

COMING UP...

JULY 12 - JULY 19

Sunday, July 12

9:00 a.m. Adult Sunday School
10:30 a.m. Sunday Worship
In-person & Online & Children's Church
VBS Recognition/Celebration (Please wear your VBS T-Shirt).
Back-to-School Blessings & Giveaway

Monday, July 13

11:30 a.m. Monday Ministry Zumba
11:30 a.m. New Life Luncheon at Michele's

Tuesday, July 14

1:00 p.m. Grief/Caregiver Support Meeting

Thursday, July 16

Noon Prayer Team

Sunday, July 19

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



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

CONTACT US

2400 Devonshire Drive
Columbus, GA 31904

Church Office (706) 322-6973

Pastor's Cell (706) 992-9147

www.epworthumc.com

toni@epworthumc.com

(example: 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 AssistantWhitney Mennifee
Custodians.....Martha Conklin
Barbie Webb
Media TechTristan Campbell
Music Director..... Bob Lee
Nursery WorkerMartha Conklin
Pastor Rev. Earnestine Campbell
Praise & Worship Director..... Mandi Battle

 epworth
united methodist church

July 12, 2026

FROM BURDEN TO BLESSING: A SERMON RECAP

SIXTH SUNDAY AFTER PENTECOST

MATTHEW 11:16-19, 25-30

What a powerful Worship Serve Sunday—the Holy Spirit was truly present with us through love and diversity of different elements of worship in its presentation by God's people. We also recognized the 250th year of our country's independence by asking for prayer and devotion and seeking God's will for our nation. Our scripture was Matthew 11:16-19, 25-30, and our Sermon Title, "From Burden to Blessing," exploring how Jesus invites us to move from burden to blessing by taking on His yoke.

The Burden: We all know what it means to feel weighed down—by expectations, comparison, and the sense that we never measure up. In Matthew 11:16-19, Jesus describes a generation that is never satisfied, likening them to children in a marketplace who refuse to engage, no matter the tune. This imagery reminds us how we sometimes resist God's call, preferring comfort or dismissing challenging voices, as the people did with John the Baptist. In the cultural context of first-century Judea, marketplaces were not just commercial hubs; they were lively social centers where life unfolded. Children's games mirrored adult rituals, illustrating communal values surrounding celebration and mourning.

Today, our modern marketplaces are similar in this dynamic through social media platforms, for example, where we gather to share experiences, thoughts, and cultural exchanges. But also, in comparison, the marketplace creates burdensome expectations by showcasing curated lives, Instagram models, and perfectly arranged homes—they are often unattainable and shown only in the best light, not in real life. An Illusion of Perfection: There is a warning about the pressure to live up to these artificial standards, noting that what is presented online is often a filtered or edited version of reality, leading us to adopt an imposter personality—feeling inadequate and lacking. Just as in Jesus' time, we find ourselves navigating these spaces, often missing the spiritual calls embedded within them. As we do today, we must let go of the distractions and attachments that Jesus tells us are a burden.

Where Burden and Blessings Meet: This is the turning point—Jesus sees our struggles but invites us to see them differently in Him. Jesus continues with a poignant illustration: "For John came neither eating nor drinking, and they say, 'He has a demon.'" The Son of Man came eating and drinking, and they say, "Here is a glutton and a drunkard..." (vv. 18-19). This contrast leads us to examine how we respond to God's presence in our lives. Are we open to God's challenges and comforts, or do we dismiss them based on our expectations? The wisdom of God breaks through our preconceived notions, bringing us to focus on the fruits of our faith rather than merely the forms. John was indeed a contrast to Jesus. He was rigid in his approach, dressed in strange clothing, and lived an austere life, eating insects, such as locusts, and wild honey in the wilderness. His demeanor was serious and straightforward, lacking the social skills that often connect people. He stood firmly, not wavering with every new doctrine that came along—not a people pleaser, by far. In his message, he presented himself as a voice crying out in the desert, yet he was seen as eccentric and stern. I think he just didn't care about offending people, but the Word was a priority.

(See Insert for Continuation and VBS Acknowledgement)

In Christ,
Pastor Earnie



Epworth connects and equips all kinds of people to SEEK, SERVE, and SHARE Christ.

