



Emmanuel United Methodist Church  
11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705

301-937-7114  
[www.eumcbeltsville.com](http://www.eumcbeltsville.com)

*Rev. Dr. Andrea M. King*  
*[PastorKing@eumcbeltsville.com](mailto:PastorKing@eumcbeltsville.com)*



## The Lamplighter

The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church

**NEW YEAR WISHES JUST FOR YOU  
HAPPINESS AND PEACE IN ALL YOU DO  
MAY GOD BLESS YOUR HOME AND FAMILY TOO  
MAY HE BE WITH YOU THE WHOLE YEAR THROUGH**



# The Lamplighter

## The Newsletter of Emmanuel United Methodist Church!

# JANUARY

## JANUARY 2023

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From the  
Pastor's  
Desk...

As we have been moving toward the Christmas Season, we have undertaken another season, which we call "Advent."

The term "Advent" is derived from the Latin word *adventus* meaning "coming" or "visit," and the Advent season begins four Sundays before Christmas and ends on Christmas Eve. Advent is the beginning of the church year (also referred to as the Liturgical Year) for Christians. The season proclaims the comings of the Christ: (1) The first coming is Jesus's, which we prepare to celebrate every year (again and again) (2) The second coming. is our anticipation of Jesus's return in final victory. Each year the season of Advent calls the community of believers who have faith in Jesus Christ to prepare for both these comings. Part of that preparation historically has been that Christians have set aside a time of fasting; however, more Christians equate the act of fasting as part of the Lenten season. Interestingly, both Lent and Advent are typically signified by the color purple (and I will note that some Christians sects use the color blue instead of purple as a means to have their members distinguish between Lent and Advent.

During Advent, we prepare for and anticipate the coming of Christ. We remember the longing of Jews for a Messiah and our own longing for and need of forgiveness, salvation and a new beginning. Even as we look back and celebrate the birth of Jesus in a humble stable in Bethlehem, we also look forward anticipating the second coming of Christ as the fulfillment of all that was promised by his first coming.

Although we are accustomed to celebrating Christmas on a single day, in both Christian tradition and on the church calendar, the Christmas season lasts from sundown on Dec. 24 (Christmas Eve) through Epiphany of the Lord (Jan. 6). This is sometimes referred to as "the 12 days of Christmas."

### WHEN IS ADVENT?

Advent is a season of four weeks including four Sundays. Advent begins with the fourth Sunday before Christmas Day. If Christmas comes on a Sunday, Advent may begin on the last Sunday of November and last four full weeks.

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Do you have something for our newsletter? Send items to the editor, Rick Bergmann at [lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com](mailto:lamplighter@eumcbeltsville.com)

## Emmanuel is Partnering with James E. Duckworth Regional Center



Pastor King and Mr. Sanick

Mr. Sanick from James E. Duckworth School brought in a crew of students to Emmanuel UMC to orient them to do new tasks in real-life settings.

Duckworth School serves special needs students ages 5-21. "The students who are older need to learn how to do jobs that can secure them employment after they graduate," Mr. Sanick explained.

During this session, the students learned to use the vacuum cleaner and were able to clean the entire sanctuary. Vacuuming is one of many skills they hope to acquire, and EUMC looks for to a long-lasting partnership with the students and staff of Duckworth.

## Pictures From Advent

Advent returned to a more normal tradition this year for the first time since the Pandemic began way back in 2019. Pastor attended the Lion's Club Holiday Party and was able to visit with Ernie Kilbourne. The choir returned in a limited capacity and we returned to lighting the advent candles in person instead of digitally online. Here's to keeping that momentum going for 2023!



From the Pastor's Desk Continued

### WHAT IS AN ADVENT WREATH WITH CANDLES?



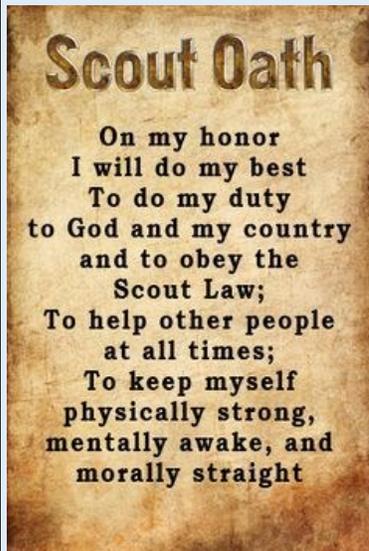
Abel Martin lighting the Advent Candles

The Advent wreath began in the time of the Protestant reformer Martin Luther. While the Advent wreath with its four candles did bring light to churches, it was not to illuminate the interior as much as to symbolize the coming of Christ. The glow becomes brighter each week with each added candle. During each Sunday of the Advent season, focus on one of the four virtues Jesus brings us: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace.

