



**Quarterly Newsletter of Epworth United Methodist
March/April/May 2022**

Huge Thank You

The Epworth Staff would like to give our wonderful congregation a huge THANK YOU for the very generous Christmas Gift of Love. Even through these tough times, your love for us shines through and warms our hearts. Thank you, thank you, thank you.

Mask Update

Effective Sunday, Feb. 27, masks will be optional and recommended in our facilities Sundays and throughout the week. Though we are no longer requiring masks, we encourage everyone to wear them around our children.

***VISION: Explore Faith,
Embrace Community***

***MISSION: Inviting, Belonging,
Connecting, Caring***

All Means All

As a [Reconciling Ministries Network](#) congregation, we welcome all people, regardless of sexual orientation or gender identity, to share their prayers, presence, gifts, service, and witness.

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Epworth.faith

MARK YOUR CALENDAR

March 2022 Worship Schedule 3/6/22 and forward

9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line
(masks optional and recommended)

Lenten Worship Schedule:

Ash Wednesday—3/2/22

12:00 p.m. & 6:00 p.m. at Epworth and on-line

Easter Egg Hunt—4/9/22

Time TBA—in the morning

Palm/Passion Sunday - 4/10/22

9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line

Holy Thursday - 4/14/22

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

Good Friday - 4/15/22

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

Easter Sunday - 4/17/22

9:00 & 11:00 a.m. Worship at Epworth and on-line



Pastor Vicki's Views



Isaiah 43:1-3a "But now thus says the Lord, he who created you, O Jacob, he who formed you, O Israel: Do not fear, for I have redeemed you; I have called you by name, you are mine. When you pass through the waters, I will be with you; and through the rivers, they shall not overwhelm you; when you walk through fire you shall not be burned, and the flame shall not consume you. For I am the Lord your God, the Holy One of Israel, your Savior..."

Overwhelmed. Burned out. Anxious. Exhausted. Depressed. I hear these words much more frequently than I used to before the pandemic. We tire of being isolated and distrustful of one another. We long for life to go back to "normal." And, while we see light at the end of the pandemic tunnel, such as masks becoming optional, life may be far from returning to normal.

Of course, all this isolation has impacted our mental health, too. Cases of clinical depression and anxiety continue to rise, and with it, substance abuse as a way to self-medicate, as well as the need for counselors. As Christians, we often downplay mental illness, falsely believing that if we have Jesus in our lives, we have no need to be depressed. This false assumption leads many Christians to struggle with mental illness in silence and alone. Yet, scripture repeatedly describes people going through raging rivers or burning flames or a

downcast soul. And, Jesus specifically calls us to be a healing community.

Henri Nouwen writes that: "A Christian community is therefore a healing community not because wounds are cured and pains are alleviated, but because wounds and pains become openings or occasions for a new vision." Our task does not involve taking away the wounds, which often lies beyond our control, but allowing the wounds to become shared. This sharing of one another's burdens both eases the pain and strengthens our experience of God's love in community.

Sadly, for many Christians, we struggle to bear another's pain. Sometimes people feel the need to "fix" the problem so that they do not need to hear about it anymore. Other times, people minimize the concern of another, either by telling them they should be grateful or by sharing a story of someone who has it "worse" than they do. Another unhelpful approach involves "spiritualizing" the problem, telling the person they merely need to pray more or read the scripture more.

How, then, can you help a brother or sister who is struggling with depression or anxiety? You can give them the gift of an empathetic, non-judgmental listening heart. Mirroring phrases, by summarizing or rephrasing their words, help a person feel heard or even clarify their own feelings. If you find yourself getting anxious, practice deep breathing so that you can focus on their pain and not be distracted by your discomfort. Continue to invite and include people even when they turn invitations down. Sometimes, even if they do not have the emotional energy to participate, it helps them to know they have not been forgotten. Offer hopeful words, not dismissing their pain, but reassuring them of the presence of a loving God who will not leave them, who calls them by name, and remains in the struggle with them. Encourage them to seek help, either through counseling or support groups. Finally, do not discourage them if their doctor recommends medication. Sometimes the chemical imbalance in our brains can only be addressed with medicine, a gift which God gives to us through science.

