

Whoever you are, wherever you are on life's journey, you are welcome here.

## NEWSLETTER May 2025

### A WORD FROM OUR PASTOR



#### “Come thou fount of every blessing”

Ah!-to worship a God who is the source of all goodness.

This Easter season we will be following Peter's life and calling through the lens of this beloved hymn. This song is a brilliant example of our Wesleyan theology. You may know that some denominations form their beliefs through formal essays delineating everything. John and Charles Wesley, however, were men of the people and shared theology in songs and sermons bit by bit. It gives us a theology that grows and shifts through a lifetime of knowing God. And it gives us a rich canon of songs to help us know God. (Sneak peak: we'll spend

the summer exploring beloved songs and theology, so stay tuned!).

This song, Come Thou Fount, was not written by Charles, but it was written by a Methodist. Which Methodist? That's a matter of some controversy! It was either written by Robert Robinson or Selina, Countess of Huntington.

Robinson was a Methodist who transformed his life after hearing George Whitefield preach. Whitefield was one of the preeminent preachers who followed the Wesley's radical denomination. He was eventually sent to America and laid the groundwork for every single one of us to be worshipping in United Methodist churches.

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Robinson has historically been given credit for the hymn in song books and in his biography. The Countess, however, had a packet of loose songs she had copied or written, including this one, that was found in a Wesleyan song book after her death. All had attribution to its author, and this one listed herself!

What a mystery!

Current scholarship suggests that Robinson is the true author.

Its earliest printing was 1759. And yet, it strikes my heart today. Yes, there are some funky words to deal with (what's an "Ebenezer" and how do I raise it?). But I understand the feelings of it. I understand what it's like to crave and then receive "streams of mercy". I understand what it feels like "to leave the God I love" and then make a new commitment to give over my heart. This Easter season (it's the 50 days after Easter leading up to the birth of the Church at Pentecost!) I invite you to deeply consider the words of this song as we walk with Peter through his life with Christ. Sometimes we need to let joy burst out of us! Sometimes the only appropriate way to respond is with deep, faithful rejoicing!

Blessings,  
Rev. Emily

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## LEADERSHIP TEAM UPDATE

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April's Leadership Team meeting began with a discussion on making decisions in the gray areas. How do we make sense of issues that aren't in black and white but still you must make a decision?

We read 3 verses (of many) from Scripture to see how God has instructed us in decision

making. They are as follows:

***"Trust in the Lord with all your heart and lean not on your own understanding; in all your ways submit to Him, and He will make your paths straight." Proverbs 3:5-6***

***"Where there is no guidance, a people can fail but in an abundance of counselors there is safety." Proverbs 11:14***

***"If any of you lacks wisdom, let him ask of God, who gives generously to all without reproach, and it will be given to him." James 1:5***

The good news is we don't have to decide alone. We can rely on God's guidance when we doubt our abilities and He tells us to confide with an "abundance of counselors" when we have no guidance. Trust in Him.

Using the above as a guide, we began a review of Salem's Financial Policy last updated in 2019. We made some minor changes. We decided that language in the policy for the Legacy and Memorial funds should be revised to show recent changes in reporting. We agreed to incorporate additional steps in the Pastors Discretionary fund for transparency. And to review the In-Kind donations policy to ensure Salem is recording these in compliance with the letter of the provision. The revised document will be subject to discussion at the next meeting.

Also, fortunate for us was the presence of Mollie Haines of the Financial Leadership Action Team (FLAT) and Teri Anderson who is meeting with Salem's Investment people. Both gave us good advice on their respective subjects. Thank you, ladies, for your interest and input.

We are still looking for a bid to remove one of the pieces of playground equipment as it remains a safety hazard.

The side entry door to the Sanctuary is showing its age and needs to be replaced as there is some rot along the bottom. It's always something.

Reverend Emily and Mark Aebig will be attending the Baltimore-Washington Conference UMC Annual Conference this month and will report back on that later on.

The Leadership Team has tentatively planned its annual Strategic Retreat for September. If you have any ideas you want us to discuss, please e-mail Mark Aebig at [aebigm@gmail.com](mailto:aebigm@gmail.com). Please pray for us to have the wisdom to answer Salem's goal and vision going forward.

Mark Aebig, chair

Members: Quinn Anderson, Chet Babylon, Buck Bartley, Churchill Groves, David Heinbuch, Janice Vieira, Hisashi Yamagata

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## EASTER SERMON SERIES

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There are so many things we can only do through God's help. Peter, in an incredible jolt of faith, steps out of his boat to walk towards Jesus. When he realizes how foolish it could be, he immediately begins to sink. By Jesus' help, Peter rises to the surface and back to

safety. This Easter we'll explore Peter's wandering heart, his desire to learn about forgiveness, his love for Jesus, and his denial.

