



**The Wesley School**  
*Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro UM Church*  
**155 E Mt Harmony Road**  
**Owings, Maryland 20736**

Revised July 2021



## **SCHOOL HANDBOOK - 2021-22**

### **Welcome**

As an outreach ministry of Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church, The Wesley School is inspired by our Wesleyan heritage that believes education is the key to a fuller, richer life for individuals and society. The Wesley School believes in the transformative growth that results from a classroom community. We celebrate multiple learning styles. We are all different..and we all learn from each other.

### **Who We Are**

We are a non-public school that is certified by the Maryland State Department of Education. What is different for the students at the Wesley School is the small group, individualized learning models, and the daily schedule of collaborative learning, self-initiated discoveries, hands-on lessons, and the outdoor classroom.

Our school is a five-day-a-week program operating across a 171 day academic year. We are glad to be able to offer safely using measures provided by the CDC and the State of Maryland document called Maryland Together which is to serve as a guide for all schools in the state.

### **Faith & Love in Practice**

As an outreach of the church, many ask, "Why don't you teach religion?" A hallmark of John Wesley's approach to Christian living was his call to 'put faith and love into practice.' Our school is an expression of faith and love: a classroom community formed to affirm the dignity of every child, lay a moral foundation of critical and creative thinking and teach children how to listen, share and communicate across our differences.

A central theme of our time together is celebration of what we learn from each other. The Wesley approach values the transformative growth that a classroom provides in raising children who will one day accept the faith for themselves. A monthly non-denomination chapel service is led by Rev. Wilkerson. After school activities offered by the church include Kids Bible Academy, Family Mission Projects, Children's Choir, and Summer Camps.



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## **Our Approach**

At the Wesley School, our goal is to develop a child's love for life-long learning. We seek to create the best learning environment for your child so that they have the ability to concentrate, think critically, express ideas and communicate respectfully.

Our small-group classroom (ratio 1:10 for elementary and 1:8 for preschool) makes it possible for us to implement some of the best models of education that encourage collaborative learning, self-initiated discovery, hands-on lessons and individualized learning.



By working with the unique learning profile of each student, we can better understand each child's pattern of development to ensure they master the knowledge and improve their grade level skills.

Our curriculum includes instruction in the areas of Literacy, Math, Social Studies, and Science as well as art, music and physical education. Integration of subjects throughout the curriculum provides more meaningful learning experiences.

### **The Wesley School's Core Values**

*These phrases help to define our school culture and shape what we do:*

**“Do All the Good You Can.”** As our primary core value, the school motto translates into showing understanding, respect, social responsibility, honesty, and kindness as staff, colleagues, and companions on our learning journey.

**“We are all different, and we learn from each other.”** We believe in an inclusive school community that supports multiple learning styles and teaches how to communicate across our differences. We model this through our interactions with each other as staff, and in our partnerships with families. Neurodiversity is celebrated as an opportunity to share our skills and talents and learn from one another.



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### **The Wesley School's Core Values - continued**

*These phrases help to define our school culture and shape what we do:*

**“Life-Long Learners.”** We understand that learning is not confined to childhood or the traditional classroom setting but is a continuous process that takes place across different times and contexts. When academic and life skills are intertwined, we achieve meaningful learning that reflects real life.

**“Developmentally Appropriate.”** We seek to know our children as whole persons and use their emergent ideas and strategies as a basis for developing understanding. We ensure experiences and goals are suited to their learning and development and challenging enough to promote their progress and interest.

**“You can do hard things.”** This motivating core value builds a mindset of resilience and encourages the appropriate risk taking that is needed for growth. It compels children to meet challenges, push through self-limiting beliefs and gain confidence. Children and staff grow to become cheerleaders of their own, and each other's growth. No matter our age, we are capable of more than we believe!

**“Assessment for Learning (AFL).”** We use a continuous assessment loop which creates feedback that can be used to improve children's performance, i.e., inform the 'next steps' for their learning, as well as identify what they did well. Children are involved in setting learning objectives so they can have confidence in what the expectations are and how they will know when objectives have been met. Children are given a variety of opportunities and modalities to show what they know, understand, and can do. They are involved in tracking their own progress so they can enjoy and take ownership of their achievements. Through assessing children's learning, AFL also assesses the learning environment, giving staff opportunities for reflections on how they can promote a specific aspect of learning or make their space more inclusive.

