



Quarterly Newsletter of Epworth United Methodist March/April/May 2021

Re-opening!

BREAKING NEWS! Epworth's Staff and Governing Board have agreed upon a date to re-open for worship! We will open on March 21, the week before Palm Sunday for a single, masked, socially-distanced worship service at 10:00 a.m. We will also continue to live-stream via Facebook and YouTube. Although the Governor has allowed 50% capacity, we still need to social distance, so our seating capacity will remain at 116. We will ask you to reserve your space, just like we did in November, either online or by calling the office. We also will continue to ask the screening questions and take temperatures. Holy Week services will be held both in-person and live-streamed on Thursday and Friday. Watch for more information. If we consistently have more than 116 who wish to attend, we will add an additional service to make room for ALL.

Small groups may also now meet in person in the building, as long as the leaders follow the protocol: temperature screening, questions, masks, and social distance. Other ministries may also return with the same procedures. Contact Debbie in the office to ensure you have a room large enough to social distance. We will not allow outside groups in until July 1.

Additionally, we will wait until summer to allow for food during fellowship hour or meetings. We will continue to follow the State of Delaware guidelines, so we recognize that these restrictions might change. However, we wanted to keep you up-to-date with where we are as a congregation, which Explores Faith and Embraces Community. Thank you for being a vital part of our amazing Epworth Community.

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 2021 Worship Schedule

3/7/21 & 3/14/21

10:00 a.m. On-Line Worship
3/21/21

10:00 a.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line
(with COVID restrictions)
(reservations required)

Lenten Worship Schedule:

(all services at Epworth require reservations and
need to adhere to COVID restrictions)

Palm/Passion Sunday - 3/28/21

10:00 a.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line

Holy Thursday - 4/1/21

7:00 p.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line

Good Friday - 4/2/21

7:00 p.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line

Easter Sunday - 4/4/21

10:00 a.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line

This Newsletter is sponsored by:

The United Methodist Women



EPWORTH
REHOBOTH BEACH
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Pastor Vicki's Views

Hitting the Wall



In 2002, my sister, Laurie, and I ran the Philadelphia marathon. We had both trained well, logging the same miles on our long runs each weekend, and including hill and interval training. We also run at about the same pace. We got up early that morning, ate a bagel and drank plenty of fluids, and lined up in the queue based on our approximate pace. Our families met us at miles 7 and 13, and then went to the Franklin Institute to wait until we finished.

At around mile 20, Laurie “hit the wall.” Hitting the wall involves depleting your glycogen reserves, causing exhaustion and muscle fatigue. She had only trained drinking water so was afraid to drink the Gatorade offered at the water stations. I had trained drinking Gatorade, so I knew I’d be okay. When she hit the wall, I asked her what she wanted to eat when we finished the race. She replied: “Ben and Jerry’s Chunky Monkey.” So, I told her to focus on running each next step to my cadence—“chun-ky mon-key.” I chanted that phrase for the last six miles of the race and we finished together.

I share this story with you now because I feel as though we, the Epworth community, have hit a wall with the pandemic. During the first wave, we felt that adrenaline rush of fight, flight, or freeze and we pulled together as a team to handle the challenges. We adapted quickly to Zoom meetings and virtual worship. Many of our community had to acquire a Facebook account to be able to comment in the live chat of worship. And, we enjoyed greeting everyone in that virtual space.

Now, however, we seem to have reached pandemic fatigue, running out of our emotional reserves and our patience. At staff meetings, we often respond to what may seem like irrational behavior with the explanation—“COVID.” We give people extra grace and even more patience because we know we have all become weary during this time.

I read a Harvard Business Review article explaining that during this second wave of COVID, now that we have settled in for the long-haul, we need to use different emotional muscles to keep going. The author wrote that we need to utilize our endurance skills now, to tap into resilience and strengthen our resilience skills as a community. One of the reasons I wanted us to focus on discipleship, and especially spiritual disciplines, for the year included strengthening our inner reserves and resiliency.