Remember God's promise: "*Because you are precious in my sight, and honored, and I love you... Do not fear, for I am with you...*" *Isaiah 43:4a, 5a*

Pastor Bo—Spiritual Moments Matter



Lent, the 40 day season of preparation for the Easter celebration of the resurrection of Jesus begins Wednesday, March 2 this year. This year, in lieu of our daily Lenten devotionals, we offer the following three suggestions for a daily Lenten discipline that we can all join in together. The first comes from an organization we are participating in with pastoral colleagues in the Baltimore-Washington and Peninsula-Delaware Conferences to practice spiritual wellness called The Living Compass.

This Lent season The Living Compass offers a daily email devotional, Living Well Through Lent 2022: Letting Go With All Your Heart, Soul, Strength, and Mind. The devotional includes reflections from: Robbin Brent, The Rt. Rev. Brian Cole, Amy Cook, Dr. Sarah Robinson Flick, The Rev. Jan Kwiatkowski, William “Father Bill” Miller, The Rev. Dr. Scott Stoner, The Rev. Mary Bea Sullivan, The Rev. Benjamin Thomas, The Rev. Ed Thompson, and Liz Ward.

You will receive 47 daily emails, one for each day of Lent, plus Easter. The emails will begin on Ash Wednesday, March 2, 2022. You can unsubscribe at any time.

Go to [Lent — Living Compass](#) and scroll down to sign up for the email daily devotional deliveries and to join a Facebook discussion group. In this group, participants will have a chance to share their responses to the prompts in the daily readings, and also the chance to receive additional material for reflection. You may also order a free electronic copy of the 80-page Lent devotional guide here: [Living Well Through Lent 2022 - 8.5x11 \(PDF VERSION\) – Living Compass](#)

Lent Photo-a-Day 2022

Do you generally give something up during Lent? Would you consider adding in a practice? **This second community suggestion involves a daily creative practice throughout Lent of seeing with spiritual eyes.**

Lent, the season of the Christian Year that is typically observed as a time of simple living, prayer and fasting leading up to Easter, begins on Ash Wednesday (March 2, 2022). But what is Lent really about?

Many spend the time in self-examination and reflection as modeled by Jesus in Matthew 4: 1-11 where he prayed and fasted for 40 days before beginning his ministry.

What happened during those 40 days of fasting and praying in the wilderness? Our friends at the Upper Room say that maybe Jesus needed some time with God to sort through the major changes happening in his life. Maybe he needed a break from family, friends, and his regular routine in order to see God (and himself) more clearly. Maybe he sought more time with God as he searched for direction and answers to the question that we, too have from time to time: “Who am I called to be?”

We, too are invited into this time of introspection. Join this photo-a-day challenge and share with the community how you perceive each word of the day? No explanation needed. After all, a picture is worth a thousand words. Tag us on your Instagram, Facebook, TikTok or on Twitter with **#rethinkchurch**.

Finally, the United Methodist Discipleship Ministries has prepared a weekly [Family Lent Devotions Overview](#) for churches and families to experience together. The hope is that these will guide families into times of reflection and renewal during this holy season. Each devotional introduces the weekly Gospel reading, a spiritual discipline, practical ways to practice the spiritual discipline at home, and a family prayer. May this be a holy time for you and your family as you get your hearts and homes ready for the mystery of Easter.

RETHINKCHURCH [®] photo-a-day		LENT 2022 MAR 2- APR 17
March	17 - LIVING	April
2 - FULL	18 - PLANTED	1 - KEEP
3 - TEMPTED	19 - LOOKING	2 - ALWAYS
4 - ALONE	20 - CELEBRATE	3 - CELEBRATE
5 - PROTECT	21 - WITH	4 - SENT
6 - CELEBRATE	22 - SHARE	5 - BRING
7 - PRAY	23 - NEED	6 - NEEDS
8 - DAZZLING	24 - FILLED	7 - BLESSED
9 - GLORY	25 - ENOUGH	8 - PEACE
10 - AWAKE	26 - COMPASSION	9 - SILENT
11 - GOOD	27 - CELEBRATE	10 - CELEBRATE
12 - CHOSEN	28 - RAISED	11 - PREPARED
13 - CELEBRATE	29 - SERVED	12 - FOUND
14 - PRESENT	30 - ANOINTED	13 - HERE
15 - SACRIFICE	31 - CARED	14 - AMONG
16 - REPENT		15 - REMEMBER
		16 - BELIEVE
		<i>Easter AMAZED</i>

