

# COMING UP...

MAY 17 - MAY 24

## Sunday, May 17

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Worship In-person & Online & Children's Church  
The Church Council committee will meet immediately after worship service for their 2nd quarter meeting of the year.

## Monday, May 18

11:30 a.m. Monday Ministry Zumba

## Tuesday, May 19

All day - Fellowship Hall Reserved for General Election Voting

## Wednesday, May 20

Noon Bible Study  
6:30 p.m. Zoom (EPEC) Bible Study

## Thursday, May 21

Noon Prayer Team

## Sunday, May 24

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School  
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship  
In-person & Online & Children's Church



## CONTACT US

2400 Devonshire Drive  
Columbus, GA 31904

Church Office (706) 322-6973  
Pastor's Cell (706) 992-9147  
[www.epworthumc.com](http://www.epworthumc.com)

[toni@epworthumc.com](mailto:toni@epworthumc.com)  
(example: [earnestine@epworthumc.com](mailto:earnestine@epworthumc.com))

Facebook - [EpworthUMC.com](https://www.facebook.com/EpworthUMC.com)  
Instagram - [EpworthUMC.com](https://www.instagram.com/EpworthUMC.com)  
Youtube - [epworthumccolumbus1430](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCepworthumccolumbus1430)

## CONTACTING YOU

Most of the church's communication is through e-mail. We send three e-mails each week—a newsletter on Monday, an email from the pastor and an email reminder of Sunday worship. We also use e-mail to send important meeting reminders and other information. Help us contact you by ensuring the church office has your current e-mail address.

## OUR CHURCH STAFF

*Epworth's members are our ministers.  
The professional staff who assist us are:*

Administrator Assistant.....Toni Thomas  
Children's Ministry Director.....Jas'min Vontoure  
Children's Ministry Assistant .....Whitney Mennifee  
Custodians.....Martha Conklin  
Barbie Webb  
Media Tech.....Tristan Campbell  
Music Director.....Bob Lee  
Nursery Worker .....Martha Conklin  
Pastor .....Rev. Earnestine Campbell  
Praise & Worship Director.....Mandi Battle

*The mission of the United Methodist Church is to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world.*

## "Voices at the Gate," Part II

JOHN 10:1-10  
6TH SUNDAY OF EASTER

Last Sunday was our Part I of the Sermon, "Voices at the Gate," from John 10:1-10. Jesus preaches and teaches about Himself as the Good Shepherd, the gate, and the gatekeeper. If you missed part one, you can find it on our social media platforms and an excerpt in last week's bulletin. The text brought us to, and I expounded on how the sheepfold in Jesus' day was a community place—multiple flocks, one gate, one gatekeeper, and only the real shepherd had the right voice to call the sheep out, and the ones who were thieves and robbers entering in the sheep gate — the fold - illegitimately are not to be trusted. Who is Jesus talking about — who are the thieves and robbers — in this context, in the Pharisees, the religious leaders who are antagonistic towards Jesus and not shepherding God's people in the righteous and godly way.

From Sunday, we picked up with Part II—and we're starting at verse 5. This is where Jesus hones in on what happens when the sheep hear voices that don't belong to their shepherd. Verse 5 says, "But they will never follow a stranger; in fact, they will run away from him because they do not recognize a stranger's voice." That's where I want us to live for a bit—the voices at the gate.

Let's talk about our gates. In the old days, the gate was made of stone or wood. Today, our gates look like group texts, Facebook posts, DMs, emails, or even work at home, at the church, or at the stores. These gates are where voices gather—some are familiar, some are strangers, and some want to shepherd us, whether we realize it or not. The question is, who are you letting shepherd you at your gate? Who's got your ear in the middle of the conversations and all that is going on in our world today?

*(See Insert for Continuation)*

In Christ,  
Pastor Earnie



## SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:00 AM

### **The Nathan Patterson Class**

Study: Psalms 1-18  
Teacher: Bobby Smith

### **The New Connections Class**

Study: Life Lessons From ACTS  
Teacher: Glenn Griffin

### **The Seekers Class**

Study: Wired Word  
Teacher: Donny Davis

## **THOSE WHO SERVE**

May 17, 2026

Ushers: Becky Britton & Diona Bronson  
Financial Secretary: Patricia Bronson  
Acolytes: Children/Youth Ministry/Ushers

## **OUR STEWARDSHIP**

May 10, 2026

Tithes & Offerings:	\$2,007.00
Received To Date:	\$103,694.59
Needed To Date:	\$87,021.85

Attendance:	
Sunday School	*11
In-person Sunday Worship	52
Online Viewers	141
<b>Total</b>	<b>193</b>

\*New Connections Sunday School class did not meet last week.