Research demonstrates that five particular practices improve our resiliency. These five practices include: changing the narrative, facing our fears, practicing self-compassion, meditating, and cultivating forgiveness. We all know that we can tell a story several ways. When my children were little and would share a difficult story, I would invite them to tell it a different way and make up several possible endings. This practice prevents us from catastrophizing the events of our lives. We may not know that facing our fears actually makes us braver. So much of our fear arises out of what might possibly happen rather than our previous experiences. For example, statistics show that flying in an airplane is safer than driving, and yet many people fear flying. Facing these fears teaches our brain to trust our experience.

As followers of Jesus, the final three practices sound familiar— self-compassion, meditation, and forgiveness. We know that God’s love for us remains unconditional and eternal, so we can have compassion on ourselves. God’s promise to forgive our past and to provide for our future helps us to meditate by remaining mindful and fully in the present, instead of ruminating on the past or worrying about the future. Finally, Jesus offered his life so that we could both receive and give forgiveness. These three practices come in very handy during this final stage of COVID, when so many have hit the wall.

Finally, we have hope in Christ Jesus. Romans 5:3-5 reads: “And not only that, but we also boast in our sufferings, knowing that suffering produces endurance, and endurance produces character, and character produces hope, and hope does not disappoint us, because God’s love has been poured into our hearts through the Holy Spirit that has been given to us.”

How Do We Imagine Communicating?

Throughout the past year of the COVID-19 pandemic and quarantine, we have been working hard to learn and use new and old technologies to keep us connected as a community of faith – when it has become unsafe to connect in many of our typical ways. Our staff and church leaders have invested time and money into new and improved technologies to find new channels of communication and improve some of our established ones. Every member and friend of Epworth has had to learn new skills and navigate unfamiliar software and hardware to figure out how to attend worship experiences, small groups, or meetings, keep up with church happenings, and especially connect with each other.

Recently, we have assembled a group of leaders to reassess our communications policy and methods at Epworth. We have learned some interesting things about how members and friends of Epworth make use of the diverse array of communications tools available to us. We will be sharing the policy and background information as soon as our Governing Board has a chance to discuss and approve it later this month. What I hope to share in this article is a broad comparison of two communications metaphors – a spoked wheel and a network of intersecting ripples – and what that means for the way we connect with God and with each other at Epworth and in our world.

The Wheel

Most of us at Epworth grew up on the communications metaphor of a central hub emanating to the outer rim via a network of one-way spokes. The hub may have been a broadcast TV network or a publishing company, book, show, pastor, teacher – but the idea was always the same: content flows one-way from the hub to the masses. Information could be controlled, and as long as you could receive the broadcast, keeping up with this limited content wasn't too difficult. The price we paid for this kind of simplicity was silence.



The Ripple Effect

The Information Revolution has unleashed a bewildering network of hubs, content creators, and multi-directional communications connections. As I envisioned this article, it was difficult to imagine a metaphor (web was too centralized, the connections too straightforward and a kaleidoscope too confusing). Now there are as many ideas/content as there are connected human beings, and those of us who are used to the hub feel the loss of control acutely. In addition to a voice, the Information Revolution has placed the responsibility of curating and vetting information into all our hands (something the hub used to handle exclusively). This is the price we pay now – the vital necessity of discernment in a world filled with spam, scams, and disinformation – to



say nothing of the sheer, overwhelming volume of information in this vast sea.

Discernment is our birthright – attending to the spirit of truth as we speak or listen, move or be still in concert with God's will. This is our responsibility in the time God has given to us amidst the cultural opportunity and chaos that is the Information Revolution. God gave you a voice – listen, speak, and act – these ripples echo in eternity. (Paraphrased from Marcus Aurelius, Meditations.)

Vaccinations for Underserved @ Epworth

On Saturday, February 13, we hosted a three-hour 300-vaccination distribution session by Beebe Healthcare targeting underserved people (minorities, elderly, deaf and hard of hearing, persons with limited mobility, or who are unable to drive). There were no walk-ins. Together with First State Community Action and Village Volunteers, Mickie McManamon (staff leader for Caring Ministries) organized volunteers to set up appointments for 10% of the total number of vaccinations. She worked hard with only 72 hours' notice to ensure our most vulnerable people were included, according to the state guidelines. In addition to Mickie, Gwen Osborne (staff lead for Belonging Ministries) and Ruth Ann Curley, we give thanks to God especially for Chet Sprague and Bob Mitchell, who endured the cold to direct people in our parking lot.