SHARE YOUR PHOTO EACH DAY AND TAG WITH #RETHINKCHURCH

EPWORTH REHOBOTH BEACH

Youth—Moments Matter

Written by Mickie McManamon

Epworth Youth and Polar Bear Plunge

Sunday, February 6, 2022, was so much nicer, if you compare it to the previous Sunday's 24 degrees and 14" of snow. Yes, Polar Bear Plunge Sunday, Feb. 6, did not have snow, but the temperature was a very brisk 32 degrees and the ocean's temperature was a chilly 37 degrees. Team Epworth, led by our youth group, were not to be discouraged. Right after the service they huddled in the youth room to prepare for their trip to the very cold sands of Rehoboth Beach. Our Kitchen@Epworth prepared a warm meal of spaghetti, salad, dessert, and drinks to prepare them for their task, plunging into the cold Atlantic Ocean (37 degrees). Soon after lunch they journeyed by caravan to Baltimore Ave and to the very frigid sands of the beach. Our youth were joined with other church members who also were plunging for Special Olympics Delaware. In total the group raised over \$4000. The money raised will provide sports activities for over 4000 Special Olympians in our state, one of those athletes is a member of our church. Once the countdown to the 1:00 p.m. plunge began, robes, sweats, and towels were discarded.



Youth - Moments Matter (cont.)



As the buzzer sounded there were over 2700 hearty Polar Bears that ran to the ocean. Some only made sure their toes got wet but the hearty Epworth bears took a full dive into the cold water! This brave group came back to their towel holders with big smiles and lots of laughter. As they headed back to warm cars and hot showers at home there was talk of making next year's Epworth Polar Bear Team bigger and better! 2022 Plunge facts: 3244 Bears raised over \$1 millionand our youth helped!! Epworth Youth Group...you are the best!!





Church Moments Matter

by Murray Archibald

The Source Collaborative Streams of Living Water

Hello Church! I am excited about The Source Collaborative (TSC), and our Epworth team is committed to keeping you up to date on the progress.

Take note please, I said, “the” progress, not “our” progress, because TSC is not about a team of people telling you how to conduct your ministries, services, and programs. The Source Collaborative dreams of inspiring all of us to thrive—as a church; as the awesome, creative, living body of Christ and people of God.

The Source Collaborative brings together a cohort of churches from Delaware, Maryland, Virginia, and West Virginia, and their coaches, Wesley Seminary staff, and Wesley student research associates, for a two-year program.

The first year we will spend understanding who we are, exploring community, and creating a plan for what comes next. In year two we bring it all to life.

If that sounds vague and simplistic at this point, it is. For we are not prescient enough to know what the outcome of a year of exploration, soul searching, and creative dreaming will reveal. And that is as it should be. To know the answer now would mean we have already hardened our hearts and minds and would miss the opportunity for spontaneous revelation.

Our only goal right now is to inspire us as a church community to shine, to blossom and grow and bear fruit, and to revel in the flourishing “streams of living water” flowing both inward and outward in a vigorous torrent of life and love.

That’s quite an effusive statement, but it captures my enthusiasm. As I hope to capture yours—and your imagination with it—for who doesn’t want to thrive?

Truthfully, I can’t think of a better time for us to begin this process. The hardship, loss, stress, and pain of life in a pandemic has taken a toll on all of us. But people are resilient; setbacks and obstacles make us stronger and inspire us for what comes next.

The world around us is changing rapidly, but that is not a reason to fear. Nor do we need to live wrapped up in future possibilities. Thriving is about the present. About the right now!

There are a great many things we cannot control about the world around us, but we can control our response to it. So my friends, I ask for your prayers for all of us—for the team, for the church, and for our community. Pray for both inflowing and outflowing grace and inspiration and creativity. Pray not for what will be, but for what is, right now, alive and present in this moment.

Amazing God, you are our true source, and your presence is a stream of living water to a thirsty world. Nurture us in this time of healing and change. Open our ears to hear your voice. Open our eyes to clearly see the world around us from your perspective. Touch our hearts and minds and make our words and actions a holy vision of your creative presence among us. Amen



Food Ministries Moments Matter

Article from WRDE News



REHOBOTH BEACH, DE. — On Sunday, volunteers in the kitchen of the Epworth United Methodist Church gathered boxes of food indoors to get away from the cold weather.

Church members donated both perishable and cooked foods, including chicken, corn, sandwiches, and cereals.