Current traditions, three candles are purple for Hope, Love, and Peace (Hope can also be a blue candle), one candle is pink (or rose) for Joy. However, please note that in some settings all four candles may be purple, or all four candles may be blue. Whereas, the Christ candle (fifth candle), white in color, and placed in the center of the wreath, and we light the Christ candle on Christmas Eve to remind Christians that Jesus is the light of the world. The order and exact wording vary among churches, but the wreath continually reminds us of whom we are called to be as followers of Jesus.

## Troop 1033 – Looking Back, Looking Forwards...

By Jenny Kresge



Greetings from Troop 1033! As we start the New Year, let's take a few minutes to look back at 2022 and forward to 2023!

During 2022, Troop 1033 has had a lot of fun, participated in community service and learned life skills! We've done many activities including: skiing, camping, hiking, our annual Spring mulch fundraiser, indoor and outdoor rock-climbing, attended Summer Camp, kayaking, go-karting, archery, Scouting for Food, and collecting toys for Dr. Bear's Closet at Children's Hospital. We've worked on several Merit Badges, including First Aid, Sustainability, Citizenship in the World, Kayaking and Citizenship in Society. We've completed two Eagle Service Projects at Emmanuel – the clean-up of the Scripture Garden and new directional signs for the Narthex. We celebrated when the two scouts leading those projects officially achieved the rank of Eagle – the highest rank in Boy Scouts. We've also welcomed three new scouts into our troop.

Now, let's look forward to 2023. As you may have heard, there have been a lot of discussions and negotiations over the past few years between The Boy Scouts of America and The United Methodist Church at the national level of both organizations. This is a result of The Boy Scouts of America having to deal with lawsuits over child abuse from decades ago. Traditionally, BSA Units (i.e. the Boy Scout Troop, Cub Scout Pack,

or Venturing Crew) are "chartered" by local community organizations, such as churches or service organizations (for example, a Rotary Club). The Charter Organization "owns" the unit. In the past, however, the way the charter agreement was set up allowed some of the liability for lawsuits to fall onto the Charter Organization and not just The Boy Scouts of America. Although the current Charter Agreement has been reworded, The United Methodist Church feels that it still does not offer enough liability protection for local churches. As a result, the UMC Baltimore-Washington Conference strongly recommends that local churches do not charter Boy Scout units. Local churches who want to continue to have a relationship with their BSA Unit can allow them to continue to meet and store their equipment on church property through a Facilities-Use Agreement, while the unit itself needs to be chartered by either the local BSA Council or another local community organization.

So what does this mean for Troop 1033? Emmanuel UMC in Beltsville and Troop 1033 have had a long and positive relationship – Emmanuel has chartered Troop 1033 for over 60 years! Both groups are sad that things can't continue as they have been. However, we all agree that we need to follow the recommendations of the Baltimore-Washington Conference. So starting January 2023, Troop 1033 will continue to meet at Emmanuel UMC with a Facilities-Use Agreement in place, but we will have a new charter organization. The Troop's new Charter Organization will be the Beltsville Academy Parent Teacher Organization. Beltsville Academy is the public school for grades Pre-K – 8th in Beltsville and their PTO already charts Cub Scout Pack 1031 (Cub Scouts are for kids in grades K-5). Since their older students are of the age to join a BSA Scout Troop and they are already a Charter Organization, it was a logical choice to ask them to charter Troop 1033 as well. We are looking forward to establishing our new relationship with the Beltsville Academy PTO as well as maintaining our long-standing relationship with Emmanuel UMC. The Troop will benefit from the support of both of these well-established organizations.

*Check out some pictures from Troop 1033 on the next page!*

**Christian Love and Sympathy To The Families of:**  
The Mcleans (friends of Sonia Kassambara)  
Carmen Validares nephews wife  
Leopold Mensah (Cousin of Abel Martin)  
Mary Ann Shearer (friend of MaryAnn Blakely)  
Othell Heath  
Doris Humphrey



