



# Thus Far...

*Then Samuel took a stone and set it up between Mizpah and Shen. He named it Ebenezer, saying, "Thus far the LORD has helped us." 1 Samuel 7:12 (NIV)*

## Spring/Summer 2019

God continues to bless us with opportunities to spread His word and demonstrate His love. This issue of "Thus Far..." includes articles about God's work underway here at Ebenezer United Methodist Church and plans for the future. We hope each of you will help fulfill our vision of "Christ: Love Him, Share Him, Serve Him" by being a part, in whatever way God directs you, of all that is going on. You'll be a blessing to others and receive blessings in return!

### *"Thus Far..." is Going Digital!*

At the May Church Council Meeting, the Council approved two changes effecting "Thus Far...". First, starting with the next issue, we'll be going digital. If you are listed in the EUMC Directory with an email address, we will send "Thus Far..." to you via email. This change will save printing and postage costs, as well as trees!

Paper copies will continue to be sent to those without email addresses and to those who wish to continue receiving this newsletter by mail. **If you wish to continue to receive a paper copy, just let us know;** send email to [ThusFar.EUMC@gmail.com](mailto:ThusFar.EUMC@gmail.com) or drop a note in the offering plate any Sunday.

The Council also approved a publication schedule of three issues a year – Winter, Spring/Summer, and Autumn. The next issue (Autumn) will be published in October. We invite your submissions, as well as feedback on previous issues.

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## *EUMC Charge Conference to be Held on October 12th*

Rev. Charles F. Bates became the new Rappahannock River District Superintendent, effective July 1, 2019, coming to us from his position as lead pastor at Fishersville UMC on the Staunton District. Because Rev. Bates wants to meet everyone in the District, he is scheduling individual Charge Conferences with each of the 74 congregations in the District, sometimes as many as two or three on the same day!

***The Ebenezer Charge Conference is scheduled for Saturday, October 12, 2019, at 7:00 p.m.*** We will begin the evening's festivities at 5:00 p.m. with a Pot Luck Dinner, followed by a family game night (Scrabble! Pictionary!).

Please plan to attend to welcome Rev. Bates to Ebenezer and to participate in the Charge Conference, as well as to enjoy the fellowship – and the eats! – on October 12<sup>th</sup>.

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## *Homecoming is Coming!*

Every two years, Ebenezer holds a Revival and a Homecoming service. This year, the Revival will be held on November 1-2, and Homecoming will follow on Sunday, November 3. Ralph Fallin, chair of the planning effort, needs **your** help to make this a success. Please sign up with him soon. Many hands make light work!

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## Pastor's Ponderings ...

– from Pastor Rebecca Rumburg

At some point in my sermon on June 23rd, I referenced the song entitled, "The Prayer." In this issue of our newsletter, I want to share that song with you again as we enter this new season in the life of the church.

The Virginia Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church gathered in Roanoke, VA, June 20-22. As the clergy and laity filed into the Berglund Center, we found our seats and prepared to being Holy Conferencing for the 237th time. Historically, we open with words of welcome and greeting followed by some announcements (sounds a bit like our own Sunday morning opening, doesn't it?) The opening hymn is always the same, "And Are We Yet Alive?," which is fitting at the ending of the appointment year.

I usually look forward to attending Annual Conference. It is a time to reconnect and worship personally. However, with all the division in our United Methodist Church, it felt different this year. The undercurrent of anxiety, particularly given the bold expressions of opposition to the results of the 2019 Special Session of General Conference, was palpable and unmistakable. The United Methodist Church seems less united now than ever before.

When I found myself shaking my head and noticing a hurt in my heart for the current and future state of the church, the Holy Spirit would intercede. Those intercessions are what gave me hope that God is not done with the people called Methodists. Our future may be uncertain, but isn't it always? However, the certainty of God's presence among us is undeniable!

The Holy Spirit spoke to me through the words of "The Prayer." Uncertainty will always be present, and anxiety will rear its head, but may we always remember that Jesus Christ is the head of the United Methodist Church and of this local congregation called Ebenezer!