## **MAY BIRTHDAYS**

3 Pat Phillips	17 Sophie Aspinwall
4 Vicky Griffin	19 Emma Knight
6 Bill Thrower	21 Mildred Rogers
8 Rosemary DiSimone	
Madison Jackson	22 Lindsey Fossa
Debra Ledbetter	24 Robert Willis
10 Abby Knight	29 Corey Fossa
13 Anne Wilson	31 Nancy Hiller
15 Jennifer Lawson	

## **STAY CONNECTED**

**In-Person & Livestreaming Worship** - Join us each Sunday at 10:30 a.m. Options for worshipping by livestream are: Put the name [epworthumc](https://www.facebook.com/epworthcolumbus) first: [facebook.com/epworthcolumbus](https://www.facebook.com/epworthcolumbus) or [youtube.com/channel/UCZJhDYHDeeE-dnv5a5nQKjA](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCZJhDYHDeeE-dnv5a5nQKjA) as close to 10:30 a.m. as possible or as close to the time of other livestream services.

## **BIBLE STUDIES**

Wednesday, May 20

--- Noon Bible Study, in Questors Classroom. New Study, Book of Philippians 2.

--- 6:30 p.m. Online Zoom, EPEC, Bible Study class. The book of Exodus, lessons 15 & 16.

## **MEMORIAM**

- A Memorial Leaf was given in memory of  
*Trevor Whittington* by New Life UWF.

## **CONFIRMATION CLASSES**

Confirmation classes will begin in May 2026 for youth ages 12 to 17! Confirmation is a journey where young people deepen their understanding of faith, learn about the teachings of UMC, and become professing members of our church through their baptized faith and baptism preparation. Parents are encouraged to bring their children to this spiritually enriching experience, developing their growth and commitment to God and the church. Don't miss this opportunity to support your child's faith journey!

## **A SPECIAL FUNDRAISER OPPORTUNITY FOR OUR CHURCH**

- We are excited to announce a special opportunity to support our church through the book, *The Journey of Abraham and Sarah: Faith, Failure, Fulfillment*, authored by Pastor Earnestine Campbell. This inspiring book grew out of our Noonday and Zoom Bible study classes and offers a wonderful opportunity for personal growth and spiritual deepening within our faith.

- With a donation of \$20 or more, you can join this transformative journey through the lives of Abraham and Sarah, exploring their struggles and the grace of God.

*Thank you for your continued support!*

## **MISSIONS & UPCOMING EVENTS**

### **MAY MISSION**

**May Mission Opportunity** - Consider these facts:

- Every 10 seconds, a child dies of malnutrition
- 45% of all deaths in children under five are caused by malnutrition
- Nearly one third of children under five suffer from malnutrition globally

MANA (Mother Administered Nutritive Aid) Nutrition, a non-profit based in Fitzgerald, GA, uses 2 million pounds of Georgia peanuts per month to produce RUTF (Ready to Use Therapeutic Food), a formula of milk, multivitamins, and peanut butter. This shelf staple product requires no preparation and treats acute severe malnutrition. Our goal is to purchase 1/2 pallet (22 boxes) of RUTF at \$40 per box. Each box contains 150 packets. Perhaps each family or church group can sponsor a box.

Remember to mark your gift "Mana!"

As always, thank you for your continued support.  
Blessings!

## **UNITED WOMEN IN FAITH (UWF) BOOK STUDY**

The UWF is hosting a book study on *The Color of Compromise* by Jemar Tisby, an insightful look at the American Church's history, race, and practices. All women are invited to join. The next book study will be Monday, May 18 at 7 p.m. To register, use the following link: <https://docs.google.com/forms/d/110Qt5rwiRVW3hheplbyeyzn5trzXdF6q48hyd2STeA/edit>. Book link: [amazon.com/Color-Compromise-American-Churchs-Complicity/dp/0310113601/ref](https://www.amazon.com/Color-Compromise-American-Churchs-Complicity/dp/0310113601/ref).