**“Leaders are Readers”** A love of reading is contagious, and our school culture demonstrates a passion for books. We all read, and we all talk about what we have read. We create comfortable, inviting reading spaces for children, and source books which will interest and inspire them. We offer literacy support at every age level. When we teach children to read, we hand children the keys to discovering new knowledge, and to unlocking their imagination!

**“Celebration of Learning.”** At The Wesley School we understand the value and importance of taking pause for reflection. We reflect on what we have learned, the ways in which we learned it, the questions we have answered, and what our areas of strength and struggle have been. This is a practice which lays the foundation for children to become the self-reflective adults we all aspire to become, who can set and



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## **The Goals and Purposes for the Educational Program**

Our guiding principles are founded on the belief that every student is created in the image of God and learning is a life-long process of discovery.

Therefore at The Wesley School,

- (1) we uphold an educational approach that celebrates the diversity of learning styles; valuing each person as a unique child.
- (2) we collaborate as a community of support between students, teachers, and families to succeed in each students academic pursuit.
- (3) we encourage the development of life-long learners with an awareness of personal and collective responsibility to care for others and the world.

The Wesley School encourages discovery of the knowledge and love of God among all people. We are an inclusive and welcoming school where individuals are valued, relationships cherished, and where neuro-diversity is recognized and respected .

## **How we will Achieve our Goal and Purposes**

Our curriculum for all grades draws inspiration from the emergent model of education and the Project Approach, a model introduced in North America by international educators Lilian Katz and Sylvia Chard, which is inspired by European schooling. By working with the unique learning profile of each student, we understand and track each child's pattern of development to ensure they master the knowledge and improve their grade level skills. In addition, our outdoor classroom is an integral part of a creative educational approach that combines heart, mind, intellect and appreciation for diversity in the natural world.

The daily schedule encourages collaborative learning, self-initiated discoveries, hands-on learning, creative & critical thinking. In the preschool and early elementary, imaginative play is incorporated into areas of learning. In the upper school classes, a Constructivist Paradigm of teaching and learning is employed. The goal is for children to construct their own understanding and knowledge of the world through their experiences: asking questions, exploring and assessing what they know. Project work and systematic instruction work together through four, inter-related practices:

1. Systematic knowledge and skills instruction
2. Activities which employ those skills to solve problems in real-life application
3. Child-led projects which investigate and explore topics deeply, integrating a range of subject areas, and providing opportunities for children to transfer the skills bank they have built up, across their projects
4. Project presentation, Celebration, and Assessment for Learning (across all 4 practices)



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## **The School Year and Class Ratios**

The school year begins in September and fulfills the MDSE requirement of 170 instructional days per academic year. We meet Monday - Friday in the education building at Mt Harmony Church and are approved by the Maryland State Department of Education. Elementary academic teachers hold, at minimum, a bachelor's degree from an accredited college or university in addition to a philosophical passion for the unique approach of the program.

Our classroom ratios are as follows: (1:10) kindergarten - second grade (1:8) preschool. These ratios enable us to utilize small group and individualized learning models. In each classroom, students will receive instruction in ELA, (English Language Arts), Math, Social Studies, and Science as well as art, music and physical education.

## **Non-Discrimination**

The Wesley School is an outreach ministry of Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church. We are committed to welcoming, respecting, and celebrating the individuality of all community members. Diversity at The Wesley School is defined as differences in race, ethnic background, religious beliefs, gender, gender identity, sexual orientation, family composition, economic status, political beliefs, learning styles, and physical abilities.