May 4 3<sup>rd</sup> Sunday of Easter: By Thy Help  
*Matthew 14: 22-33*

May 11 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter: Prone to Wander"  
*Matthew 16: 21-23*

May 18 5<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter: Teach me  
*Matthew 18: 15-22*

May 25 6<sup>th</sup> Sunday of Easter: Bind my Wandering Heart  
*Matthew 26: 69-75*

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## MISSIONS

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### The Lord's Table

Surprise! Salem has one more spring volunteer day on Friday, May 2. The location is Epworth United Methodist Church, 9008 Rosemont Dr., Gaithersburg. Contact our admin to sign up or for more info. [admin@salemunitedmethodist.org](mailto:admin@salemunitedmethodist.org). After this last day, we will take a break for the summer.

### Olney HELP Food Needs

Most needed items this first week in May are sloppy joe sauce, canned fruit in juice, frosting for the many cake mixes they have, sweet peas (no sodium), and snacks for kids (popcorn, cookies, granola bars, crackers, raisins, Goldfish, animal crackers, etc.). Also needed are pancake mix, canned pasta especially ravioli, fruit cups, Honey Bunches of Oats, Knorr pasta sides, Ranch dressing, and canned tuna and chicken. Any pantry friendly item (everything you're use to seeing on previous lists) can be donated. Please do not donate expired food – it will only be discarded.

You may leave non-perishable food donations in the box under the table in the sanctuary or in the marked box in the Community Hall. Olney Help has an Amazon wish list where items are listed as Highest Priority or High Priority, making it very easy to shop. [Click here](#) to access "Olney Help Pantry Food 2025" on Amazon.

You can also drop off Giant gift cards at the Giant Customer Service desk, and they will hold them for Olney Help. The same is true for Safeway and Harris Teeter. If you are interested in volunteering or know someone in need, please call their Helpline at 301-774-4334. If you wish to make a financial donation, see their webpage at [www.olneyhelp.org](http://www.olneyhelp.org)

### Prayer Shawls

Prayer shawls are available free for anyone to give to someone who is ill or needs comfort. Feel free to pick one up near the coat rack.

### Greeting cards

On the table leading into the sanctuary, there's a basket full of greeting cards as well as a directory of addresses. Feel free to find the perfect card to bless someone.

### Mini-Missions during Social Hour

Social Hour is a time for fellowship and serving our community. There is a sign-up sheet in the sanctuary if you want to sign up to bring food for any of the Social Hours. Nothing fancy. A dozen donuts cut in half is perfect. FYI, Rev. Emily likes brownies.

Our second Lenten mini-mission was packing personal hygiene kits which we assembled for the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR).

UMCOR is a humanitarian organization that helps alleviate human suffering, one of the two main goals of Global Ministries. They participate in U.S. disaster response, international disaster response, migration and refugee programs, and providing relief supplies.

For our mini-mission, we assembled about 47 hygiene kits which were then shipped off for the next disaster relief effort.



Learning how to package a kit



Rev. Emily, Mollie, and Churchill counting supplies





Churchill, Barbara, Mary Ellen, Rev. Emily, Janice, and Marti sharing the joy

Our third Lenten mini-mission was a special drive to collect food and items for Olney Help from their updated list. We learned about the organization's outreach to the community, the services they provide, and how many families depend upon them for food deliveries.

For their ongoing needs, see the large announcements sheet in the sanctuary, the Olney Help Food Needs section above, and the weekly "What's Happening" email. We'll try to provide you with the latest highest priority items in each weekly email. You can purchase food from your favorite store or from Olney Help's Amazon wish list. Drop off the items at Salem, and as always, a volunteer will take them to the pantry.

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### WEDNESDAY BIBLE STUDY

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"Parables: Putting Jesus's Stories in Their Place" by Josh Scott

When Jesus taught in parables, he was doing more than telling simple morality tales. His stories were grounded in the world in which

he lived and his vision of the Kingdom of God. This book explores six parables that give us a window into Jesus's message and movement, and, once they are heard in their own context, ask what they might mean for us today.

The study began on April 30 with Chapter 1—Wine and Wineskins. The rest of the May sessions are:

Date	Lesson	Reading (due at class session)
May 7	The Parable of the Mustard Seed	Chapter 2
May 14	No class	
May 21	Parable of the Leaven	Chapter 3
May 28	The Wicked Tenant	Chapter 4

This will continue for two more weeks in June.

**New!** To sign up for the class, [click here](#) and fill in your info.

To purchase the book from Cokesbury, click on this [link](#):

To purchase the book from Amazon, click [here](#).

To access the meeting, click on this [Zoom link](#). Fellowship begins at 6:30 P.M. and the study is from 7 to 8 P.M.

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### BELL TOWER REPAIRS

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Last month, from April 7 – 11, 2025, Mr. Craig Hardin of Hardin Construction Inc. demolished and rebuilt Salem's bell tower roof. This completed work represents the first phase of the entire sanctuary re-roofing project. Salem applied for and received

sufficient funding that will become available after July of this year. The church can then move forward with the remaining work.

Mr. Hardin said the rest of the project will take a couple months to demo the sanctuary roof and replace it with a new standing seam metal roof. It should start in about a year.