## **CHILDREN & YOUTH MINISTRY**

Reach out to parents, grandparents, and guardians you know to invite their children and youth to be part of the transformative ministry at Epworth! Here, they can participate in the Word and engaging activities, grow in their biblical understanding, and experience the unique culture of the Southeast—faith, fun, and fellowship!

## **FELLOWSHIP HALL RESERVED**

All day - Fellowship Hall Reserved for General Election Voting

## **UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES**

### **QUARTERLY COMMITTEE MEETING**

**-Church Council Meeting, Convener, Marguerite Hay**  
Sunday, May 17, following worship service

\*Note: If you are a committee member and you are not able to attend, please notify your committee chair.

\*Note: For committee chairs whose committees are not listed above, please schedule your committee meeting for planning and submit your meeting reports prior to the May 11 reporting deadline in preparation for the Church Council meeting. These meetings can occur in person, via the church's Zoom or other ways. We want to make it convenient for all to attend and participate in the great ministry that God is doing through Epworth.

## **SOUTH GEORGIA ANNUAL CONFERENCE**

- Our 2026 South Georgia Annual Conference Session is set for May 31 - June 02, 2026.

## **CALLING ALL GRADUATES**

Attention All Graduates! If you are graduating from high school or college this year, please inform the church office by Monday, May 18 of what school you are graduating from. If graduating from high school, include what college/university you plan to attend.

## **VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL (VBS) JULY 8TH - JULY 11TH**

- Vacation Bible School schedule:  
- Wednesday, July 8 – Friday, July 10, from 5:30 p.m. - 8:00 p.m. at the church. Volunteers are needed. The signup sheet is on the church office window. You can register online using this VBS registration link: <https://www.jotform.com/build/251553961689067>.

- Annual Outing Adventure on Saturday, July 11th at Launch Trampoline Park from noon - 4 p.m.

-We will conclude VBS and enter into Back to School ministry with a Back to School Giveaway on Sunday, July 12th, during the worship service. -Further details to come on school supplies donations.

### *Continuation...*

We see this gathering of voices played out in the stories right before John 10. Remember the woman caught in adultery (John 8)? She's brought before Jesus, and notice, they bring the woman but not the man. The crowd and the leaders want to condemn her, their voices shouting for judgment. But Jesus quiets the gossip — He writes in the dirt. When He stands up, the accusers are gone. Jesus inevitably wrote down their sins, calling them out, and they fled. Voices of those with bad intentions we will encounter, but who will we listen to at the gates of our situations? Jesus, who doesn't condemn but convicts to correct us into a better life, or those who are pretentious and want to cause harm and destruction to us. Jesus at our gate—He silences the noise and gives us the strength to stand up, forgiven and loved — every encounter with Jesus is an encounter for change and transformation. Just as he stood and covered the woman's sin, He has been forgiving and healing before the cross of crucifixion at Calvary.

The same in John 9, the story of the man born blind. The disciples, the neighbors, the Pharisees—they all have opinions, all these voices about whose fault it is, who's to blame, and trying to destroy Jesus' work and reputation. Jesus isn't interested in their blame game or their name-calling. He heals the man, and then, when the man is questioned, Jesus finds him again. Jesus doesn't just open his eyes; He calls him into a brand-new life. The voices at the gate wanted to judge, but the Shepherd's voice brought healing, dignity, and a new life. Jesus is the ultimate change-agent.

The thing about Jesus is, He calls us by name. Just as He called Simon "Peter," met Philip with a simple "Follow me," and saw Nathanael under the fig tree, these disciples were hesitant to follow Jesus' voice. Like we are so often today, not understanding when Jesus is ministering to us. Or, when Jesus called Lazarus out of his tomb, he brought him back from death. The same that His voice does for us today. We only need to invite Him in. He speaks and resurrects those things that seem dead, with no hope or life — our situation, condition, or circumstance. Mary Magdalene knew Jesus' voice. He called her name at the tomb, and she responded with worship. Mary had a personal relationship with Jesus. Jesus called her name when he healed her of seven demons previously, at the graveyard of life, the whispers in the market, and on the soccer field, people were talking about her demons. Her deliverance came with the breakthrough of hearing the voice that matters - Jesus! He is what changes us. Thomas, "Put your hand in my side—stop doubting and believe." Each time, Jesus rewrites our doubt, shame, anxiety, and fear—not with a lecture and condemnation, but with a personal call — his voice. Will you know Him when he calls?