SUNDAY SCHOOL AT 9:00 AM

The Nathan Patterson Class

Study: Psalms 79 - 89

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

July 12, 2026

Usher: Donny Davis

Financial Secretary: Donny Davis

Acolytes: Children/Youth Ministry/Ushers

OUR STEWARDSHIP

July 5, 2026

| | |
|---------------------|--------------|
| Tithes & Offerings: | \$4,522.00 |
| Received To Date: | \$132,612.38 |
| Needed To Date: | \$128,242.08 |

Attendance:

| | |
|--------------------------|------------|
| Sunday School | 12 |
| In-person Sunday Worship | 43 |
| Online Viewers | 99 |
| Total | 142 |

JULY BIRTHDAYS

- 3 Jonathan Hutchinson
- 4 Baron Conklin
- 5 Faith Newton
Chuck Salter
- 6 Ema Cherai
- Kristi Stokes Lovelock
- 9 Kathryn Hargrove
- 15 Chris Conkle
Diane Morris
- 16 Jenny Powell
- 18 Eva Cherai
- 21 Ron Sawyer
- 22 Debby Macon
- 26 Cheyenne Wilson
- 27 Scott Akers
Frank Karastury
- 28 Susan Dunn
- 29 Barre' Whittington
- 30 Fraser Wooldridge
- 31 Jeremy Chase
Trudy Harris
Payton Mobayeni

STAY CONNECTED

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

MANY THANKS!

In June, Epworth collected a record-setting 471 cans of green beans and corn to Brown Bag of Columbus! Special appreciation goes to the Home Church in the Winchester neighborhood. They responded to our Facebook call for canned goods. Well done, all!

GRADUATE THANK YOU MESSAGES

I would like to sincerely thank my church family for recognizing me as a graduate. Your love, prayers, encouragement, and support have meant so much throughout this journey. I am truly grateful for this honor and for having such a caring church family to celebrate this milestone with me.

Thank you, and God bless you all - Diona J. Bronson

I want to express my heartfelt thanks to my Epworth church family for the beautiful Graduate Recognition on Sunday, June 21. I am truly grateful for the gifts and support from the church, the United Methodist Men, and for the lovely FAMU monogrammed prayer shawl from the Prayer Shawl Ministry. Your kindness and generosity are a real blessing to me.

With love and in Christ, Lauren G. Campbell

FELLOWSHIP HALL RESERVED

- Saturday, August 8, 1 p.m. - 3 p.m.

Tuesday, August 18, 9:00 a.m. - 1:00 p.m.

SANCTUARY & FELLOWSHIP HALL RESERVED

Saturday, August 15, 8:30 a.m. - 2:00 p.m.

QUESTORS CLASSROOM RESERVED

Tuesday, August 18, 6:30 p.m. - 9:00 p.m.

MISSIONS & UPCOMING EVENTS

JULY MISSION

July Mission Opportunity - Our July mission is the Chattahoochee Valley Imagination Library. The Imagination Library provides high quality, age appropriate books directly to over 4,000 children's homes in the Chattahoochee and Muscogee Counties of Georgia as well as Russell County, Alabama. All children from birth until their 5th birthday, are eligible.

Our goal is to provide 25 children a year's supply of books at \$31 per child. A dollar-for-dollar match, up to \$500, is available for this month's mission.

As always, your support is greatly appreciated!

CHILDREN'S & 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!

GRIEF/CAREGIVER MEETING

Grief / Caregiver Support Meeting - Our next Support Meeting is Tuesday, July 14, at 1:00 p.m. All Epworth members are invited and encouraged to invite friends to come out for support and encouragement. For more information, contact Martha Conklin at 706-329-0629 or Vonna Franks at 423-902-6134.

UPCOMING EVENTS & OPPORTUNITIES

QUARTERLY COMMITTEE MEETINGS

-SPRC Meeting, Chair, Michele Lancaster - Tuesday, August 4, 6:00 p.m.

-Finance Meeting, Chair, John Grandon; Convener, Donny Davis - Tuesday, August 4, 6:30 p.m.

-Lay Leadership Nominations Committee Tuesday, August 11, 11:30 a.m.

-Trustees Meeting, Chair, Glenn Griffin - Sunday, August 23, immediately following worship service.

-Church Council Meeting, Chair, Debra Johnson, Co-Chair, Marguerite Hay - Tuesday, August 25, 6:00 p.m.