Wheel with bell behind



New aluminum roof on lower section



A bird's-eye-view of the completed tower with new roofing on upper and lower sections

Photos by Craig Hardin, Hardin Construction

## SANCTUARY RENOVATIONS

As you've just read, the bell tower roof has been replaced. Now the work needs to continue inside the sanctuary. A small group of us are investigating how to

- make pews safer
- make mobility around the sanctuary easier for those of us with walkers, canes, etc.
- space the pews so that accessibility is increased
- make aisles meet fire code
- replace the carpet

Step one of this project has already occurred. Many thanks to Mark Aebig and Steve Patterson for securing all the pews properly to the floor. Have you noticed they don't rock or tip anymore? (Save one which is not secured because it may be moved shortly.) Three professional furniture restorers have provided free inspections, and each agreed the pews are safe as long as they don't tip. *But*, there are some that need repair to prevent this age-related damage from growing worse. And, we all know, they *all* need refinishing. We are working on getting estimates for this work and are thinking about the logistics of how it can be accomplished.

If you would like to participate in this big project, please contact Joan or Rev. Emily, and we'll let you know when the next meeting will be (tentatively May 8 at 12:30 P.M.). Please come and observe, voice your opinion, and consider becoming the head of this group to help spur on this exciting work to preserve our historic church.

Joan Aebig [newsletterjoan@gmail.com](mailto:newsletterjoan@gmail.com)

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## VISITATION TEAM – A NEW MISSION

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### ARE YOU INTERESTED?

Salem's Mission calls for us to express God's love through serving others in the community. That community contains a number of nursing homes and retirement centers. We are exploring a plan to form teams of two to visit church family, loved ones, and the lonely housed in these locations. If you have an interest in becoming part of a visitation team, please contact Vern Schinski at [vschinski5@verizon.net](mailto:vschinski5@verizon.net)

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## GOD JOBS

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If you've been wondering how you can serve our Lord, or our Lord has been equipping you to do something for him, please take a look at our growing list of God Jobs that have become available:

- Scripture reader – to read the scripture during the worship service; frequency approx. five times per year
- Money counter – after the worship service is over, count the money collected during the offering; frequency approx. twice a month
- Person to crochet or knit prayer shawls – make as many as you like; generally meet once a week at JoAnn's home
- Visitation team member – team is currently in planning stages (see message from Vern above)

See Rev. Emily for more info or to express an interest. There is a video about God Jobs on our website under the SERVE tab.

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## CONNECTIONS CLASS

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If you are interested in becoming a member of Salem, a new Connections Class will be scheduled where you'll learn about Methodist vows and discipleship. Contact Rev. Emily with interest or if you have questions.

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## LUNCH FOR SIX

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Would you like to chat with others outside of church while enjoying lunch out? This is the perfect opportunity to socialize during the week. Groups have gone to GrillMarx, Mama Lucia, Silo Falls, Dempsey's and many more. We recently had a wonderful time at Thai Cuisine Restaurant. There is a sign-up sheet for the next group on the bulletin board down the hall from the sanctuary. Bring a friend!

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## READING ROOM

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The Reading Room shelves are full! We cannot accept any more books. The good news is there are well over 400 books and DVDs. It's located upstairs in the Community Hall and is open on Sundays from 8:30 A.M. to noon.

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## GIVING

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Offerings can be sent to:  
Salem United Methodist Church  
12 High Street, Brookeville, MD 20833

If you would like to give by app, you can download the "Vanco Mobile" app and search for Salem United Methodist Church or by its invite code R8A63K.

If you haven't been able to access Vanco and would like to give electronically, we now have a PayPal option. You can use this link:  
<https://paypal.me/SalemBrookeville>

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## CONTACT INFORMATION

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Reverend Emily Hart takes Sabbath days on Saturdays and Mondays for rest and renewal. She also honors time with her husband and dogs in the evening. Please contact her on these days (or after 8:30 P.M. on other days) only in an emergency or a scheduled meeting.

Church Website:  
[www.salemunitedmethodist.org](http://www.salemunitedmethodist.org)

Church Address:  
Salem UMC  
12 High Street  
Brookeville, MD 20833

Church Telephone: (301) 774-7772

Rev. Emily's cell phone: (443) 846-5110

Rev. Emily's e-mail:  
[pastor@salemunitedmethodist.org](mailto:pastor@salemunitedmethodist.org)

Administrative Specialist:  
[admin@salemunitedmethodist.org](mailto:admin@salemunitedmethodist.org)

Music Director:  
[music@salemunitedmethodist.org](mailto:music@salemunitedmethodist.org)

Building Use:  
[building@salemunitedmethodist.org](mailto:building@salemunitedmethodist.org)

Salem Cemetery:  
[salem12cemetery@yahoo.com](mailto:salem12cemetery@yahoo.com)

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The newsletter is prepared by the Salem United Methodist Church Communications Team. Contact any team member with questions or comments. Thanks!

Rev. Emily Hart  
Joan Aebig  
Mollie Haines  
Nancy Joie Wilkie  
Kyle Mauzy, Intern  
Michael, Admin Specialist

Most of the photos in the newsletters are taken by Mark Aebig. But there are many other contributors. Thank you!