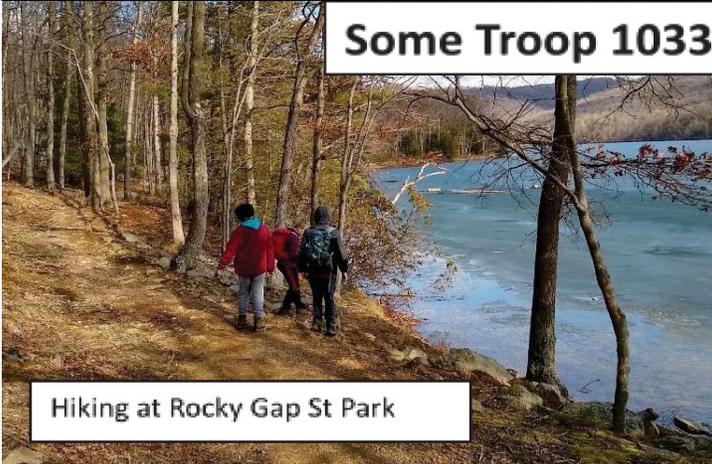
**Please pray for our homebound**

**Home bound**  
Glen and Pauli Colburn  
Bob Humphrey  
Ernie Kilbourne

**Out of state**  
Lil Mizzer



## Some Troop 1033 Activities in 2022



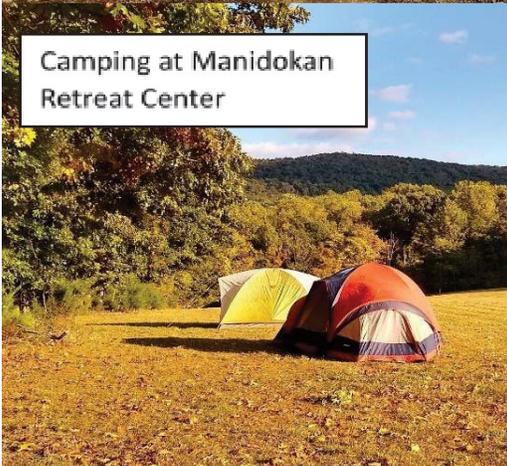
Hiking at Rocky Gap St Park



Outdoor cooking



Rock Climbing at Sugarloaf Mt



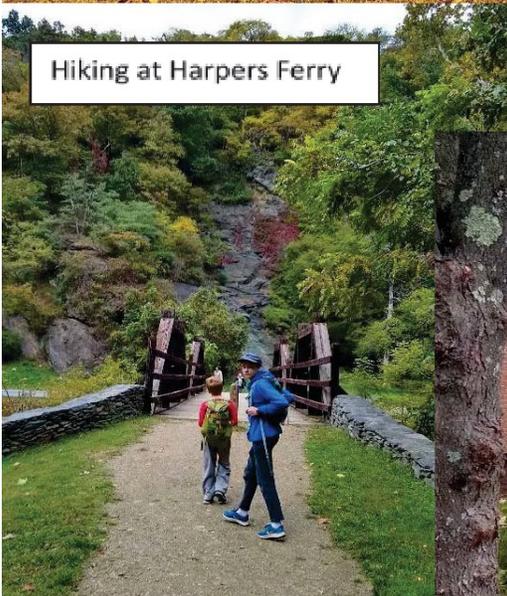
Camping at Manidokan Retreat Center



Scouting for Food



Summer Camp at Rodney Scout Reservation



Hiking at Harpers Ferry



Scripture Garden Clean-up



Archery



Kayaking on Nanjemoy Creek



New signs for the Narthex

## Did you know Emmanuel has a Widow's Group?



The ladies of the Widow's Group enjoying an afternoon at the Olive Garden!

Did you know that Emmanuel has a widow's group. The group meets once a month on the second Tuesday at Olive Garden in Laurel. Currently there are 10 members who attend and they spend the time having fun, fellowshiping, and as member Judy Dietrich puts it "discussing everything and anything." Emmanuel Member Tammy White was instrumental in getting the group back together after the Pandemic. Their first meeting occurred in October. If you are interested in joining this wonderful group of ladies, reach out to Tammy White at 301-633-6626.



### Introducing Emmanuel UMC's One Board Nominees, effective January 1, 2023:

John Claye  
Mekai Nicholas  
Darwin Hernandez

### Non-Board Nominees effective January 1, 2023:

Gail Belshay, Treasurer  
Rick Bergmann, Trustees

### Board Members Continuing to Serve:

Andrea M. King, Pastor  
Ted Ladd, Board Chair  
Roy White, Lay Leader  
Gretchen Buchen  
Barbara Butcher  
Sonia Kassambara  
Abel Martin  
Suze Mendelsohn  
Andy Onukwubiri  
MaryAnn Vaughan

BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE



THE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*Bishop LaTrelle Easterling*

BISHOP, PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE,  
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

REV. ANTOINE C. LOVE *Assistant to the Bishop*

REV. ERICA ROBINSON-JOHNSON *Chief Administrative Officer*

## Christmas 2022 | A Message from Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

I greet you in the hope-filled name of our Lord and Savior, Jesus the Christ. As we move through the expectation of Advent and into the miracle of Christmas, we come together once more as a people of faith.

The birth of our Savior comes every year, whether we are immersed in celebration and merriment or in the depths of grief and despair. For too many, the latter expression is still prevalent. We certainly hoped that this Christmas would arrive with the pandemic, war and infighting behind us. However, emergency rooms remain full with those battling serious illnesses, wars are still raging, and our denomination continues to struggle with the reality that disaffiliations are tearing us apart. Gun violence continues to be rampant in our communities and hatred still blinds many to the inherent worth of every life. And yet, the gift of a Savior is ours every Christmas, with all of the promise and hope and joy that accompanies his birth.