## "The Prayer"

Lyricists: David Foster, Carole Bayer Sager, Tony Renis, and Alberto Testa

*I pray you'll be our eyes  
And watch us where we go  
And help us to be wise  
In times when we don't know*

*Let this be our prayer  
When we lose our way  
Lead us to a place  
Guide us with your Grace  
To a place where we'll be safe*

*I pray we'll find your light  
And hold it in our hearts  
When stars go out each night*

*Let this be our prayer  
When shadows fill our day  
Lead us to a place  
Guide us with your grace  
Give us faith so we'll be safe*

*We ask that life be kind  
And watch us from above  
We hope each soul will find  
Another soul to love*

*Let this be our prayer  
Let this be our prayer  
Just like every child  
Just like every child*

*Needs to find a place,  
Guide us with your grace  
Give us faith so we'll be safe ...*

God is calling us to go forth with Him. He will guide us with His grace and will strengthen and deepen our faith in Him. May the Holy Spirit continue to guide and direct us to be the church God is calling us to be, for such a time as this! Just a reminder: Jesus Christ is, has been, and always will be, the head of the church!

Glory to God! Amen!

Praying for you,  
Rebecca

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*Needed: Leaders for Our Children*

We are so incredibly blessed! God's goodness and faithfulness at Ebenezer is abundantly evident, but sometimes it's easy to get confused in our thinking. It has been said that children are the future of the church. I whole heartedly disagree. **Children are not the future of the church; they are the present.**

Have you ever thought of our children as a present or gift? One of the greatest blessings God has bestowed upon us is the gift of children!

Here at Ebenezer, we have all the elements needed to develop an amazing Children's Ministry, starting with the most important element of a vital Children's Ministry: children! We have the desire to be good stewards of the gifts God has given us. And, gratefully, we have the facilities and the financial resources to support a quality program.

**What we need is Leadership!**

Does the task of leading a Children's Ministry seem too large? Do you feel like someone else will surely step up? Maybe we are looking at it from the wrong vantage point. Maybe it's time we change our perspective. Instead of viewing Children's Ministry as a task, I challenge us to look at Children's Ministry as a powerful opportunity to meet Christ in our midst!

Ebenezer needs one or two people to respond to this opportunity. Is Christ calling you to partner with Him as a Children's Ministry team leader? Leading our children into a deeper experience of God and His love is a life-changing opportunity!

**Pray about it with me, won't you?**

-- Pastor Rebecca

*"Suffer the little children to come unto me ...  
... for of such is the kingdom of heaven."*

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*Make a Playground Pledge!*

Recently, our Ebenezer children collected "Change for Change" to support upgrading the playground at Cople Elementary School. Now it's Ebenezer's turn to upgrade our own playground. The United Methodist Men (UMM) inspected our equipment and found that some of the older wood structures are splintery and in need of repair or replacement, and that additional upgrades to the playground are needed to keep our kids safe and happy.

Ebenezer's playground is used not only by the young children of our own congregation, but also by children in the neighborhood. It is open to all.

The UMM and the United Methodist Women (UMW) have each provided \$500 toward the playground make-over, and the Church Council passed a motion to provide an additional \$1,000 from the annual budget. With \$2,000, we are off to a good start, but the total renovations, which are still in the planning stage, will probably require several thousand dollars more to fund the fun!

The Council, therefore, agreed that we should have a pledge drive to raise the necessary funds. A target amount for the pledge drive has not yet been set, pending additional work to design and price an improved playground. However, it's not too soon to start the "Pledge for the Playground" initiative.

IF YOU WOULD LIKE TO MAKE A PLEDGE, even at this early stage, please use the bulletin tear-off section and drop it in the offering plate any Sunday.

More information about costs, equipment selection, installation schedules, etc., will be available soon. Help keep smiles on our children's faces!

## Team Honduras Heads for Tegucigalpa

On June 29, 2019, the Team Honduras – Medical Mission left Dulles Airport in Washington, DC, to fly to Tegucigalpa, Honduras, for a 7-day mission trip. Thirty people from 5 states, including 17 people from Virginia, will be traveling to Honduras to provide medical, dental and optical services to the people there. The Team took with them 30 checked bags of medical supplies, almost 1500 pounds!

