

THIS WEEK

SUNDAY, MARCH 9 – DAYLIGHT SAVINGS

9 AM – ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL – LOUNGE

10 AM–10:25 AM – FELLOWSHIP TIME – EXT.

10:30 AM – WORSHIP & CHILDREN’S CHURCH

11:30 AM – UWIF MTG. – EXT.

MONDAY, MARCH 10 – NO EVENTS SCHEDULED

TUESDAY, MARCH 11 – NO EVENTS SCHEDULED

WEDNESDAY, MARCH 12 – NO EVENTS SCHEDULED

THURSDAY, MARCH 13

9 AM – BMG – EXT.

11 AM – 2 PM – THE SHOPPE & ANNEX at RPUMC Open for shopping *Proceeds Benefit Missions/Outreach*

11:30-12:30PM – FREE LUNCH MINISTRY – FH

FRIDAY, MARCH 14

2 PM – BOOK CLUB – LOUNGE

SATURDAY, MARCH 15 – FH RESERVED

11 AM – KOINONIA MTG. – EXT.

SUNDAY, MARCH 16 – FH RESERVED

9 AM – ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL – LOUNGE

10 AM–10:25 AM – FELLOWSHIP TIME – EXT.

10:30 AM – WORSHIP & CHILDREN’S CHURCH

11:45 AM – UMCOR PROJECT ASSEMBLY – FH

ANNOUNCEMENTS AND EVENTS

UMCOR Sunday 3/30 – The Rev. David McMillan has invited RPUMC for a worship celebration on Sunday, March 30, at 9:30 am, at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church. Guest preacher will be Bishop Latrelle Easterling of the Peninsula-Delaware and Baltimore-Washington Conferences. To celebrate this special occasion, the formation of a community choir, to sing the morning anthem, with all participating churches. A rehearsal will be held in the sanctuary before the service at 8:45 am. Following the service, everyone will be invited to Fellowship Hall for a delicious brunch. Please join us and if you are able to attend, join in with the community choir to sing the anthem. If you are attending the church brunch, please let the church office know, so we know how many members will be participating and how many are expected to stay for the brunch. Thank you.

Book Club – Our February meeting was held on Friday, February 14th at 2 pm at the church. We discussed “Must Love Flowers” by Debbie Macomber. The discussion questions provided by the author led to one of our most interesting discussions. Our March meeting will be on Friday, March 14th at 2 pm at the church. We will discuss “Who is Maud Dixon” by Alexandra Andrews. If anyone has trouble getting a copy, please let me know. I hope to have access to an extra copy. We received copies of “Remarkably Bright Creatures” by Shelby Van Pelt which will be the book for our April meeting on Friday, April 11th at 2pm. It is also the book selected by News Castle Reads for their event for 2025, which is scheduled for Tuesday, April 15, 2025 at 7 pm at the Chase Center. We will enjoy dinner at Iron Hill Brewery before the event at 5:15pm. Coming attractions include “The Wedding Planner” by Daniel Steel, “Dreamland: A Novel” by Nicholas Sparks, “Hidden Pictures” by Jason Rekulak, “The Housemaid’s Secret” by Freida McFadden, “The Book Woman of Troublesome Creek” by Kim Michele Richardson and several books by Ariel Lawhon (“The Frozen River” and “Flight of Dreams”). Paul

Fellowship Time – Sunday Social meets from 10 am until 10:25 am in the Extension before morning worship. Join us for fellowship. We will have snacks, coffee and tea to enjoy. Donations of prewrapped snacks, if you are able to contribute, would be greatly appreciated. Thank you, Dottie & Rose

Flower Containers – We love delivering altar flowers to shut-ins and they love the visit BUT we are in need of containers. I have found the 1 lb. metal coffee cans do work very well. Please donate these so we can continue this wonderful program. Blessings, Marlene

Free Lunch – The Free Lunch Ministry program continues every Thursday from 11:30am-12:30pm. We prepare a hot lunch in take-out containers. Each person also receives a ‘bag of blessings’. Our dedicated volunteers work on Wednesday mornings preparing food and the ‘bags of blessings’ to hand out. We are averaging about 110 meals a week now. Contributions of items are always accepted. Some church members pick up meals and deliver them to family and elderly neighbors. Thank you for your contributions to this wonderful ministry.