As I was attending a Philharmonic Holiday concert and heard a beautiful rendition of *O Holy Night*, I was deeply moved by the verse, "A thrill of hope, the weary world rejoices." While this is one of my favorite carols, that verse has never moved me the way it did on that particular evening. On Christmas Day, there is a thrill of hope, there is the entrance of one who comes despite our circumstances to make all things new. Even though we are weary from death, grief and loss, we still have a thrill of hope. How are we to understand this hope?

Henri Nouwen, the renowned theologian, writer and priest, explained the hope of Christmas this way, "the fulfillment of great expectations; it is the remembrance of the most intimate mystery of life; the birth of God in an agonizing world; it is the planting of seeds of compassion, freedom, and peace in a harsh and unfree society; it is Hope in a new earth to come." Mary understood how to hold onto hope in an agonizing and weary world.

Mary was a young woman promised in marriage but not yet a wife. She lived in times when women were without agency and easily shamed if their lives deviated from the expected norms. She was visited by an angel of God who prophesied that she would bear a son who would upright the lowly, quench the thirst of those who longed for justice and feed those hungry for good things. The child knit together in her womb by the power of the Holy Spirit would bring deliverance to all who called upon his name. This was the promise offered to Mary and she received it in faith. The words of the angel filled her with the thrill of hope. That hope remained as she faced the scandal of pregnancy without the benefit of marriage. That hope remained as she traveled over rough terrain carrying a child. That hope endured as she and her beloved arrived at their destination only to be turned away. That hope was secure even as she gave birth among animals in a noxious stall. In surroundings that could have induced her into anger, despair and feelings of betrayal, Mary rejoiced in the fulfillment of God's promise to her.

God's promises to creation have been fulfilled again and again and again. As beautifully written in Lamentations, "The steadfast love of the Lord never ceases, his mercies never come to an end; they are new every morning; great is your faithfulness. 'The Lord is my portion,' says my soul, 'therefore I will hope in him.'" Beloved, the *thrill* of hope is ours. Our weary world can rejoice because God is good, joy will come in the morning, death does not have the final word and justice shall prevail. A new and glorious morn pierces even the darkest night and brings on her wings renewed strength for the journey.

May you rise on Christmas Sunday morning filled with the thrill of hope. May that thrill be yours, not because all is as you would desire, but because the Prince of Peace is with us, we have the gift of everlasting love, all oppression shall cease and every promise made shall be fulfilled.

Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling  
Peninsula-Delaware and Baltimore-Washington Conferences  
The United Methodist Church



## Cooking with Pastor King: Scavenger Cookies

Making these cookies will seem like a scavenger hunt because you will need find a whole bunch of miscellaneous things to put in them! Search through your pantry and find a box of cake mix. If you don't have one, your neighbor likely does (and its about to expire).

1 box of any cake mix you have on hand  
2 eggs  
1 stick of melted butter or margarine (you can substitute 1/2 cup of vegetable oil)  
In a large bowl, mix all three ingredients together.

While you were searching your cupboards, you probably came across some chocolate chips, nuts, dried fruit, Reese's Pieces, a half used box of ginger snaps -- something that you may have already on your kitchen. Take that extra something and add it to your batter.

If you don't have anything to add, just leave the batter as is (or high jack the Skittles from the lunchbox)

With a cookie scoop or tablespoon, you will need to scoop the dough onto a silicone baking sheet or parchment lined baking pan. If you don't have parchment or wax paper to line your cookie sheet or baking pan, use a plain old brown paper bag (not the printed side).

CHILL THE COOKIES in the refrigerator (30-60 minutes) OR in the freezer 15 minutes) BEFORE BAKING.  
Bake in a preheated 350°F oven for 10-12 minutes (or until cookies are no longer glossy on top).

Yields approximately 2 dozen cookies.

AFTER the cookies are baked and cooled, top them with a canned or homemade frosting, sprinkles, drizzle -- whatever floats your boat!

Yellow cake mix + pretzel pieces + chocolate drizzle works for me!

Try this recipe and see what you come up with.



### Hybrid Worship at Emmanuel!

Join us on Sunday mornings in hybrid worship in person or through Zoom.

Worship begins at 10 am. Sign Language interpretation and closed captioning is available for online closed captioning is available in-person on our screens.

Use this link if you wish to attend virtually: [https://zoom.us/j/97839889289?](https://zoom.us/j/97839889289?pwd=YzUxZjJKTzUybTJnZEt4UC9qTkI4QT09)

[pwd=YzUxZjJKTzUybTJnZEt4UC9qTkI4QT09](https://zoom.us/j/97839889289?pwd=YzUxZjJKTzUybTJnZEt4UC9qTkI4QT09)

or go to zoom.us and click join a meeting.