So, how do we grow and discern hearing His voice? We do it by spending time with God's Word, through prayer, study, devotion, and being in places where the Shepherd's voice sounds off to us—whether it's a small group, worship, or just being still on the porch. Sometimes, we need to be reminded that Jesus is both the gentle rocking chair on the porch—His presence calming us and steadying us—and the battle axe in the fight, strong enough to protect us and give us the courage to face what's coming.

There are a lot of voices at our gates today. Some want to shepherd us for their benefit. Some are just noise. But Jesus promises that His sheep know His voice and run from the stranger. (v. 5) We get to choose which voices shape us. Sometimes, you're the one being shepherded; sometimes, God uses you as a shepherd when someone reaches out for comfort or truth. And always, it's an opportunity to point people back to the voice of Jesus—the only one who leads to freedom and an abundant life. As religious leaders; leaders in governments; managers; supervisors; and leaders in our homes, we have to be shepherded by the righteousness of God's word and not our volition. People will tell us not to spend time in the Bible — it's fake, it's no real evidence. What I have discovered is that the Bible is a sound instruction for living a life of abundance — faith, health, situations, conditions, finances, relationships — preparing for eternal life in heaven while practicing down here on earth. The voices at the gate that we need to be led by, and not others that come to steal, kill, and destroy. (v. 10)

So this week, as you scroll, text, talk, and gather, ask yourself: "Whose voice am I following? Who's got my ear at the gate?" And remember, when you need to be still, He's the rocking chair. When you need to stand up, He's the battle axe. He's always the Shepherd, always the Gate, calling you by name and leading you into the fullness of life He came to give. His name is Jesus — the name above all names and the King of all kings and our Savior! (v. 9). Amen.

## EPWORTH PRAYER LIST

### Church Family

Lloyd Britton	Cheryl Jandreau	Annette Taff
Rebecca Britton	Natalie Kernodle	Michael Taff
Deborah Cooper	Bob Lee	Marjean Waters
Buddy Dunn	Linda Lee	Lillian Wooldridge
Susan Dunn	Mildred Rodgers	
John Grandon	Ann Smith	
Jeanne Guilbeault	Susan Stark	
Chester Jakes		

Mary Lee Crews & Family	Ron Sawyer & Family
James and Donna Faircloth & Family	Ann Smith & Family
Frank Karastury & Family	Barre' and Steve Whittington & Family
Earl & Melonie Phillips & Family	Family of Myra Tucker
Family of Harold Morris	

### Extended Church Family

Patricia Waldo	Steve Guilbeault	Robbins Family	Kuester Family
Dora Spires	Willie Ryles	Judy Patterson	Cassie Prochaska
Billy Hill	Kim Jordan	Grier Family	Bruce Chapman
Carol Hall	Charles Holmes	Marilyn Buck	Danny Chidester
Beth Goodwin	McDaniel Family	Stephanie Bryan	Adams Family
Hattie Campbell	Robin Grantham	Dana Thurston	Diane Wiggins
Cristina Mattocks	David Garner	Kathy McClintock	Amanda Kinsman Vines
Ann Mitchell	Patricia Jefferson	Susan Land	Aundre Smith
James & Sue Flowers	Robert Wagers	Sarah Browder	Mary Kennedy
Maggie Smith	Hazel Dullin	Family of Neil Gergun	Janna Family
Roger Buterbaugh	Diane Propst	Ralph & Sandy McGough	
George Bowen	Martha Bone	Danny Snider & Family	Davis/Osborne Family
Tammy White	Sam Wilson	Michelle Slappy	Linda Walker
Bertha Robinson	Nona Robinson	Rev. Tim Paulk	

### Independent/Assisted Living/Nursing Home

Oaks @ Maple Ridge - Helen Pharris	The Lodge (Bessemer, AL) - Lorene Carlisle
Kings Bridge (Atlanta, GA) - Blount King	Wesley Glen (Byron, GA) - Nancy Hiller
River Place - Anne Wilson	
Oaks @ Grove Park - Ron Sawyer	

*Please continue to pray for our homebound people. They would love a call or text!  
If the prayer list needs to be updated, please call, email, or leave a note with updates at the church office. Thank you for your help!*

## Tree of Life Memorial for Epworth UMC and Hamp Stevens UMC

**Given by The Friendship Class in memory of Jean F. Morris  
whose generosity and caring spirit made this world a better place.**

You may remember a family member or friend, now deceased, on the lasting Tree of Life Memorial that graces the entrance of our Sanctuary. Consider commemorating their life with a leaf placed on this handcrafted piece of art.