The Shoppe & Annex – is **Open** for shopping on Thursdays from 11 am until 2 pm. Stop on by The Shoppe & Annex, grab a deal or two and be sure to tell your family and friends! Thank you everyone for your support! *Proceeds Benefit Mission/Outreach*



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

BISHOP, PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE,
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

REV. ERICA ROBINSON-JOHNSON *Chief Administrative Officer*

March 3, 2025 - A Message from Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

'Be still, and know that I am God!

I am exalted among the nations, I am exalted in the earth.'

The Lord of hosts is with us; the God of Jacob is our refuge. - - Psalm 46:8-11 (NRSV)

Just a few short months ago, The United Methodist Church gathered in Charlotte, NC, to hold our General Conference. Our scriptural theme, *...And Know That I am God*, was taken from Psalm 46. Perhaps the first thing one noticed was the absence of the two words that preceded the theme: *Be still*. Be still. Be still.

In these days fraught with increased anxiety, vitriolic conversations, litigious battles, relentless accusations, systemic deconstruction and compounded loss, one of the most important actions we can take is to be still. Be still for a time without listening to the talking heads. Be still without mindlessly doom-scrolling. Be still without even engaging in a conversation with our beloveds. ***Just Be Still***. And in our being still, the power of the succeeding words from the Scripture will become ever more compelling – *and know that I am God*.

God is still God even as the earth shakes and the seas roar. God is still God, even as the familiar gives way to the disconcerting. God is still God, even as hard-won rights are erased with the stroke of a pen. God is still God, even in the face of economic uncertainty. God is still God, even as the things we have taken for granted are now in jeopardy. God is still God even, as trials come on every hand. God is still God, and the truths of God do not change:

God is love.
God is good.
God will never leave us nor forsake us.
God is our rock and refuge.
God loves us; God loves you.
God is.

These immutable truths do not change and will sustain us as we walk through these tumultuous days. There are times that the only way out is through, and we are in such a time. In such days it is impossible to avoid strong emotions. This is all the more reason to remain rooted, grounded, planted, and centered in Almighty God. As everything around us becomes like sinking sand and we feel unmoored, the steadfastness of God is our anchor. ***Be still and know that I am God***.

Beloved, I encourage you to be intentional about when and where you engage the news. Be

mindful of what a steady diet of news and social media are doing to your well-being. Be mindful of what constant conversations about our political milieu are doing to your peace of mind. We cannot avert our eyes from the disturbing and sometimes evil things unfolding around us; but neither can we allow them to unsettle us to the point that we lose our equilibrium and our trust in the goodness and power of God.

I encourage you to be intentional about when and how you engage in acts of advocacy, protest and resistance. I've shared with you many times the advice I received from a wise supervisor – You cannot swing at every ball. While the church must not be silent in times of injustice and oppression, no one can singlehandedly fight the good fight. We must be intentional about when we will speak, write, advocate or march. Otherwise, we will find ourselves succumbing to justice fatigue. ***Be still and know that I am God so that:***

We act and not react.
We rightly divine the Word of Truth.
We wait upon the Lord.
We renew our strength.
We remain within the will of God.

We do not know what trials await us in the coming days or how we will be called to respond as the people of God. But we know that the God of our salvation will be as close as breath. As we live our faith and embody our baptism, also take time to be still and know that God is God.

Beloved, know that I am praying for you, our nation and our world. You are precious in God's sight and at the very center of the heart of God. You are strong, you are resilient, and you are blessed. God will sustain us, and we will surround one another with love, comfort and unyielding hope.

