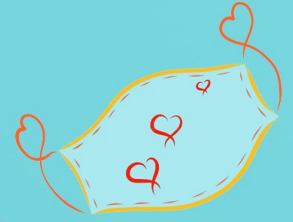


# MOMENTS matter



Quarterly Newsletter of Epworth United Methodist Church  
June/July/August 2023

## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Written by Adam Emel-Firestone



**NEWS!!! NEWS!!!! NEWS!!!**

Epworth United Methodist Church is extremely pleased to announce the return of Vacation Bible School to be held July 31, 2023 to August 4, 2023, from 6:30—8:30 p.m. with optional dinner served at 6:00 p.m.

There will be plenty of opportunity to volunteer. This is a special time for children and a special blessing for those who help. I look forward to guiding this endeavor with assistance from my church family

**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.



19285 Holland Glade Rd.  
Rehoboth Beach, DE 19971  
302-227-7743

[Epworth.faith](http://Epworth.faith)



## June/July/August 2023 Worship Schedule

- ◆ 10:00 a.m. In-house Contemporary Worship Service or Online worship.

You can access these services through Epworth's Facebook page, YouTube, or on the Web at [www.epworth.faith](http://www.epworth.faith)

- ◆ Sunday school for children 12 and under. Children leave with teachers after Children's Time in worship.
- ◆ Youth Group for middle school and high school meets at 11:00 a.m. after worship.





### The Surprise of Change

Bo and I celebrated our 37th anniversary on May 23. We have certainly seen many changes during our marriage. Some we knew were coming and others were a complete surprise. Some changes had signs that they were coming and still surprised us.

Our engagement surprised my father. Bo, being the southern gentleman, wanted to ask my father to marry me. We drove to my parent's home and after dinner Bo talked to my dad about how much he loved me. They discussed the importance of marriage and the commitment it takes, and how marriage helps each partner become the best version of themselves. Bo told him that we wanted to get married after we graduated from Annapolis. Dad listened and affirmed what Bo said. But, at the end when Bo said, "Would you like to see the ring?" Dad replied with shock: "Ring? What ring?" Even though all the conversation pointed to engagement and marriage, the reality of it still caught my father off guard. We got engaged that day and have been journeying together ever since.

We would often tease Dad about that day. Yet, changes catch most of us by surprise, even when we see the signs. Epworth has undergone many changes over the past fifteen years. We moved from one location to another. We have had pastoral changes and lay leadership changes. We have had members leave and new members join. Of course, the pandemic brought many changes, including significant financial changes, and we still cannot fully grasp all the implications. And The United Methodist Church is undergoing a major transformation with many churches disaffiliating and the remaining churches revising the future.

Our Source Collaborative Team recognizes that the three initiatives we have proposed (a Learning Center @Epworth, Youth and Families @Epworth, and Online Community @Epworth) will bring both energy and excitement even while requiring change in our church. We will need to change to become more interdependent on one another, no longer doing ministry in a vacuum, but acknowledging the other ministries and how we all work together. Epworth needs some systemic change, too, reviewing and

reworking policies and procedures to ensure that our congregation thrives. We hope that these changes will bring new growth, and new people will bring new ideas and change to our congregation.

We have spent this past year in worship focusing on transformation, to help us process all these changes. We laid out a transformational model: Regular Reflection will lead to Interdependence and Systemic Change which will bring about Bridge-Building and expand our Inclusivity. We explored the Case for Change and Preparing for Change. We spent time understanding the Emotions of Change and Practices which Change.

Recently we announced some staffing changes. Working with SPRC and our Governing Board Chair, we examined duplication of tasks as well as which ones could be filled with volunteers. As a result, we eliminated the custodian position. Our Facilities Manager will pick up most of those tasks as well as volunteers. We changed our Office Manager position to Finance Manager and reduced the hours from 40 to 20. We reduced the hours of our Special Projects Assistant, from 25 to eight, and changed the focus of that role to Building Rental only. And we reduced our Administrative Assistant from 11 hours to eight. As a staff and a congregation, we will need to live into these changes, training volunteers and working together to accomplish the work that still needs to be done.