EPWORTH REHOBOTH BEACH

Demonstrating Care—Moments Matter

Written by Linda D'Aloisio

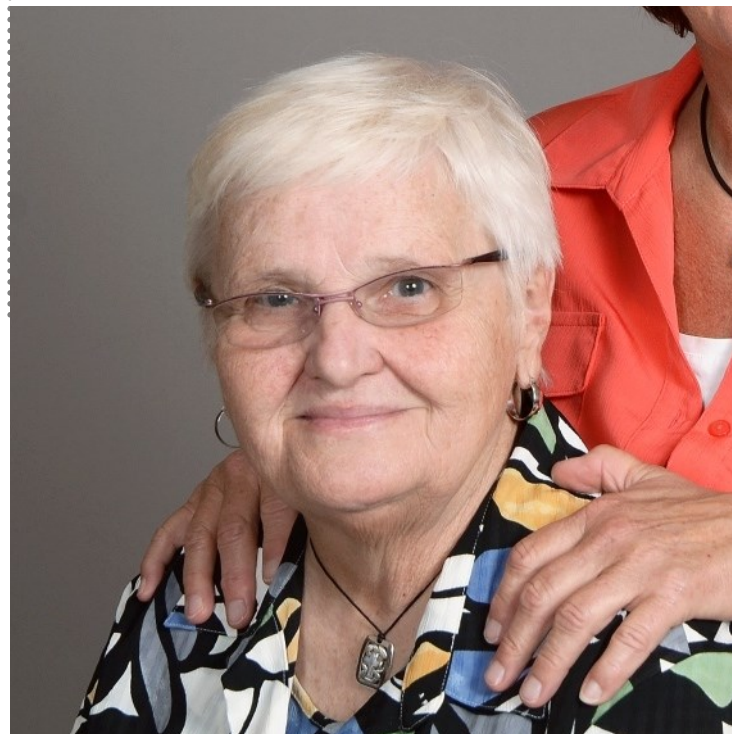
Card Writer – Karen West

In this age of text messaging, email, and communicating via social media, there is still nothing like receiving a personal, handwritten note in the mail. Epworth's team of card writers is dedicated to providing those words of support and comfort to members of our congregation and others as part of the church's Demonstrating Care ministry. One member of this team, Karen West, has been an especially prolific card writer, having sent over 500 cards on behalf of the church between Thanksgiving and Christmas alone, and 200 cards to those on her personal card list. The physical toll the card writing has taken is now requiring that Karen take a bit of a break from this task, so we took this opportunity to speak with her about what participating in this ministry means to her.

In addition to birthday greetings and other types of cards, Karen has crafted messages for inclusion in the food baskets that are distributed to those in need. She tries to change the wording each week so that frequent recipients will see a different message each time and feel there is a personal connection with the Epworth family. Although she could use printed messages in her cards, she prefers to stick with handwritten notes. When asked where she gets her ideas and inspiration, Karen said she has contacted former pastors and others for suggestions and has also used Google for sources of inspirational messages. For those of us who sometimes have trouble writing condolence, supportive, or other more difficult types of notes, Karen suggests trying to say something to give the recipient some peace or comfort, or something to make them feel good about themselves or good in the moment. A recipient who was having a bad day once told another church member that they lined up the cards on their coffee table and looking at the cards gave them more strength to get through the day. When she was forced to cut back on the number of cards she was writing and became concerned that she wasn't doing enough of God's work, she

became inspired by the lyrics in a song performed by Bon Jovi and Jennifer Nettles, "When You Can't Do What You Do, Do What You Can." (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FjbqMHATdsk>) For now, doing what she *can* means limiting her card writing to a couple dozen cards a week, but with the help of physical therapy and perhaps a new chair, she hopes eventually to get back to "doing what she does,"—75-100 cards a week.