The meeting number is 978 3988 9289. The Password is EUMC

You can call in on any telephone (cell or landline) at 1-301-715-8592 If you're calling on the telephone the information is Meeting ID: 978 3988 9289 Passcode: 479360

## Making the best use of church space

By Jim Patterson



Alex (right) makes a selection from among donated items at the Clothes Closet, a ministry of McKendree United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tenn. Assisting him is church member and volunteer Jeremy Rutan. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

Jacques Brown was waiting at McKendree United Methodist Church in downtown Nashville, but not for a church service.

“I’m here to get help with some clothes and stuff,” Brown said. “I’m homeless right now, so I’m trying to get all the help I can get. Somebody told me about this program with this church right here, so that’s why I came over.”

Like many folks waiting to take their turn in McKendree’s Clothes Closet on Sept. 29, Brown had an air of weary resignation about him — but also a faint, defiant hope about his future.

Up until a couple of years ago, Brown, who grew up in a Nashville housing project, had worked his way up to managing a White Castle burger joint and had a wife and a home.

“I had everything, but me and my wife — you know how it goes — going through a divorce and stuff,” he said. “I go to other churches, too.”

They do showers, let you wash your clothes, help you with housing, identification and all that type of stuff.”

Although ministries like the Clothes Closet have been going on forever in churches, loss of members in recent times is leading church leaders

to use thousands of square feet of otherwise wasted space to expand their reach further into the community. At the same time, McKendree is working to grow its membership by experimenting with smaller ministries that meet outside the church building in coffee shops and the like.

“When I got here in 2009, the third and fourth floors (of the church) were vacant,” said the Rev. Stephen Handy, pastor of McKendree. “Those were historically Sunday school classes. But as the congregation aged over time, those Sunday school classes went away.”

Handy and other church leaders decided that the space should be repurposed to serve the community. Some of that is being done by the church itself, while McKendree partners with other entities better prepared to offer other services.

“The prerequisite was it had to be nonprofit and it had to align with our mission of making disciples for the transformation of the world,” Handy said.

Today, McKendree uses church space to provide free haircuts, house and help 18- to -24-year-olds who have aged out of foster care, offer a temporary place to live for missionaries who serve in the city, feed people, provide medical and dental checks in collaboration with United Methodist-related Meharry Medical College and operate the Clothes Closet.

Monday through Friday, 90% of the McKendree church building’s 46,425 square feet is being utilized with some sort of ministry, Handy said.

“We’re just reclaiming our roots,” Handy said. “It’s part of our history that we had abandoned through wanting to be this upper middle-class church, when God has called us to be examples of Jesus to connect with the marginalized.

“If you’ve got to be in a downtown urban center, you have to connect with the marginalized, and probably 20% of our congregation are marginalized people.”

At Norfolk United Methodist Church in Virginia, the Rev. Sherry Daniels says a membership of about 300 maintains a more than 16,000-square-foot church building.

“It’s not a burden. It is a challenge,” Daniels said. “But it is a part of the larger vision that we have for our ministry that we not just be a worshiping community that gathers on Sunday, but that we are in ministry seven days a week.”

The church uses its space to minister with teen mothers and has converted the parsonage into transitional housing that boards three homeless families. It also provides free space to four small businesses that COVID-19 nearly drove out of business.

“The commercial rates were really out of range for most small businesses — particularly minority-owned small businesses,” Daniels said. “So we repurposed our space so that we could accommodate those businesses that were in line with our vision and our values.”

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Space Continued from previous page

The church also provides the businesses some office support and use of its commercial kitchen.

Wesley Community Development, in Huntersville, North Carolina, consults with congregations on repurposing or selling property with an eye toward sustainable ministry. The firm manages real estate for the Western North Carolina Conference and has done \$160 million in development since 2019. It's also done work in Virginia and Georgia.

"This is a faith-based but professional real estate firm that is really working hard to help churches reposition," said Joel A. Gilland, Wesley's senior vice president of strategic planning and the son of a United Methodist minister.

"The first thing is to always keep the church first," he said. "If we're dealing with a closed church, then the question is, 'Can it be repurposed?' If we're dealing with an active church, how do we help them become more sustainable and continue to grow their ministry while removing the burden of real estate off of their shoulders?"

Membership rolls have been shrinking as congregations age and younger people either don't join or contribute as much. This is taking a toll on churches, Gilland said.

"The buildings are becoming a hindrance; they're becoming an obstacle to new growth," he said.

Mixed development combining churches with affordable housing, businesses and other destinations is the blueprint to a sustainable church future, Gilland suggested.