Therefore, we need your help as we transition. We need your patience, grace, and flexibility as we learn new ways of being. We need you to volunteer your time and pitch in when you see a task that needs doing. I also ask you to refrain from gossip, which only tears down our body and eventually hurts everyone.

I also ask you to allow yourself to grieve the changes. You might feel afraid, or angry, or sad about the changes. Recognize that these emotions are a normal part of grief and change. When you recognize these emotions in yourself, try not to take them out on others. When you see others experiencing these emotions, be gentle and patient with them.

Above all, I invite us all into a deep trust of God's love, which never changes. Everything around us may change. But God's love remains steadfast. As we trust in that love, we remain open to the new creation God is making out of us. Take a moment the next time you see the sanctuary and look up at the cross. Murray has been using hearts to create a sense of movement and change. By the time you read this article, he will have transformed the hearts into a butterfly. What a beautiful metaphor of new life and growth and change! Let's hold onto one another and trust in the depth of God's love to lead us into the future unafraid.



## Pastor Bo's Views



### Faith thrives at Epworth through our online congregation

[Rev. Dr. Bo Gordy-Stith](#),  
Pastor of Community and Communications

Bishop Johnson appointed me as Associate Pastor at Epworth in July 2020, several months after the Covid quarantine necessitated all-online worship – for the next year! During those months, we experimented with ways to meet virtually for fellowship, study, and service to others during the week, as well as ways to worship, share communion, and sing every Sunday. We all learned new technology (how to unmute ourselves on Zoom! or open a rip-and-sip communion cup) and different ways of celebrating and grieving together. Both of our children were married in intimate Covid quarantine ceremonies (my parents and brothers watched on [Facebook](#)), and we held a socially-distanced funeral for Vicki's mother. We worshipped in person on Saturday evenings in our parking lot.

When the quarantine lifted in 2021, everything refused to go back to normal again (there's no place like home; there's no place like...), and we realized nothing would ever quite be the same. Two years later, we gather in person and online at 10 am on Sundays, and many if not most of our

meetings and studies meet online (in three unique spaces live – [YouTube for regular](#) and [ASL](#) and [Facebook](#) – and throughout the week on those platforms). I was excited to hear (at the first of this year) that our Source Collaborative Team identified an [online congregation](#) as one of our [three major initiatives in strategic planning to thrive](#) in this new and in many ways uncharted landscape. To start, I wanted to identify Epworth members and friends who are part of our online congregation. This proved harder to do than I would have imagined. After months of sleuthing, I have a list of only 60 people, which includes folk on extended vacation (or work – or dealing with health issues) away or out of town on a Sunday and checking in, as well as regular online congregation members who live beyond commuting distance from Epworth. Only a fraction of us check in or participate in the chat (especially on YouTube, the platform of choice for most of our online congregation).

Here's the thing: the fact that identifying who our online congregation is (a relatively straightforward task with an in-person group) eludes us indicates that many of the aspects of this ministry will not fit the mold of our experience with what it means to be the church. Which does not mean we don't know anything about this ministry – or that nothing in the sanctuary applies online. Even before Covid, churches that offered online (worship) ministries typically assigned a [host to each online session](#) (great for live participants – and the host can also respond to comments pasted later). [Menti-meter/word wall](#) responses allow everyone [online and in person to join together](#) (so long as they're watching live).

So much of what we have already learned together online defies the boundaries and limitations we had come to accept about in person gatherings. Work Sunday mornings? Dave checks in from all over the country! Live in Ellicott City, Dover, or Wilmington? Jen, Kris, and Elle experience Epworth as their faith home in their living room. Vacationing in Italy, Florida, or wherever? Rick and Esther, and Dee and Linda kept connected when far away (and Linda even recorded a wonderful message in Florida about our paying off the mortgage that we played [during worship](#)). Who knows what else we will discover? I can't wait to find out with you!

*Pastor Bo*





## WINGS Ministry Moments Matter

Written by Gail Gingrich

### News from WINGS' "Bag Ladies"

We have two ongoing sewing projects:

1. In place of plastic bags, we are making t-shirt bags for the ISOP Students when they come to the dinners at Epworth. We will provide these bags for the students in which to take their donated food home.

We have completed 108 bags (our projected need is for 200 more) and we will ask that the students bring the bags back when they come again for dinners.