Volunteers say the food drive is a way to make sure food doesn't go to waste, and a means of helping Delmarva families in need of food.

"We had a reverse advent, where everybody took a box home, and then filled it with all kinds of canned goods, and all the things we were asking for. We collected over 1,400 pounds of canned goods, pastas and dry goods, Dotti Outland, a Volunteer at the Dry Food Intake program at the Epworth United Methodist Church, said.

The event ran from 1:00 pm to 3:00 p.m, and volunteers say that the next food drive is on Tuesday, Jan. 18 and Thursday, Jan. 20.

For information on where to donate goods or to the Epworth United Methodist Church, visit <https://www.epworth.com/pages/give>

Environment—Moments Matter

Written by Bob Paulen

LOVE YOUR MOTHER...EARTH!

Our planet is facing an imminent crisis. We must get our climate under control before it is too late. (Fifteen of the hottest sixteen years on record have occurred in the 21st century.) While this may not be an issue for some of us older folks, it certainly is for our children and grandchildren. It is also a social justice issue as the adverse impacts of global climate change disproportionately affect individuals and nations least responsible for the emissions.

Genesis 1:10 says "God saw everything that God had made and indeed, it was very good." All creation is the Lord's and as Christian stewards we are responsible for the ways in which we use and abuse our planet (cf. Psalm 8).

What are you and I doing to defend our planet? What is Epworth doing to defend our planet? Over the past two years environmental articles have appeared in our newsletter. Yet, we as a congregation have done too little to address the seminal issue of our century. Where is a sense of urgency? The clock is ticking. Remember, there is no plan(et) B. Help us cast a bold new vision for a contemporary world!



Food Moments Matter

Written by Linda D'Alisio

Feeding Our Community in 2021

With the COVID pandemic still very much with us in 2021, Epworth combined and expanded its four food ministries—Intake/Donations, the Good Sam Mobile Pantry, Food Rescue, and the Food & Love Ministry/ Kitchen@Epworth—to address the growing food-related needs and distribution challenges of our community. Epworth provided a location for people to both donate and receive food on Sunday and Thursday afternoons and Tuesday mornings. A group of us partnered with Beebe Hospital to deliver food and care packages to food-insecure individuals identified by the hospital. In addition, many individuals, groups, and business organizations collected food for us to distribute.



The Food & Love Ministry Team celebrated its 500th consecutive Sunday meal in September. The team lives its mottos, “Cook food, serve love” and “Hungry? Not in our house!” through the efforts of three “chefs” and six rotating teams of more than one hundred volunteers. In 2021, the team served 8,515 meals, with volunteer hours totaling 3,209 hours.

The statistics speak both to the level of need and degree of volunteers’ commitments to these efforts.

- ◆ Good Sam Mobile Pantry@Epworth collected 51,670 pounds of donated food (936 volunteer hours).
- ◆ Good Sam distributed food to 7,579 individuals (2,741 volunteer hours).
- ◆ Thanksgiving@Epworth distributed Thanksgiving food kits to feed 742 people on the Tuesday, Thursday, and Sunday before Thanksgiving (over 100 volunteer hours).
- ◆ Food Rescue@Epworth worked six days a week rescuing and distributing 356,542 pounds of food otherwise destined for the landfill (over 7,578 volunteer hours).

Rescued food donations were distributed to the Kitchen@Epworth for its Food and Love Ministry, the Good Sam Mobile Pantry, Tom & George’s Mobile Ministry, Mary Mother of Peace, What is Your Voice (domestic abuse shelter), Community Resource Center, La Esperanza, Hispanic Coalition, Savannah West, Teach a Person to Fish, Soul Ministries and Beebe Community Outreach. These organizations then distributed the donations to about one thousand people a week.

Food rescue donations were received from the following:

Aldi	Nicola Pizza
Beebe Community Outreach Programs	Outback
Chick Fil A	Panera
Chipotle	Papillon Café
Community Resource Center	Rise Up Coffee
Fifer’s Market	Starbucks
Giant of Rehoboth	Surf Bagel
Giant of Millville	TastyKake
Good Earth Market	Wawa (the 3 Rehoboth stores)
Historic Lewes Farmers Market	Weis
Marsh Creek Cattle & Co.	302 Aquaponics

God has truly blessed Epworth with this opportunity to bring together so many generous, compassionate, and hard-working individuals and organizations to serve the Rehoboth area during a time of great need.