"I think particularly the next five years are going to be very busy," he said.

"I think we'll probably be doing child care, mental health facilities, retail and office. It's an interesting concept of putting the church in the center of the community instead of you drive into a parking lot, and the only place that goes is the church."

It's a positive development for there to be a Starbucks convenient to a church, or for concerts to be staged near or in the church itself, Gilland said.

"This is a really, really exciting time for the church," he said. "I hear a lot of folks talking about the death of church. ... I see this as a really exciting time to reconnect, reenergize and play a new role."



The Rev. Jeff Streszoff sorts donated items at the Clothes Closet ministry of McKendree United Methodist Church in Nashville, Tenn. Streszoff is pastor of Grace United Methodist Church in Mt. Juliet, Tenn. Members and leaders at Grace, a suburban church near Nashville, often volunteer at McKendree in Nashville's city center. Photo by Mike DuBose, UM News.

## CAN YOU HELP?

Share your talents at Emmanuel by sharing the Word as a Scripture Reader during our Sunday Service! *Help for a single Sunday or choose several.* You choose how many Sundays you are able to help. Just email the office at [office@eumcbeltsville.com](mailto:office@eumcbeltsville.com) and they will let you know which weeks are available!

*No experience needed! We will train you on the job!*

## Worship in Giving: How Can I Give?

**Online:** You can now give online through Emmanuel's website at [www.eumcbeltsville.com/giving](http://www.eumcbeltsville.com/giving) or scan the QR Code below. This is a great way to keep up with your giving if you are out of town, are sick or if you can't come to church.

**Through the Mail:** You can mail your offering to the church. The address is 11416 Cedar Lane, Beltsville, MD 20705.



## Happy January Birthdays!

01 - Carrie White

03 - Doug Galloway

07 - Dan Kenyon

11 - Jane Grays

14 - Hazel Newell

15 - Glendy Hernandez

25 - Bonnie Bland

26 - Bobbie Deegan, Doug Weston

28 - Rebecca Vaughan

31 - Rick Bergmann



## Happy January Anniversaries!

14 - Rick and Nancy Zerbe

December, 2022

Dear Friends of GYTTE:

We thank God for you and your churches that keep us in your prayers and also donate to the ministries of *Give Ye Them to Eat* that bring hope to the people of the state of Puebla, Mexico.

We are grateful for so many things: the first would be you and your love for the Mexican people and for the GYTTE ministry. The next would be that Covid is way down, and by December we will have hosted three mission teams (AWARE teams) – two from Pennsylvania and one from Spokane, Washington. They provide concrete help, encouragement and also accompany our staff and some of the people with whom we work. This gives us hope!



The last two groups worked on a compacted earth home for our employee Veronica (who you may remember lost two brothers and her parents in the last two years). They also helped with work at the Tree of Life Center.



2022 has been an amazing year in community-based health (More Than a Bandage). Some 40 women took the beginning course for a week, half in March and half in September. Our Health staff, Betsy and Panchita also spent a week in the mountains of Puebla with Indigenous women focusing on self-esteem and prevention of violence. We also had five regional meetings and a final Health Promotor celebration in November.



March Basic Health Course



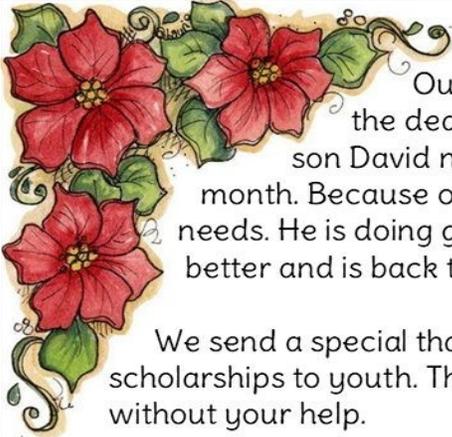
September Basic Health Course



Xalcuahuta Puebla - Nahuatl Group

Continued on next page





Our staff has suffered quite a bit this year with the death and illness. Most of you know that Rey's son David nearly died and was hospitalized for over a month. Because of your donations he received the medicines he needs. He is doing great! Marce, who had severe anemia is also better and is back to working parttime.



We send a special thanks to those who provide educational scholarships to youth. These young people likely wouldn't be studying without your help.



This year we worked with members of ten communities teaching them to build dry ecological toilets, wood-saving stoves, gabions, different kinds of composting, recycled paper and dried fruit.



When working with people who have sheep and goats, we always think of the shepherds – very humble people – who receive a message of hope from an angel as they are keeping watch over their flock. “Do not be afraid. I bring you good news of great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David, a Savior has been born to you. This will be a sign to you: You will find a baby wrapped in cloths and lying in a manger.” Suddenly a great company of the heavenly host appeared with the angel, praising God and saying, “Glory to God in the highest heaven, and on earth peace ...”