*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 **August 18** 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.

Back-to-School Blessings & Giveaway

-We will conclude VBS and enter into Back-to-School ministry with a Back-to-School Giveaway on Sunday, July 12, during the worship service.

School supply donations are requested and are due by Friday, July 10. See the list below for donations needed. Please drop off donated items in the green tote located in the Welcome Center. Monetary donations are appreciated; please mark on your offertory envelope "Back-to-School Giveaway."

Binders (1-2 inch binders with pockets)

Composition notebooks

Three-prong folders with pockets

Pencils

Color pencils

Notebook paper

Sheet protectors

Highlighters

Markers

Glue sticks

Hand sanitizer

Band aids

Scissors

Pencil pouch

Kleenex

Ziploc bags

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

Continuation...

In contrast, Jesus brings joy and acceptance. He mingled with people, celebrating life's moments with feasting, fellowship, and socializing—what we call today a “social butterfly”—charismatic and drawing people to Him who wanted better. Jesus knew how to engage with others, connecting with them in their joys and sorrows and enjoying a party—a feast—like when he changed water into wine in John 2 and sitting, eating, and socializing with those called sinners, like Matthew the tax collector. This juxtaposition reveals the truth: despite their differences, both persons were met with criticism. Jesus illustrates this point powerfully: “To what can I compare this generation? It is like children sitting in the marketplaces...” (Matthew 11:16-17). Here, He points out how fickle generations (humans, churches, and nations) can be; regardless of how they present themselves in Christ, they will find fault if their hearts are not receptive. This reflects a childlike immaturity—spiritually unready to embrace God's diverse ways. He stayed with the Word as well but was multifaceted in his social skills—His Christology was solidified through His own word. He identified himself as the “Son of Man”—what more needs to be said about His authenticity? “Wisdom is justified by her deeds” means that the life-changing results of Jesus' ministry—healing the sick, restoring outcasts, and offering true grace—stand as undeniable proof that His mission is from God. And Jesus reminded people of this when he sent the message back to John through his disciples (vv. 1-7).

Scripture reminds us that we all carry burdens—whether from religious expectations, societal pressures, or our own feelings of inadequacy. These weights may stem from comparisons, work, relationships, or spiritual struggles. However, even when we feel left behind, living for God, He is building us according to His timing.

The Blessing: When we accept Jesus's invitation, our burdens are transformed. In Matthew 11:25, before extending this invitation, Jesus praises the Father for revealing wisdom to the humble and childlike—a contrast with the comparison of childlike behavior in Matthew 11:16-19. This is the right kind of “childlike” in discipleship: those who are willing to learn and keep growing. Often, those who appear to have it all together miss the profound truths of God. Yet, those who approach with humility and openness discover the fullness of His grace. If you've ever felt inadequate or unworthy, remember that God welcomes you just as you are.

Jesus uses the image of a yoke—a tool for sharing a load—to show that He wants to partner with us. By walking with Him, we lay our burdens on His shoulders rather than carrying them alone. His yoke means (1) we don't face struggles alone; (2) He guides us gently, not harshly; (3) He meets us where we are; (4) He transforms burdens into opportunities for growth; (5) He offers true rest—peace for our souls; (6) He gives us relationship and trust, freeing us from isolation and comparison. He continues, “Take my yoke upon you and learn from me...” (Matthew 11:29). Here, Jesus invites us into a partnership. His yoke symbolizes a way of life that is supportive and well-suited to our needs. He doesn't seek to add more to our plates but to walk alongside us, helping us carry our burdens. This is not about being more productive or performative; it's about finding a rhythm of grace that allows us to thrive. The rest Jesus promises isn't just relief from demands—it's a blessing of inner peace and joy, rooted in God's love, no matter our circumstances.

In closing, let's reflect on Jesus' words in Matthew 11:28-30. His invitation to “come” is personal and urgent, calling us to approach Him when we are weary and burdened. Rest means divine refreshment and peace for the soul. Jesus doesn't promise to remove every struggle but to walk with us so our burdens can become blessings, and exhaustion can give way to peace. *Amen.*

VBS & BACK-TO-SCHOOL GIVEAWAY ACKNOWLEDGMENTS & APPRECIATION

What an exciting time we had at the Vacation Bible School (VBS) from July 8 to July 10! Themed “Fruit of the Spirit,” based on Galatians 5:22-23, this enriching ministry focused on nurturing faith and building friendships and community among 45+ participants across various age groups, including babies, pre-K, elementary, youth, and adults. Each day was filled with engaging activities exploring the “fruit of the Spirit”—love, joy, peace, patience, kindness, goodness, faithfulness, gentleness, and self-control. The experience was enhanced by uplifting music that created a joyful atmosphere, along with delicious food and prizes celebrating our learning as disciples.