Blessings and Peace,
Bishop LaTrelle Easterling
Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Area
The United Methodist Church

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Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference, 139 N. State Street. Dover, Delaware, 19901



Bishop LaTrelle Easterling

BISHOP, PENINSULA-DELAWARE CONFERENCE,
BALTIMORE-WASHINGTON CONFERENCE

REV. ERICA ROBINSON-JOHNSON *Chief Administrative Officer*

March 5, 2025

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling's 2025 Lenten Message

Search me, O God, and know my heart: try me, and know my thoughts: And see if there be any wicked way in me, and lead me in the way everlasting. --Psalm 139:23-24

Beloved, we once again find ourselves in the profound season of Lent. It is a formative time of praying, fasting, examination and preparation for faithful discipleship. And, for many this year, a time that is carrying more weight and burden than they've felt since the pandemic. Almost daily, I hear from those lamenting our present milieu. I hear the frustration of those who thought the dark days of rampant injustice and capricious governance were behind us. Communities who believed that hard-won rights were secure and while their lives weren't perfect, they were not riddled with dread.

The following is a long quote from the Rev. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., taken from an address he gave at Western Michigan University in December of 1963. I believe it is important to receive the quote in its totality to fully grasp what Dr. King was saying, and its relevance to our world today. Dr. King proclaimed:

"Now the other myth that gets around is the idea that legislation cannot really solve the problem and that it has no great role to play in this period of social change because you've got to change the heart, and you can't change the heart through legislation. You can't legislate morals. The job must be done through education and religion. Well, there's a half-truth involved here. Certainly, if the problem is to be solved then, in the final sense, hearts must be changed. Religion and education must play a great role in changing the heart. But we must go on to say that while it may be true that morality cannot be legislated, behavior can be regulated. It may be true that the law cannot change the heart, but it can restrain the heartless. It may be true that the law cannot make a man love me, but it can keep him from lynching me and I think that is pretty important, also."

Dr. King's argument could not be more veracious in capturing the tension we are experiencing within the United States of America today. You cannot legislate morality, but without legislation, injustice can become rampant. It can be executed with force if the unjust laws and practices of a nation are not constrained. And yet, everything those laws and practices are meant to achieve is not secure unless hearts and minds are changed. Without real transformation in belief, thought and understanding, injustice, bias and oppression are simply suppressed for a time. But just like a villain who is vanquished at the end of a movie and then rises again in the sequel, so does injustice if lasting change has not taken place.

The work of imparting Godly wisdom rooted in love is the work of the church. Offering a new

way of living in the world, a way that changes minds, softens hearts and teaches transformation, is the work of those who claim discipleship in Jesus Christ. Inviting others into a relationship with Jesus Christ is to offer an opportunity for the only vehicle that creates lasting change – repentance. Repentance is not the suppressing of errant beliefs, values or behaviors until an opportune time arises to revert. Repentance is not quietly biding your time until the environment is right to double-down on selfish practices. Repentance is a realization that something is antithetical to the very nature of God and turning away from it. Repentance is a change of heart and mind. And, for our founder, John Wesley, repentance is just the front porch of our faith, which opens the door to a deeper abiding life in Christ and the power of the Holy Spirit to continue this perfecting work.

The psalmist invites us into a conversation with God – a conversation that confesses our ability to hide behind a façade from everyone except our Creator. We may even fool ourselves, but we cannot fool God. The psalmist encourages us to seek God’s examination of our hearts, minds, intentions, even our most hidden thoughts – and to lead us in the way everlasting. To be led in the way everlasting is to repent of the ways that are not within the will of God, the love of God and nature of God. To be led in the way everlasting is to live the character of the beatitudes, the anointing of the Good News extolled in Luke 4: 18-19, the fruit of the Spirit from Galatians and the uncompromising love of 1 Corinthians 13. This is not the whole of the matter, but it is a tremendous start.

On this Ash Wednesday, as we receive the ashes, we are reminded of our fallibility and our need for God. These ashes symbolize both our humility and our willingness to turn away from sin and toward the grace and mercy of God. We are not perfect, and it is through humility — recognizing our imperfection and seeking God’s strength — that we are transformed. In the succeeding days of Lent, may we allow God to examine our hearts and call us to true repentance. That repentance will lead to Christ-centered change. And individual change is the first step toward communal transformation. A transformation that does not seek to revert when the political or societal winds change; rather, it remains steadfastly rooted in the expansive grace of Jesus Christ. May it be so.

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