Knowing how much recipients value these cards and caring notes, Karen would like to see more people get involved in card writing. This activity is an important part of the Demonstrating Care ministry's mission to "put our faith into action as we demonstrate care in the community and in our church." Sending so many cards can become expensive, Karen suggests that those who want to help in ways other than writing cards can donate them by dropping them off at the bayside entrance to the church on the days that food and other donations are accepted (Tuesdays, 9:00-noon and Thursdays, 2:00-4:00pm). Cards may have illustrations on the front but should be blank inside. Anyone interested in becoming a member of the card-writing team should contact Mickie McManamon at 302-227-7743, ext. 107 or mmcmanamon@eumcrb.org.



Stephen Ministry - Moments Matter

Jayne Tamburello

I have always wanted to help alleviate suffering. When I was eight, I tried to turn my brown-haired friends into blonds by creating some crazy concoction because they hated their hair color. Needless to say, their hair didn't turn blond, but I tried! At age twelve, I made a special yarrow tea to help a garden snake stop bleeding after it was run over by a lawn mower. He hissed at me as I poured it on him, so I'm not sure my efforts were fully appreciated, despite good intentions. Years later, I entered graduate school and became a holistic healer, hoping to alleviate suffering by curing people of illness.

In 2018, to my shock, I was diagnosed with a very aggressive cancer. How could this be? I was taught and then 'preached' to others, to avoid chemicals, eat organic, meditate, exercise, etc., to stay cancer-free. I did everything that I was supposed to do, so how did this happen? I felt betrayed and incredibly angry at God. I quit my practice.

However, a friend lifted me out of the dark hole that I found myself in by being there for me. He didn't judge my anger or try to cure or fix me by telling me what to do. He listened and asked God to release my fear and anger. Though I knew only God is the Cure-Giver, he could sit with me in my anger and self-pity until I was ready to come out. I did come out, and now I love God more than ever and am so faith-filled. My friend was not a Stephen Minister, but he did what a Stephen Minister does, which is why I am one now.

So, if you want blond hair, I don't recommend coming to me. But if you want someone who will hold Jesus' hand with you as you exit your own dark hole, someone to be with you and listen no matter how long it takes, my fellow Stephen Ministers and I are here for you. I have learned to be a Care-Giver, knowing that God alone is the Cure-Giver.

Val Linder

What is Stephen Ministry? It is "bringing Christ's healing love to people who are hurting in a one-on-one confidential and caring relationship."

I became aware of Stephen Ministry in 2003, when my husband and I joined a small church in Carroll County, Maryland, where I was impressed by the dedication and love shown by those Stephen Ministers. I began to feel a call to share God's love by helping hurting people in difficult situations. Several years later, while attending a different church, I was asked if I was interested in becoming a Stephen Minister. After prayer and soul searching, I decided it was the right time to serve.

I got my first Care-Receiver following my extensive training in 2012. The person I "walked with," suffered a sense of loss due to advanced aging. For almost two years we explored faith and God's love. We prayed, studied Bible verses, and I listened to her express her feelings. Mostly, I was a consistent presence for her every week.

In 2015, my younger brother died suddenly, devastating me. After much thought and many tears, I decided I needed a Stephen Minister, becoming a Care-Receiver. My Stephen Minister 'walked' beside me, listening to stories about my brother and how his death affected me. She truly was a blessing. We met weekly for about six months until I felt that I could better handle my feelings.

So, what does Stephen Ministry mean to me? It means care, love, and faith. I have now been called to this ministry at Epworth, overseeing the program as a Leader, and trusting in God's guidance for skill, wisdom, and compassion.



Stephen Ministry - Moments Matter

Curt Smith

I became involved with the Stephen Ministry at my previous church in northern Virginia, after the program had just been introduced there. I had been through a very difficult time a few years earlier, including a bout with depression and the sudden death of a friend in the congregation, so the program seemed something both the church and I could benefit from. While I regularly volunteered at the church ushering, greeting, and running the coffee hour with my wife, etc., I had never done a ministry like Stephen Ministry. It seemed something I could do. Having experienced intense emotional distress, I thought I could help others going through their own crises.