The festivities continue with our annual outing this year at Launch Trampoline Park on July 11, where children and youth can enjoy an afternoon of fun and fellowship. The outing provides a wonderful opportunity for them to bond and celebrate the friendships they formed during VBS.

It takes a team to bring our vision to life. With hands and hearts working together in ministry across various committees, we created a success that truly reflects our spirit and our love for Christ and His people:

A heartfelt thank you goes out to the parents, grandparents, and guardians who ensured their involvement. Our deep appreciation is extended to our dedicated volunteers for teaching, decorations, and set-up: Dekara Berry, Quenton Brantley, Diona Bronson, Patricia Bronson, Lauren Campbell, Kenedi Gadsden, Cordero Miles, Khloe Simmons, Skylar Simmons, and Tristan Campbell for media; the hospitality and food teams—Buddy Dunn, Susan Dunn, Belinda Lias, Janie Nellums, James Stevenson, Lisa Stevenson, and Barre' Whittington—whose efforts ensured a warm and inviting environment and delicious meals; the Trustees; Robert Campbell for security; Martha Conklin for her support in the nursery; and Toni Thomas, our church administrator, for all her help.

Special thanks and deep gratitude go to Jas'Min Vontoure, our Children's Director, for her visionary leadership, theme-based VBS, and the dynamic creations that beautifully adorned our VBS decor. We appreciate Van Vontoure for her artistic contributions and works, and Whitney Mennifee, our Children's Ministry Assistant, for her teaching and leadership throughout the week.

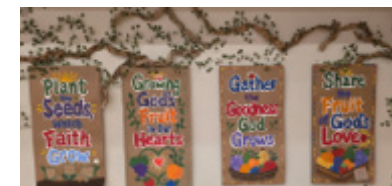


The VBS concludes with a celebration presentation and, this year, with our annual Back-to-School Blessing Giveaway on Sunday, July 12, where children and youth will receive essential school supplies along with special prayers for the upcoming academic year. We appreciate the donations of essentials and monetary contributions, as well as the works of the family, children's, and youth ministries for coordinating this giveaway.

All these events and celebrations are a part of our commitment to nurturing families and growing a supportive community where everyone feels welcome and valued.

As we reflect on this blessed event, may we continue to nurture the “fruit of the Spirit” in ourselves, our homes, the church, and our communities. “And the peace of God, which transcends all understanding, will guard your hearts and your minds in Christ Jesus.” Philippians 4:7. Let's look forward to more joyful gatherings and spiritual growth together!

Amen,
Pastor Earnestine Campbell



ORDER OF WORSHIP

July 12, 2026 • 10:30 a.m.

Seventh Sunday after Pentecost

*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.*

***PRAISE SONG**

Medley: "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 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.

VBS PRESENTATION

Jas'Min Vontoure, Children's Ministry Director
Whitney Mennifee, Children's Ministry Assistant

VBS CELEBRATION SONG

"I'm So Blessed"

VBS Children & Youth Choir

BACK-TO-SCHOOL BLESSING & GIVE-A-WAY

Pastor, Children's Ministry Director & Assistant

SHARING OF CONCERNS & CELEBRATIONS

Rev. Earnestine W. Campbell, Pastor

Lord, in your mercy, hear our prayer.

***SCRIPTURE**

MATTHEW 13:1-9, 18-23

Becky Britton

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

People: Thanks be to God.

SPECIAL MUSIC

"Never Lost"

Mandi Battle
Praise & Worship Director
CCLI # 2967303, Song #7134788

SERMON

"Harvest Potentials or Hollow Personas?"

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**

"Leaning On the Everlasting Arms"

CH 575 vv. 1 & 2
Praise & Worship Director

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

Acolytes

***BENEDICTION**

Pastor

***POSTLUDE**

Music Director

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.