## **ENROLLMENT PROCESS**

### **Steps at a Glance**

- |              |  |
|--------------|--|
| STEP ONE -   | interested families complete an Application for each child. applications are received on a rolling basis.  |
| STEP TWO -   | applications are reviewed, interviews conducted as needed  |
| STEP THREE - | Offer letter and Admissions Packet is sent to family.  |
| STEP FOUR -  | Review the Admissions Packet, complete necessary forms which includes a signed tuition commitment form   |
| STEP FIVE-   | For transfers, we will guide you through process of transfer to The Wesley School. Transcripts are exchanged upon completion of paperwork at your previous local school. |
| STEP SIX-    | Complete Health Forms, pet and photo policy forms and immunization records from your pediatrician before the deadline.   |

## **RETURNING STUDENTS**

- All students who wish to return must annually complete an Application to hold their registered place in the next academic year. There is no application fee. Applications from current students are reviewed in January.
- After applying, family will receive Letter of Enrollment, Tuition Agreement and financial payment options.



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## **2021 - 2022 TUITION**

**half-day preschool**  
**\$4,750 / year**

**Kindergarten -2nd grade**  
**\$9,500 / year**

**3rd - 8th (pending)**  
**\$9,500 / year**

Cost includes resource materials for each grade, Science and Engineering Lab Materials for grades 3rd - 6th. Open Play for AM Drop-off which starts at 7:40am, and 3 School Uniform Shirts with logo.

Not Included: Daily Lunch, Additional Field Trip Fees, Additional School Shirts

### **TUITON PAYMENT OPTIONS**

Payments can be made monthly by check, cash or credit card (credit card fees will apply)

#### **12 Month Schedule Option**

\$500 due by June 4, 2021

\$750 per month begins August 5, 2021 and continuing through July 5, 2022

#### **10 Month Schedule Option**

\$500 due by June 4, 2021

\$900 per month begins August 5, 2021 continuing through May 5, 2022

### **SIBLING DISCOUNT**

All families who have more than one child enrolled in any program will qualify for a sibling discount of 10% off the youngest child's tuition.

### **RETURNING STUDENT DISCOUNT**

In the year 2021-22, students who returned from year 2020-21 will automatically receive a discount.

### **CHURCH MEMBERSHIP DISCOUNT**

Families who hold church membership with Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro UMC may receive a discount.

### **PAY IN FULL DISCOUNT**

Because of our commitment to keep the cost of tuition low, we are not able to offer a discount for families who pay in full.

### **SCHOLARSHIPS**

Scholarships are reviewed and awarded on a rolling basis, it is best to inquire early.

Upon application, please note if you are eligible for scholarship based on any of the following:

- (1) Returning students (enrolled in Wesley School as Kindergartener in 2019-20)
- (2) Parent or grandparent holds church membership at Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro UMC



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## **COMMUNITY COVID-19 RESPONSE**

The Wesley School is grateful to be able to implement, safe, in-person, five-day per week instruction for early preschool and elementary children that follows the guidelines of the Maryland State Department of Education. We ask that you help us be safe by adhering to our community standards for Covid-19 Response.

## **WORKING TOGETHER**

Schools, families and local health department have an important role in working together to slow the spread of diseases and protect each other. Contact tracing is a disease control measure by the Calvert County Health department and supported by The Wesley School. We will join in the process that disrupts the chains of transmission in the following manner:

## **PREVENTATIVE CARE FOR SELF AND OTHERS**

“If sick, stay home.” We encourage staff, teachers and students who are sick to stay home. Any child with respiratory symptoms (cough, runny nose, or sore throat) accompanied by a fever must be excluded from school and may return after the fever associated with these symptoms has resolved in 24 hours (without the use of fever-reducing medicine).<https://www.healthychildren.org/English/family-life/work-play/Pages/When-to-Keep-Your-Child-Home-from-Child-Care.aspx>

Also, we ask each person the health screening questions at the start of the day. Children with a fever (>100.4) or other signs of illness or who have persons in the household with symptoms of COVID-19 will not be admitted to school.

If your child has a fever, we ask that they stay home until 24 hours after fever has ended.

Employees and students who become ill are encouraged to stay at home without fear of reprisal. There will be no awards for perfect attendance as we recognize that such an award could influence safe decision making.

If a student, teacher or staff has arrives at school with a fever, or develops a fever during the school day, they will be asked to be picked up, or if at arrival, they will not be permitted to enter the building.

## **IN THE EVENT OF CONTACT WITH COVID-19**

The Maryland Department of Health and the Calvert County health department uses ‘COVID Link,’ to assist in collecting information about people who test positive for COVID-19 and any individuals they have come into close contact with. If our school has been informed by COVID Link of a connection to a staff, teacher, student or family member of a student, we will follow the protocols set forth by the Health Department.