*Merry Christmas from Nan, Miguel, Cata, Clara and the GYTTE staff*

To find out how to give to GYTTE or your Covenant Missionaries please go to [gytte.org](http://gytte.org), thank you!



## Learning to 'live welcome' in response to human need

By Linda Bloom



Niurka Meléndez, a founder of Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid, offers practical information and advice to newcomers trying to navigate New York City. The aid group is a partner with the United Methodist Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew in assisting the recent influx of asylum seekers there. Photo by K Karpen.

When busloads of asylum seekers started rolling into Manhattan in August, the United Methodist Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew turned to an established network with other groups in crafting a response.

One of the immediate needs of the arriving migrants — then allowed into the U.S. to make asylum claims — was clear. An over capacity in New York City's shelter system meant that many had no immediate place to stay, said the Rev. Lea Matthews, associate pastor.

After the staff did a quick building audit and decided that the church could provide a small shelter, five men from Venezuela were assigned to stay there. "In a matter of four hours, we had a functioning sanctuary space," she said.

The congregation's Advent theme this year — embodying Advent through hope, love, joy and peace — is playing out through its expanding migrant ministry.

Any church can contribute to this type of ministry. "There are new arrivals in almost every community," said the Rev. K Karpen, senior pastor at St. Paul and St. Andrew. "They need to feel a Christian welcome."

Junior, one of the Venezuelans living at the church, knows there are obstacles to his goal of bringing his family to the U.S. "I hope to solve my problems if I receive help with my documents," he said through a translator.

In the meantime, he is grateful to have a support system. "I thank God to have known all these people," he said, referring to the connections established through St. Paul and St. Andrew. "They have helped me so much."

The migrant response is an outgrowth of the congregation's decision in 2017 to join a movement of churches committed to immigrant rights and justice. The following year, St. Paul and St. Andrew took in a family threatened by deportation, a sanctuary situation that ended 15 months later with a legal reprieve.

This situation is different. The arriving migrants hoping to win asylum are facing a process that takes upward of six to eight years, Matthews pointed out, with the caseloads for immigration lawyers in New York way over capacity and court systems backed up. It's difficult, she added, to explain the details "to people who are disoriented and just looking for food and a winter coat."

Carol Scott, a St. Paul and St. Andrew community member who works as a paralegal for Bronx Legal Services, noted the tension between what can be done to support a small group of people and the enormity of the need related to a complex social issue.

But a "real widening of the circle" among communities of faith and neighborhood organizations has developed in this response to human need, she said.

"When we live welcome, that makes it possible for others to take pieces of the project and move forward in ways that we might not even anticipate," Scott added.

One of those pieces was a backpack project. A donation by John Street United Methodist Church helped kick the project off, Matthews said, and others, such as Congregation Rodeph Sholom, a Jewish partner, have joined in. St. Paul and St. Andrew has committed to send 50 backpacks and a food donation from church partner West Side Campaign Against Hunger twice a month to La Morada, a restaurant and mutual aid network in the Bronx that distributes the bags to shelters. Previously, the church had worked with La Morada on food assistance during the COVID-19 pandemic.

Another new piece of the ministry is welcoming asylum seekers to the church sanctuary on Monday mornings to receive information and assistance, share stories and connect with one another.

On the Monday after the first Sunday in Advent, for example, church member Fatima Bae arranged donated clothes and coats at the front of the sanctuary. She has collected and distributed used clothing in the neighborhood for 20 years and keeps a supply of men's and women's shoes for emergencies. "Then I have something to give away," she said.

*Continued on next page*

*“Living Welcome” continued from previous page*

On the opposite side, church members Karen Collins and Rosangela Oliveira stacked registration forms for the West Side Campaign Against Hunger, which provides access to healthy food and supportive services and is based in the building.

They also distributed backpacks to families and individuals throughout the morning. Each backpack included a reusable water bottle, toiletries, socks, snacks, an English-Spanish dictionary, a \$22 NYC Metrocard and a \$20 bill.

By 10 a.m., a table of food, donated by B’nai Jeshurun — a nearby synagogue that has shared space with St. Paul and St. Andrew over the years — was set up for those who want an early lunch.

Another table was staffed by Héctor Arguinzones and Niurka Meléndez of Venezuelans and Immigrants Aid. The husband-and-wife team founded the organization, also a partner of the West Side Campaign Against Hunger, in 2016.

“There was a need for Venezuelans to communicate with someone who understood them and the reasons they left,” Arguinzones said. The all-volunteer organization also helps those from other Spanish-speaking countries, such as Panama, Honduras and Colombia.

Information is crucial to navigate the city and the immigration system, he added. “We refer Venezuelans to the services they need.”