Our own Mary Jenkins is among the team members. She will participate in the medical brigades that will be fielded on four days. Every day, though, teams will be doing construction work like painting and repair, and on Friday, Mary will help install a water filtration system.

On Wednesday, the Team will visit Rancho Ebenezer, a school and orphanage, at which Mary says they “will minister to, and love on, the children there.” Included in the supplies taken to Honduras were hair scrunchies and other pretty things for the girls, so they will have a “hair-do” party, as well!



In addition to proceeds from Missions fund-raising events, the EUMC Church Council provided \$500 from Second Mile Giving to buy medical supplies, including cortisone crème, nasal spray and decongestants, and other similar items, including 600 pairs of exam gloves. The Team returns on July 6<sup>th</sup>.

## In Other Missions News...

Teresa English will be returning to South Dakota Standing Rock Indian Reservation again this year at the end of July. Contributions from Ebenezer (so far!) include more than 25 beach towels which the children there will use for nap times during the week of mission activities and then will take home as their own.

Please keep all of our missions in prayer as we seek to share God’s love.



## PANDAMANIA at Carmel UMC

“PANDAMANIA: Where God is Wild About You” is the theme of this year’s Vacation Bible School. Once again Ebenezer will join

with Carmel UMC and Coles Point UMC to host a joint VBS from July 15 through July 18, from 5:30 pm to 7:45 pm each night. Supper will be served beginning at 5:30, and the VBS program will begin at 6:00 pm each night.

Age groups will include Preschool ages 3-5; Grades 1, 2 and 3; and Grades 4 and 5. All children are invited to participate. We offer a special invitation to those in the area who are not members of one of the participating churches. Come and see what’s going on!

For planning purposes, if you know of children who would like to attend, please let Debbie Messick know ([d.messick@yahoo.com](mailto:d.messick@yahoo.com)). Registration cards for VBS are available in the Gathering Room of Ebenezer, as well as at the other churches.

It takes a church to publish a newsletter. Many thanks to those who contributed to this issue: Pastor Rebecca Rumburg, Mary Jenkins, Fran Taylor, Scott Flickinger, Mina Croson and Kathy Davis. Next issue: Your name here!



## EMMAUS ... *What the heck is it anyway?*

--- by Fran Taylor

Until I came to Ebenezer, I had never heard of a Walk to Emmaus weekend. Various people starting asking me to consider attending a women's weekend, and I of course had every excuse in the book why I couldn't go. But you people are persistent! Again, and again, the invitation would come, and each time I had an excuse. But finally, someone had to give in, and it was me.

I committed to go. I was told I would need to miss one day of work, that my sponsor(s) would pick me up late Thursday afternoon, take me to dinner on the way to camp, and pick me up on Sunday when it was over. I was encouraged to take comfortable clothes, leave my watch/phone/Fitbit/tablet at home, and go with an open mind and heart.

I was told I would have a roommate. There would be surprises. Would I know anyone, or would they like me? Good grief ... what did I get myself into? I'm a picky eater, so would there be anything to eat, and would I like it? Did I need to hide some cheese crackers and Coke cans in my luggage? And how would I survive three whole days without my Bill?? Why did it seem secretive?

The day arrived to go on my journey. The trip there was fun, with several church friends delivering me to Camp Happyland, which is in the remote hinterlands of Fredericksburg (I kept listening for banjos!).

I was there. Too late to turn back now. Would I have regrets? Yes, there was regret. Regret that I had said no countless times before finally saying yes. Regret that I missed the chance to experience God in a way I had never imagined earlier than I did. Regret that I had any thoughts that my Ebenezer family would lead me astray.

What is an Emmaus weekend? In a nutshell, it is a 72-hour encounter with God. The experience is led by a Weekend Lay Director (WLD) and a loving, dedicated group of team members who are personally invited to participate. The team meets throughout the year to ensure the walk is the experience the pilgrims deserve, praying over unnamed pilgrims even before any have been asked to participate.