At any point that our school is informed by the Calvert County Health Department that one of our school community members has been in contact with Covid-19, we could be asked to close one or all of the classrooms.



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## **FACE MASKS**

The Wesley School program has determined, based upon the characteristics of the children in our care, the nature of the outdoor classroom, and the importance of developing facial cue recognition during this early age that we learning is better facilitated without obstruction of face coverings.

## **STUDENT DROP-OFF**

Parents will remain in car unless a child needs assistance with getting out. Student drop off begins at 7:40am. The location of drop off is the back lower level parking lot. Location of pick up or drop is subject to change or adapted, but will be communicated by alert system or through online communication tools or texting.

Preschool drop off (8:25am) and (12:25 pm) is handled at the door of the preschool classroom. Parent or guardian will walk the child to the door. Protocols for preschool drop off will be reviewed and distributed to the families at the Meet + Greet with teacher in August.

## **STUDENT PICK-UP**

Parents will remain in car unless a child needs assistance with getting in. Student pick up begins at 3:00pm. The location of pick up for Grades 1+2 is the back lower level parking lot. Location of pick up for Kindergarten and all PreK classes are the upper level parking lot beside the mailbox. is subject to change or adapted, but will be communicated by alert system or through online communication tools or texting.

## **HAND WASHING**

Upon entering the building each morning, all students will wash hands with soap and water for at least 20 seconds. Hand washing during the day includes after going to the bathroom; before eating; and after blowing your nose, coughing, or sneezing. Our teachers will be employing these across classrooms. We believe that it is important to have creative ways to enforce and teach respiratory etiquette and hand washing that do not distress children or raise anxiety.

## **CLEANING AND DISINFECTING**

Staff and teachers are routinely disinfecting through out the day. Before start of class, and routinely through out the day, surfaces and objects that are frequently touched will be cleaned and disinfected. This may include cleaning objects/surfaces not previously cleaned daily or between use (e.g., doorknobs, light switches, classroom sink handles, countertops). Use of shared objects will be limited when possible and cleaned often.

The outdoor playground has many natural objects such as bamboo, sand, sticks, rock and wood that will not be disinfected. According to the CDC, spraying disinfectant on sidewalks and in parks is not an efficient use of disinfectant supplies and has not been proven to reduce the risk of COVID-19 to the public.



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## **EMERGENCY SCHOOL CLOSING PROCEDURES**

The Wesley uses a wide alert notification system should an emergency issue arise with a need to communicate rapidly. This system will notify you by phone and text from 313-131. A robo-call from the Head of School will explain the emergency. Notifications like these are not used for communicating regular information, and will only be used to announce unscheduled school cancelations, notification of Covid Contact Tracing within our school community, news of inclement weather delays or building emergencies such as loss of heat, water pressure or electricity.

## **INCLEMENT WEATHER**

The Wesley School doesn't necessarily follow the same closings for weather as any of our neighboring county school districts. Our assessment is on a smaller geographical area and depends upon our ability to clear our parking lot and open building safely. We encourage all families to employ best judgement on your safety to reach school. School closings that accumulate may require an extension of the school calendar, as we require a 170 day academic year.

## **PARENT/GUARDIAN-TEACHER COMMUNICATION**

It is very important that you know what your child is discovering in the classroom and that we get to hear your feedback. We use a private software app-based platform Bloomz for your daily announcements as well as photos from our day. You can respond to these from your phone or desktop and also send instant message to your teachers or get in touch with other Wesley families.

We encourage parents/guardians to keep ongoing conversations through Bloomz (rather than using facebook or texting their personal phones). Communication is duplicated to your email address on file.

Teachers are available for parent/guardian-teacher conversations and conferences are formally held three times per year, please see calendar. For emergencies, please call the school office to reach us during the school hours. We do not want your child's teacher to be receiving texts during instructional hours.

## **UNIFORM POLICY**

Children must wear their school uniform every day. The uniform is simple, but does allow room for personal choices. Each uniform shirt or dress should include the patch. Long or short sleeve approved as well as the ruffle collar style for girls. Cardigans or sweaters can be added in winter: white, black, light blue or dark blue.