The number of backpacks distributed on Mondays rose from 30 to more than 70 over a few weeks. But the volunteers assisting on those days also are learning what else is needed. Beginning Jan. 1, bigger items, such as diapers, menstrual supplies, winter clothing and shoes, will be available, but not in backpacks, Matthews said. However, church members will continue to prepare the essential-item backpacks to send to La Morada each month.

Church member Julia Tulloch called the overall cooperative effort a model that other churches could use. “In many ways, SPSA has been a catalyst that has pulled together these other organizations that have buckets of knowledge on how these (city and immigration) systems work,” she said.

Others in the denomination’s New York Conference are reaching out as well, according to the Rev. Nikki Hutt, the conference’s disaster response and mission ministry coordinator. And two other New York City congregations are directly involved in migrant ministry, she said.

First Spanish United Methodist Church in Harlem offers a respite center for migrants from 2 to 4 p.m. Tuesdays through Fridays, where visitors can find clothing, learn English and have a meal. The Rev. Dorlimar Lebrón Malavé is the pastor.

Bay Ridge United Methodist Church in Brooklyn, led by the Rev. Matthew Schaeffer, is collaborating on migrant ministry with the Lutheran Church of the Good Shepherd, where Bay Ridge currently rents space.

Schaeffer said the Rev. Juan Carlos Ruiz of Good Shepherd has been involved with the sanctuary movement and an immediate action was to provide three days of respite space to some arriving migrants in a café area off the sanctuary. The arrivals also were greeted with both warm coverings and warm words through a prayer shawl ministry, with a notecard saying that they were being prayed for.

“We were responding to this huge influx,” Schaeffer recalled. From August through October, it could be “pretty chaotic” as the two congregations tried to care for and assist the 15 to 20 people who could be staying there at any one time. “We’ve networked with a lot of volunteers from different organizations.”

The flow of new immigrants has decreased, he added, but the relationships continue as “the people who came here understand that this is a resource center,” he added. Beyond the basics, resources also might include ESL classes, accompaniment to check-ins and legal appointments, assistance on obtaining work permits and even acupuncture treatments.

Hutt is applying for a \$10,000 solidarity grant from the United Methodist Committee on Relief to split among the three congregations as they continue to assist asylum seekers.



Donated clothing fills a front pew at the Church of St. Paul and St. Andrew in New York City, including coats and warmer garments for the approaching winter. Photo by K Karpen.



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# JANUARY 2023

| Sun   | Mon   | Tue  | Wed  | Thu   | Fri  | Sat                            |
|---|---|--|--|---|--|--------------------------------|
| 1<br> | 2<br>Church Office Closed   | 3<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2                                 | 4<br>Office Hours 9:30 am-2<br><br>Bible Study (virtual) 7 pm  | 5<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2<br><br>Boy Scouts 7 pm<br><br>ESL Classes (Virtual) 7 pm   | 6<br>Church Office Closed                                  | 7<br>Narcotics Anonymous 5 pm  |
| 8<br>Worship 10 am  | 9<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm   | 10<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2<br><br>Prayer Fellowship 10 am | 11<br>Office Hours 9:30 am-2<br><br>Bible Study (virtual) 7 pm   | 12<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2<br><br>Boy Scouts 7 pm<br><br>ESL Classes (Virtual) 7 pm<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm                      | 13<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm | 14<br>Narcotics Anonymous 5 pm |
| 15<br>Worship 10 am   | 16<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm<br> | 17<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2                                | 18<br>Office Hours 9:30 am-2<br><br>Bible Study (virtual) 7 pm   | 19<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2<br><br>Boy Scouts 7 pm<br><br>ESL Classes (Virtual) 7 pm<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm                      | 20<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm | 21<br>Narcotics Anonymous 5 pm |
| 22<br>Worship 10 am   | 23<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm  | 24<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2<br><br>Prayer Fellowship 10 am | 25<br>Office Hours 9:30 am-2<br><br>Bible Study (virtual) 7 pm   | 26<br>-Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2<br>-Boy Scouts 7 pm<br>-ESL Classes (Virtual) 7 pm<br>-UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm<br>-Church Board Meeting 7pm | 27<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm | 28<br>Food Distribution 8 am   |
| 29<br>Worship 10 am   | 30<br>Church Office Closed<br><br>UpStage Rehearsal 7-9 pm<br><br>Depression Bipolar Support (virtual) 7 pm                                       | 31<br>Office Hours (By Appt.) 9:30 am-2                                | <p><b>Emmanuel is on Instagram!</b><br/>Follow @eumc_beltsville  <b>Instagram</b></p> <p><b>Join us Facebook!</b><br/><a href="https://www.facebook.com/groups/EUMCBeltsville">https://www.facebook.com/groups/EUMCBeltsville</a></p>  |   |  |                                |