Memorials can be made for members of the Epworth United Methodist or Hamp Stevens United Methodist churches. Initiated by the Friendship Sunday School to honor Jean's life, it is carried forward by Epworth's Board of Trustees.

Complete the section below and return it with your gift made out to Epworth UMC. With limited space, we will only be able to include names on the leaf-no other messages. The minimum donation for an engraved leaf is \$50.

Name of Donor: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Phone Number: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Email Address: \_\_\_\_\_  
 Donation Amount: \_\_\_\_\_

Names to be Engraved: *5 rows of up to approximately 12 characters on each row*

### SAMPLE

**Sebastian  
Williamson**

Jim & Jean  
Williamson  
& Family

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# ORDER OF WORSHIP

May 17, 2026 • 10:30 a.m.

Ascension Sunday

*The \* Denotes to please stand if able.*

## PRELUDE

Bob Lee, Music Director

## ENTER THE LIGHT OF CHRIST

Children/Youth Ministry/Ushers

## WELCOME & OPENING PRAYER

Worship Leader

## \*AFFIRMATION OF FAITH

Apostles' Creed UMH No. 881

I believe in God, the Father Almighty,  
maker of heaven and earth;  
And in Jesus Christ his only Son, our Lord;  
who was conceived by the Holy Spirit,  
born of the Virgin Mary,  
suffered under Pontius Pilate,  
was crucified, dead, and buried;  
the third day he rose from the dead;  
he ascended into heaven,  
and sitteth at the right hand of God the Father Almighty;  
from thence he shall come to judge the quick and the dead.  
I believe in the Holy Spirit,  
the holy catholic church,  
the communion of saints,  
the forgiveness of sins,  
the resurrection of the body,  
and the life everlasting. Amen.

**People: In the name of Jesus Christ, you are forgiven.**

## \*PRAISE SONG

"Great Things He Has Done"

CH 54 - 56

Led by Susan Dunn, Song Leader

## OFFERTORY APPEAL/PRAYER

Worship Leader

*During the offering, please place your offering in the collection plates as they are passed or text the word "GIVE" to (706) 655-6768. For our Online Worshippers, text or go to [epworthumc.com](http://epworthumc.com) and select "Donate." On Communion Sunday, please place your Communion Offering in the basket near the altar.*

## RESPONSE

Doxology

Praise God, from whom all blessings flow; praise him, all creatures here below;  
praise him above, ye heavenly host; praise Father, Son, and Holy Ghost. Amen.

## SHARING OF CONCERNS & CELEBRATIONS

Rev. Earnestine W. Campbell, Pastor

*Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.*

## \*SCRIPTURE

JOHN 17:1-11

DeKara Berry

Leader: This is the Word of God for the People of God.

**People: Thanks be to God.**

## SPECIAL MUSIC

"How Great Is Our God"

Mandi Battle

Praise & Worship Director  
CCLI # 2967303, Song # 4348399

## SERMON

"Revelations of Upper Room Prayers"

Pastor

## \*INVITATION TO CHRISTIAN DISCIPLESHIP

Pastor

*You can become a member of Epworth by either professing your Christian faith for the first time or by transferring your existing membership from another Christian church.*

## \*CLOSING SONG

"Amazing Grace"

CH 343 vv. 1, 2, 4, & 5  
Praise & Worship Director

## \*LIGHT OF CHRIST BROUGHT OUT INTO THE WORLD

Acolytes

## \*BENEDICTION

Pastor

## \*POSTLUDE

Music Director

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## COFFEE BAR ON SUNDAYS

**Coffee Bar in the Welcome Center:** Enjoy coffee and refreshments for the Sunday School and Worship Service hours every Sunday.  
~Donations are appreciated.