We are in desperate need of freshly washed used t-shirts. We have less than 30 in our inventory. If you have t-shirts to donate, please bring them to the Welcome Area on Sundays.

If you are interested in sewing these bags or have questions, please contact Gail Gingrich at: 302 344 3596, [gvingrich@gmail.com](mailto:gvingrich@gmail.com). A group of us meet periodically to sew and our WINGS Chef, Coles Marsh serves our lunch.



from rescued animal feed bags (Rescue, Repurpose, Reuse, and, Recycle). The design and pattern was created by my daughter, Kelly Klein. The idea for the bags was

2. Since 2019 the WINGS Kelly Tote Bag Ladies have been sewing grocery bags made

presented to the WINGS group and we decided it would be a win-win project. We started this project as a "green" initiative. The bags are polypropylene which can be recycled. We sell these bags to support

our various charitable donations and all our profits are donated. The sale of these bags is our only source of income. Our venues to sell our bags are limited. We will be selling these bags on the first Sunday of each month in the Narthex after the service and we appreciate your support. We are currently well stocked with empty feed bags ready to be made. Our chef, Coles Marsh, serves lunch for us during our sew-ins. If you are interested in sewing and socializing, contact Gail Gingrich, [gvingrich@gmail.com](mailto:gvingrich@gmail.com), 302 344 3596.



The following is a list of donations from 2022 and 2023:

#### WINGS Donations 2022

May 16	UMCOR for Ukraine	\$ 300
June 27	Soul Ministries	\$ 100
June 27	West Rehoboth Mural Project/ Developing Artists Collaboration	\$ 200
July 14	UMCOR for Ukraine	\$ 235
September 19	UMCOR for Kentucky Flooding	\$ 200
September 19	UMCOR for Jackson, MS water issues	\$ 200
October 11	UMCOR for Florida flooding	\$ 500
November 14	Soul Ministries	\$ 150
		\$1,885

#### WINGS Donations 2023

February 13	UMCOR for Turkey/Syria Earthquake relief	\$ 300
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## Children & Youth - Moments Matter

Written by Linda Bender Hilt

### Epworth Sunday School is Thriving and Jiving!

We are thrilled to continue our in-person Sunday School for our children. Our goal is to help our children learn and grow in Christian faith through education, music, worship, service projects and fellowship. We are thriving/growing; there are 30 children on our roster! Halleluia – our God is good!! And, we continue to be so excited about our curriculum, Deep Blue Rotation Stations: Storytelling, Arts & Crafts, Spiritual Practices, Games, Missions, Science, and Cooking!



April 30 – May 7, 14, 21      Come to Breakfast

Children will hear the story of Jesus' post-resurrection appearance to the disciples while they were fishing, discover that Jesus appeared to his followers after his resurrection, and learn that Jesus' death was not the end of the story! Bible Story: John 21:1-14; Bible Verse: They knew it was the Lord. John 21:12c; Anchor Point: Jesus is alive!

May 28 – June 4, 11, 18 Blessings and Birthrights

Children will hear the story of Jacob and Esau and learn that we can share God's love and bless others. Bible Story: Genesis 25:29-34; 27:1-46; Bible Verse: "The Lord bless you and keep you." (Numbers 6:24); Anchor Point: God blesses us.

June 25 – July 2, 9, 16 Ruth

Children will hear the story of Ruth and Naomi and discover ways to do what is good. Bible Story: The Book of Ruth; Bible Verse: "He has told you what is good and what the Lord requires from you: to do justice, embrace faithful love, and walk humbly with God." (Micah 6:8); Anchor Point: God helps me act in good ways.

July 23, 30 – August 6, 13      The Rainbow Promise

Children will hear the story of God's covenant with Noah and learn that we can trust God. Bible Story: Genesis 6:13-22; 7:1-16; 8:1-9:17; Bible Verse: God said to Noah, "This is the symbol of the covenant that I have set up between me and all creatures on earth." (Genesis 9:17); Anchor Point: We can trust God's promises.

August 20, 27 – September 3, 2023      The Lord's Prayer

Children will hear the story of Jesus teaching the disciples to pray. Bible Story: Matthew 6:5-15; Bible Verse: Give us the bread we need for today. Matthew 6:11; Anchor Point: Jesus taught us how to pray.