Children may wear shorts or pants in Khaki, Black or Navy Blue. No denim. Girls may wear leggings, tights or stockings in tan, light or navy blue or back with dresses. Argyle socks in the school colors are also approved.

A Uniform Dress option is available from Children's Place. It is your choice of polo style dress or skater style dress available in short or long sleeve. A school patch can be added to this option.



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Children's Place Colors are NAUTICO and BROOK, TIDAL and DAYBREAK.

Play sneakers are the best for daily wear as we love the outdoors where we can run and climb. Sweaters jackets and hoodies in the color scheme are accepted for layering. Shoes must be closed-toe, no flip-flops or sandals. Shoes must be worn with socks. All children must have rain boots and a light jacket, that remaining at the school. These do not need to be in the color scheme of the school uniform.

Children may wear a long sleeved shirt in blue, black, white, khaki or grey underneath their uniform shirt.

## **OUTDOOR RELATED GEAR**

"There is no such thing as bad weather, only bad gear!" Weather changes and time out of doors is part of our curriculum. It is essential your child has waterproof footwear (rain boots) in the fall and spring. These remain in the school along with a light coat. In winter, boots with insulated lining in the winter and winter jacket.

## **BELONGINGS & ITEMS FROM HOME**

This year, we need to keep each child's belongings separated from others' and in individually labeled containers, cubbies, or areas. To help in this, we ask that children do not bring extra items to school such as toys, blankets. Lunch boxes and water bottle will transported to and from school daily. Rain boots and extra coat or weather related clothing will remain at school (see uniform policy)

Parents or children who would like to bring a backpack to-and-from school each day are welcomed to. There is no uniform or color restriction on backpacks.

## **BIRTHDAYS**

On the first Friday of each month, we will celebrate the birthdays of children (who have birthdays that month) during lunchtime. All the children will be invited to enjoy lunch (pizza, veggies, fruit, crunch snack, juice box, and a baked good.) Sign-up Genius will be sent out for these celebrations.

On the day of your child's birthday, each teacher will recognize the birthday as a class. If you would like to bring something on that day, **we ask you that bring a non-edible treat.**

September 10 (celebrate Aug+Sept)	Feb 4
October 1	March 4
November 5	April 1
December 3	May 6
January 7	June 3 (Celebrate June + July)



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## **ASSESSMENTS /PROGRESS REPORTS**

Student Progress Reports are completed quarterly and are scanned into our online journal called Tapestry which is where students work is uploaded through out the year. Progress Reports will be available for parents to review and respond online as “received” and a hard copy of the original Progress Report may be either (1) handed directly to parent at teacher conference at which time parent may sign off as received. (2) placed in backpacks with school wide communication sent out to look for their report cards and sign off as received. (3) mailed out by the school with signature required which is best when students have moved out of the area or are no longer attending the school.

Parents are encouraged to review and add comments to their child’s progress through the Tapestry account.

Parents are permitted by law to request a review of their child’s Student File, but requests should be directed to the Head of School for arrangement.

## **QUARTERLY PROGRESS REPORTS + PARENT TEACHER CONFERENCES**

First Quarter Ends on November 5  
Progress Reports go out November 9  
Parent Teacher Conferences November 11 (no school this day)  
Second Quarter Ends on Jan 28  
Progress Reports go out Feb 1  
Third Quarter Ends on April 6  
Progress Reports go out April 12  
Fourth Quarter Ends on June 10  
Progress Reports go out June 17 by US Mail and Tapestry

## **AFTER SCHOOL CLUBS**

There will be clubs, including Kids Bible Academy, available for sign-up through out the year. Information will be sent out for families to sign up in advance.

## **AFTER SCHOOL CARE**

Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro UM Church offers after school care for children who need to stay until 5pm. The cost is \$30 a week, space is limited.



