Good Friday Service: April 7, 7:00 PM

Easter Sunday Services: April 9, 6:30, 8:15, 9:45 & 11:15 AM

ebenezerumc.org/easter