We have a great group of volunteer teachers and assistants to guide the children through each story throughout the year. They will learn how God cares for us all. If you would like to become a volunteer teacher; rotation is once every four weeks, please contact Linda BenderHilt 717-209-0271. The curriculum is very easy to step right into and teach, no training necessary! So, if you love working with kids, please consider becoming a Sunday school teacher volunteer, you will get so much out of this experience.

We look forward to seeing you! Please feel free to contact Linda BenderHilt 717-209-0271 or Gwen Osborne 443-745-6950 with any questions.

## Epworth Youth Moments Matter

Written by Adam Emel-Firestone

### Eggstravaganza

On April 1, 2023, Epworth United Methodist was thrilled to restart the Annual Easter Egg Hunt. The weather prohibited us from hiding and hunting eggs outdoors but the rain did not dampen the enthusiasm of the 100 plus families that participated. Children of all ages swarmed the campus to discover the hidden eggs. The children were treated first to an Egg Hunt, followed by a time of games and crafts, face painting, then a magic show presented by our own Glenn Kohr, and then to a luncheon. We want to extend a thank you to all who selflessly donated their time to help execute this



event....The parishioners at Epworth for the donations of candy for the eggs, WINGS for filling the eggs, Dottie Outland's team for providing the luncheon, the custodial staff for all the set up preparation that was done, for the Youth Group for all of their help in setting up and for helping in the game area...and of course to Epworth's Easter Bunny for seeing the children....

The day was a blessing to all who were involved.....There is nothing like the smile and happy face of a child to transport a person back to a time they can truly remember... Enjoy the photographs that are attached and may it bring a smile to your day!!! See you all 2024!!!!



# Epworth Youth Moments (cont.)

Written by Adam Emel-Firestone



## Social Justice Moments Matter

by Bob Paulen

### Love Your Mother Earth

We know that plastic pollution is piling up in the ocean...but just how much is there? According to new research in the journal "Plos One," 171 tons of plastic particles are floating in the oceans. If we keep this up by 2040 there will be more plastics in the ocean than fish!

How did we get here?

1. Plastic production has doubled worldwide in the past 20 years...but only 9% of it gets successfully recycled.
2. Micro plastic presence is increasing as older plastics such as plastic bags and food wrappers are breaking down.
3. There is very little US or international law to address this crisis.

Plastics are now not only clogging up our waters but also leaching toxic chemicals into our food chains. Both sea life and human life are being threatened! Furthermore, in our oceans, plastics are stopping one of the world's most important carbon sinks—nature's critical tool for fighting climate change.

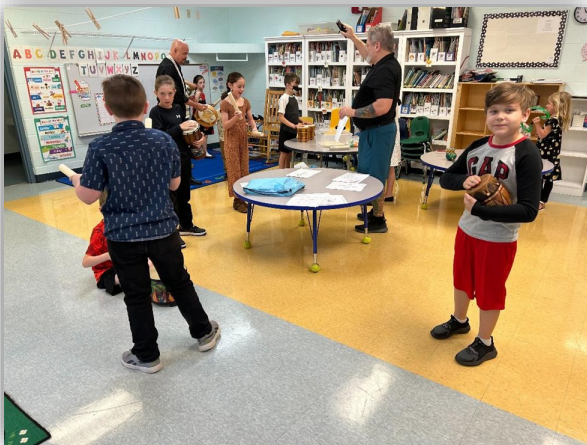
As stewards of Our Father's World, it is time for each of us to break with our plastic dependency and take preventive action seriously. *The earth is the Lord's and everything in it." I Cor: 10:26*



### Children & Youth - Moments Matter

Written by Adam Emel-Firestone & Linda Bender Hilt

Make a joyful noise unto the Lord!!! By heeding God's call, under the direction of Luke Emel-Firestone, we are pleased to announce that the Youth and Children now have a Children's Music Program.



It is for all kids—ranging in ages from preschool to our youth. The goal is for the kids to sing about every 6—8 weeks sometime during the worship service. The rehearsals take place right at the end of Sunday school beginning at 11:10 a.m. for approximately 15 minutes. Please keep this ministry in your prayers. Thank you

# MOMENTS matter

## EPWORTH: a United Methodist Church