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## **Our Staff**

### **Reverend Faith Wilkerson**

#### **Head of School**

Pastor Faith is an ordained elder in the United Methodist Church and serves as Chaplain of the North Beach Volunteer Fire Department as well as the Senior Pastor of two vibrant congregations in southern Maryland. Centenary United Methodist Church in Shady Side and Mt Harmony-Lower Marlboro United Methodist Church. She is a native Ohioan, attended Wyoming Seminary College Preparatory School in Kingston, PA as well as Capital University in Columbus Oh. She is a 2000 graduate of Wesley Theological Seminary In Washington DC and has served churches in Falls Church Virginia, Washington DC, and Maryland. She and her husband Donnie, who works for Calvert County Public Schools have a blended family of three teenage girls and two dogs.

“I’m so grateful to lead a very unique place where the whole child is celebrated and valued. Jesus held a special place in his ministry for children and so do we. I strive to pattern my leadership after his welcoming example for the church.”

### **Jamie Cowan**

#### **Kindergarten Teacher**

Miss Jamie obtained a Bachelors in Elementary Education through the University of Maryland College Park, and holds a Maryland professional teacher certificate. Her continued education includes a Graduate Certificate in Early Childhood & Teaching Adults. Experience includes teaching elementary school in Prince George's County, operating a home based child care, and tutoring struggling students.

Jamie, and her firefighter husband, are raising two children in their Maryland hometown. Her passion is to help raise the next generation of happy, healthy, and excited, life-long learners.

"I believe we can all do our best to help children build a strong foundation for a life of loving to learn through engaging, playful, and developmentally appropriate, learning opportunities."

### **Megan Knicley**

#### **First Grade Teacher**

Miss Megan holds a Bachelors degree from College of Notre Dame of Maryland and has obtained a Masters in Technology Education from University of Maryland-University College as well as a Masters in Educational Psychology from Northcentral University in California. She has most recently been the director of Childcare at Station Imagination in Lothian, providing curricula instruction for preschool age children. She has taught 5th grade at Edgewater Elementary in Anne Arundel County.

### **Erin McClelland**

#### **Second Grade Teacher**

Miss Erin graduated from McDaniel College in Westminster, Maryland and has taught grades K-5th in Anne Arundel County Schools and on the eastern shore. Erin lives in Huntingtown with her husband, a firefighter, and they are raising three children. Erin looks forward to being on the teaching staff of a school with small class sizes where the whole child is valued.



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## **Kassie Evans**

### **Early Childhood Special Educator**

Miss Kassie obtained her Masters from Fordham University and holds a Maryland professional teacher license. She has taught early childhood special education for 10yrs in New York City and has largely focused on working with children on the Autism spectrum as well as a variety of special needs and helping to included these children in general education settings.

Kassie and her husband Scott, who is in the Secret Service, are raising two little boys. They have resided in Maryland for three years.

“I am very passionate and excited to be a part of the Wesley school! I believe in helping children to love learning and have fun doing it!”

## **Kristin Benner**

### **Special Educator**

#### **Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT) in training**

Miss Kristin obtained dual Bachelor's Degrees in Criminology and Sociology from the University of Maryland, College Park in 2008. She went on to teach for a variety of non-profit organizations, and became certified in Special Education in 2013 through Trinity University in DC. She worked for Calvert County Public Schools for 7 years and earned her Advanced Professional Certification and Masters of Arts Degree in Administration in Special Education (Notre Dame of Maryland University , 2016) while tenured in the county. Kristin is currently working toward certification as Certified Academic Language Therapist (CALT).

“My passion is to help my students cultivate their excitement for learning. The best part of my job is being able to celebrate all the unique ways my students grow and explore!”

## **Jennifer Wolf**

### **Resource Teacher**

Miss Jenn studied at Anne Arundel Community college while raising her amazing six children, one who attends our school. She uses her creative gifts to lead our MakerSpace that provides space for students to design, create, experiment, build and invent. She enjoys sewing, gardening, and making goats milk products along with raising her children.

## **Julie McGaughran**

### **Family Ministry Director**

Julie obtained her Bachelors in Religious Studies and Psychology at Mountain State University and has been a part of Mt Harmony Church since childhood. She answered God's call to minister to children and youth in 2015 when she became a part of church staff. Julie is raising her daughter, who attends The Wesley School. Along with being Director of After School Programs, Julie is also "second mom" to dozens of middle and high school youth who attend her mid-week youth group, summer camps and winter retreats.