A number of us have been blessed by being invited to be team members. Being any part of someone else's weekend nearly matches our own. Watching God work in and through the pilgrims over a weekend reinforces your own faith and love for our Lord and Savior. There is nothing secretive about it, but we don't want to give too much away, so that your walk is the experience it should be for you.

Each year there is a spring walk for men and one for women, and the same thing again in the fall. For 2019, the men's fall walk will be held **October 24-27**, and they will be blessed to have our very own Larry Jenkins Jr. as the WLD for this men's walk. The Women's fall walk is **November 7-10**, and Mary Jenkins and I are blessed to again be team members.

Before my walk, my sponsor told me that if I thought God loved me now, "just wait until your weekend is over." That doesn't even come close to the truth. I'm sorry that I said no over and over, but God knew when I would need my walk the most, and He changed my heart to accept. I left that Thursday a member of Ebenezer UMC, but I returned a Disciple of Christ. I was forever changed.

If you are asked, please consider accepting. You won't be sorry. There is no cost to you. Your sponsor handles everything for you, including checking on your family during your absence.

And if you think you'd like to experience God up close and personal – on His own time – there are several Ebenezer Emmaus Alumni who would **LOVE** to be your sponsor! Don't wait to be asked! Tell me or Rebecca, and we can take it from there to find you a sponsor. Just trust. You'll have no regrets.

***De Colores!***



# Grace Notes



## A New Fifth Sunday Tradition?

Music is an important part of Ebenezer’s worship. On the first and third Sundays of each month, our Abundant Joy choir leads our traditional worship services with hymns from The Methodist Hymnal and an anthem which varies from arrangements of well-known hymns to Southern Gospel to whatever wonderful anthems seem appropriate.

On the second and fourth Sundays, our Worship Team leads the congregation with contemporary Christian music, including special offertory presentations, accompanied by guitars, drums, electronic piano, and harmonica. This diversity in music highlights our diversity in praise.

On fifth Sundays, however, which occur four times a year, we often scramble to see who is available to lead the music and what that music should be.

On the fifth Sunday in June this year, the folks involved in our Music ministry, together with our Pastor, decided to select songs from our **other** Methodist hymnal, “The Faith We Sing,” and include an additional congregational hymn during offertory instead of an anthem or special presentation.

This new addition to the fifth Sunday service was well received. We sang, among other songs, “Lily of the Valley” and “Just a Closer Walk with Thee,” and ended with “I’ll Fly Away,” an Ebenezer favorite.

“The Faith We Sing” offers many wonderful praise songs that we can learn and learn to love. Let’s hope this starts a Fifth Sunday tradition!



## EUMC on the Web

Ebenezer is on Facebook and also has a web page at [www.eumcoldhams.org](http://www.eumcoldhams.org). Check out both of our sites to keep up with all the goings on at Ebenezer.

## One More Music Note –

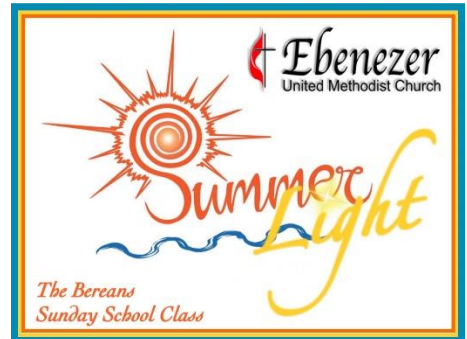
The Fellowship Hall has a new acoustic piano! The piano, once belonging to Elizabeth Sanford, has been donated to Ebenezer in loving memory of Elizabeth by her children, Marie, Eddie and Kathy.

The piano was used for her children’s piano lessons. Interestingly, during winters when the church was cold, the choir met at the Sanford home to practice around this same piano.

We are grateful to the Sanford children for the gift, which included tuning the piano after it was moved. We’d also like to thank the men who did the actual moving, no lightweight feat!

May the music from this piano bless us and our fellowship for years to come!

