

Epworth UMC Youth Group

Joy Gordy-Stith
Youth Group Director

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Welcome to 2024!

As always, we want to thank you from the bottom of our hearts for allowing your youth to join us on Sunday afternoons. We are so blessed to know these amazing kiddos and honored to help them grow their faith. Our group truly would not be the same without each of your amazing youth.

Upcoming Events

Polar Bear Plunge

February 4 // 12:00 – 1:30

Youth Serve Community Meal

March 3 // 11:00 – 1:00

Rise Against Hunger

March 9 // 12:30 – 3:30

Easter Egg Hunt

March 30 // 8:30AM

Easter – No Youth Group

March 31

Youth Serve Communion

April 7 // 10:00 Service

Mother's Day – No Youth Group

May 12

Memorial Day Weekend – No Youth Group

May 26

Annual Lock-In

June 14 // 5:30PM – June 15 // 10:00AM

Father's Day – No Youth Group

June 16

The goal of Epworth UMC Youth Group is to create a safe environment for the youth to:

- Create relationships with one another
- Create relationships with our youth group volunteers
- Explore their faith and relationship with God
- Learn more about the Bible
- Learn more about Methodism
- Explore their relationship with Epworth UMC

Looking Ahead

We want to ensure that our youth are safe and that they have the best possible experience here at Epworth. To that end, there are going to be some changes in the new year.

- All youth must be picked up from the youth room after youth group (unless they drove themselves)
- There will be take home material for you to continue the conversations with your youth
- We will be hosting events that add on to the above-mentioned goals. We encourage your youth to participate in as many as possible!
- Epworth will be starting Confirmation Class in the spring. Meet with Joy for more information

Looking Back

We had such a fun 2023! We froze together at our Annual Polar Bear Plunge, stayed up way too late at our Lock-In, and sang carols at our Christmas Progressive Dinner. We wrapped up our unit on Jesus' Ministry in June. We looked at some of the Old Testament prophecies about the coming of Jesus, what Jesus' actions, teachings, and relationships tell us about who he is, what the church believes about who Jesus is, and why it matters to us. We just finished up our Help! I'm a Teenager! Unit in December, where we talked about some of the difficulties of being a teenager, and how God can help. We cannot emphasize enough how grateful we are for your youth. Our lessons are always filled with meaningful and insightful discussions (interspersed by Joy acting out a Bible story).

Why?

Throughout all our meetings, we are exploring the why. Why do we believe in Jesus? Why does it matter? Why do we do what we do in church? I wanted to share some of their answers when I asked, "Why do YOU come to church? Does it matter?" This is what your youth answered as to why they come to church:

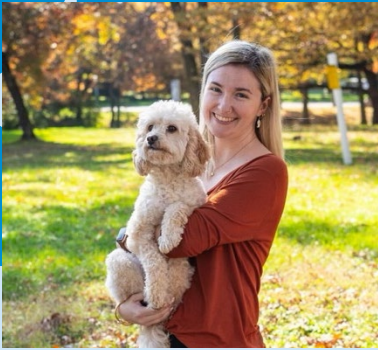
- It's safe – there's no judging here
- It's a place where we belong. It's being part of a community
- I am missed when I don't show up
- People come up to me when I come back and say that they missed me
- It's a good way to start the week. I feel off when I don't come to church
- It's a way to reflect.
- We each serve a purpose. When one person doesn't show up, it affects all of us



Our next area of focus

In 2024 our goal is to help the youth become more familiar with the stories of the Bible and work our way through the Old Testament. In addition to helping the youth become more familiar with these stories, we will be exploring the characters; how they relate to us now, what they show us about God's relationship with us, and what we can learn from them. Our team is excited about helping our group become more comfortable with exploring the Bible through our games and lessons.

Our Team



Joy Gordy-Stith

I joined Epworth UMC with my husband, Shaun Redick, in 2021. I love that we've found a church where my three stepchildren, Gage, Spencer and Ryder, are comfortable. I previously served at Wesley United Methodist Church in Dover, Delaware as the Director of Youth and Children's Ministries. I ran the Youth Group, Sunday School, Nursery, and Confirmation Class. I'm so grateful for all the wonderful relationships I've grown here at Epworth.



Thea Quillen

Thea Quillen is a native Delawarean and lived in a few other states prior to her return to Delaware. Her career involved working with children, families, and elders and in the food service industry. She is an animal lover and has been known to rescue many animals. Epworth became her Church home about three years ago. Soon after she became involved in the Youth Group ministry.



Sarah Rice

Sarah Rice is from Salem, Virginia. She was an attorney in Virginia from 1986 to 2005. In 2005 she was appointed to the Juvenile and Domestic Relations District Court bench where she served as Judge for fifteen years. Upon her retirement in 2020, she moved to Rehoboth. She has attended Epworth for three years, having served as a youth group advisor for the last two years.



Adam Emil-Firestone

Hello I wanted to introduce myself. I am Adam Emel Firestone and attend Epworth with my husband Luke and our children Rowan, Quinn, Xander and Brydon. I was raised in the Mennonite faith in Pennsylvania but have been Methodist for quite a while. We moved here about 7 1/2 years ago and love the area very much. I am retired from the Commonwealth of Pennsylvania Department of Health and Human

Services and Welfare. Although I must say I work much harder now staying at home taking care of the four children and the house than I did when I worked at times. We have no pets because two people in our family have extreme allergies to them, but we do have an African frog and he's Brydon's. I was raised in a household that religion was taught as the subject in school. Our faith journey is very important to our family, and we believe that it is a solid foundation for all else. I enjoy working with children I enjoy the youth of this church. I think both have so much to offer. I feel privileged and look forward to working with your children. And I really like the fact that our children have your children to look up to in this church because one day they will be where your children are.



Tom Lewis

I am a retired teacher. I've taught all elementary grades, K-6 and math education classes at the university level. My wife and I have been members of Epworth for about 8 years. Along with my time with the Youth Group, I have worked with the building maintenance staff and the Food Pantry and food rescue.