I did not really know what to expect, and the training showed me this was indeed a different ministry. It was more rigorous than I had expected. One of the unexpected benefits was the experience of bonding with my “classmates,” as we went through training, and then as we helped train the following class of Care-Givers.

When I was a Stephen Minister in VA, I had three Care-Recipients. The first was an older gentleman who had served in WWII, eventually retiring from the Army. As I had served as an Army Officer (and was still a Reservist), it gave us an important common bond. Although he was not suffering from a severe spiritual or emotional crisis, he was struggling with issues of aging and loneliness. During the two years I visited with him, he looked forward to my weekly visit for the company. We talked about some secular topics as well as sacred ones. I remember our discussions on Scripture and prayer. It was interesting to have the perspective of a member of “The Greatest Generation.”

These positive experiences led me to volunteer as a Stephen Minister at Epworth. I look forward to working with a Care-Receiver here very soon. Could that man be you?

Environment—Moments Matter

Written by Bob Paulen

LOVE YOUR MOTHER...EARTH!

“The focus of these articles is on the positive impact every single individual can have on our beloved planet. Here are 5 Simple Steps to Save the Bay & Ocean!

- ◆ **Make Your Yard Bay/Ocean Friendly!** The less you use chemical fertilizers, herbicides and pesticides, the better it is for the Bay and Ocean.
- ◆ **Scoop it!** Cleaning up after your pets will keep harmful nutrients and bacteria out of waterways. Your neighbors will be happy, too!
- ◆ **Practice Safe Disposal!** Oils, paints, cleaners and drugs never should be flushed down a drain. Check with your local government or waste management service for proper disposal.
- ◆ **Flush Smart!** Repair all plumbing leaks to reduce water waste. If you have a septic field, make sure it is serviced regularly. Failing systems can leak into the groundwater...thus the Bay/Ocean.
- ◆ **Drive Deliberately!** One quarter of all nitrogen entering the Bay/Ocean comes from air pollution, and cars are a big contributor. Consolidate trips & carpool.



Christmas Joy/Food Ministries Moments Matter

Written by Debbie Hunt-Weber

Christmas Joy/Food Ministries Christmas Food Baskets

This year because of COVID, our Food Ministries and Christmas Joy programs got together to create take-out Food Boxes for our community in need. Just like they did for Thanksgiving, Epworth gave out dinners for 501 people. Amazing.



Of course, Epworth being Epworth, they decorated outside to make everything festive. Our giving continues, despite the Pandemic.



Statistical Moments Matter

by Debbie Hunt-Weber

After the end of each year, we gather statistical information to send to our Conference Office. It has always been very encouraging when compiling this because Epworth is so involved in so many different things. We thought that 2020 would be very different because of COVID, but it really wasn't. Once again, the wonderful volunteers of Epworth stepped forward to make sure our community was served during a pandemic. Here are some of these statistics: Although we were not able to hold Vacation Bible School in 2020, we were still able to hold Confirmation classes and confirmed 6 teens.

We continued to have 450 amazing volunteers that served in missions to 15,914 persons in our community through outreach, justice and mercy.

Since we could not have a sit down dinner for Thanksgiving, our Turkeyville group boxed Thanksgiving dinners for 506 people. If you think this was enough—they didn't and decided to box dinners this year for Christmas too. They boxed enough for 501 people.

Even though we couldn't sponsor the ISOP dinners this past summer, we still managed to serve the following:

Christmas Joy helped 294 people

Fill the Bus helped 300 of our school kids

West Side New Beginnings program helped 69 children

Leashes of Love reached out by cards to 90 patients

Our Food & Love program fed an astonishing amount—7,813 people

Because of on-line services, we were able to reach 90 deaf persons

Our Good Samaritan program reached out and helped 6,216 people

How blessed we are.



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Find our Newsletter online at www.eumcrb.org/newsletters