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## Bereans Class Plans for Summer

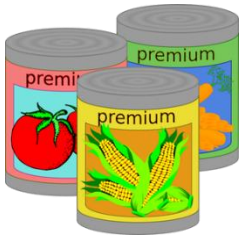
Mina Croson is putting together an 8-week program of unrelated topics for the Bereans Sunday School class. Each lesson will begin with a video and be followed by a scripture reading that will lead into a group discussion. The thought is to provide studies that will allow for people who are in and out on vacation to be able to come back to class and reconnect quickly. Check it out!

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## Scripture Quote for Today ...

When a stranger sojourns with you in your land, you shall not do him wrong. You shall treat the stranger who sojourns with you as the native among you, and you shall love him as yourself, for you were strangers in the land of Egypt: I am the Lord your God. (Lev. 19:33-34, ESV)

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## Feeding Our Neighbors: Ebenezer’s Food Pantry

-- by Scott Flickinger

Our Food Pantry sure has seen a lot of food being distributed recently. We’ve observed the typical seasonal drop of clients from our winter season high of 100-110 families to 85-95 families during our late spring season. However, the amount of food being distributed has definitely increased.

We typically give out 8 lbs of dry goods, 8 lbs of produce, 2 lbs of meat, and 1.5 lbs of bakery per client. However, due to an increase in USDA products delivered to our Food Pantry, those numbers have gone up.

Feedmore, the parent of the Healthy Harvest Food Bank of which Ebenezer’s pantry is a part, made an intentional decision last fall to distribute more fresh produce and dairy. As a result, EUMC distributed milk on four different occasions, and last month we distributed eggs for the first time. In fact, last month, we distributed over 216 gallons of milk and 120 dozen eggs. We’ve been receiving a lot of fruit and produce through the USDA program, too. For the last 4-5 months, we’ve been giving out California oranges; last month we also gave a couple bags of walnuts to each family.

### *USDA Increases Help Our Bottom Line*

In our first year of being a USDA pantry, we only received about 2,500 pounds of dry goods per month. However, at the start of the new year, the USDA program increased their dry goods allotment to more than twice that of the previous year. Food distributed has included beans (navy, pinto, black, etc.), white and brown rice, lentils and split peas.

Concurrently, we have also been getting more meat from the USDA. That, together with the meat we receive weekly from the Montross Food Lion, has overfilled our three Ebenezer in-house freezers most months, and we’ve needed several coolers to handle the overflow.

The additional food coming free from the USDA has decreased our need to purchase meat at 19¢/lb, dry goods at 19¢/lb, and produce at 7¢/lb from the Healthy Harvest Food Bank.

### *Food Bank Helps Farmers, Too*

All 25 Food pantries participating in the USDA program have expressed concern about giving out more than what we believe the clients are able to use. After a June meeting to discuss the issue, we learned that we should expect to continue to receive large amounts of food until the impact on American farmers of the international tariffs on agricultural trade is relieved.

### *Healthy Harvest Food Bank Keeps Growing!*

Prior to 2010, people from the seven or eight food pantries in the Northern Neck travelled all the way to Feedmore in Richmond each month to pick up the food for distribution. In 2010, the Northern Neck Food Bank was formed using kitchen/storage space at White Stone’s Church of the Nazarene. Within the year, they moved to a small warehouse in Irvington. Outgrowing that space, the food bank, now renamed the Healthy Harvest Food Bank, moved to its current Warsaw location in 2013.

The Warsaw location was also outgrown several years ago, so Healthy Harvest is in the process of moving again. Construction of a brand new \$2.25 million facility is expected to be completed later this year. Just over half the money for the new facility has already been committed; additional contributions are still being solicited.

Speaking of Healthy Harvest, did you know that the staff there includes two of Ebenezer’s own? **Mary Jenkins** started as a full-time Community Relations Coordinator in May of this year. **Scott Flickinger** has been an Agricultural Specialist part-timer since April 2014. He’s been seen leading volunteers in the gleaning fields from mid-June till mid-December, picking up donated produce from local farmers every Monday, and making deliveries to local pantries two or three days a week.

Our food pantry is a great opportunity to serve and to work with other churches – and other Christians – in a mission effort right here at home.

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