



## EPWORTH UNITED METHODIST CHURCH

*...to make disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!*

# Connections

December 2018

Greetings!

What do you think of when you hear the word, “*revitalization*”? As we move forward in our **Hey, God! What’s Next for Epworth?** process, it’s time to think deeply about what it means to revitalize. The Merriam-Webster dictionary defines it: “to make (someone or something) active, healthy, or energetic again; to give new life or vigor to.” Personally, I love the “to give new life to” definition. *To give new life to*. And I love the metaphor of giving birth to teach us about new life.

We are all familiar with the new life of a newborn baby. As the birth-giver, there is the waiting of the gestational period, the pains of labor and delivery, and the joy of this new life taking her first breath. The hope in the possibilities of this new life just birthed are yet to be seen - growing, learning, laughing, crying, playing, working, loving, becoming.

As Christmas nears, our hearts turn toward Mary as she waits, as she labors, and as she gives birth to a son. We see in this newborn infant, a new life full of all the hope and possibilities that we all see in a newborn infant, yet in Jesus – this new life – there is so much more. This newborn Jesus is not only human, but he is God, too. This newborn infant *is* the Son of God, the Messiah, being birthed into the world to redeem and restore a broken world.

And yet, God is the birth-giver. While in exile in Babylon, the Israelites felt God’s silence and longed for a word of hope from Yahweh. Through the prophet Isaiah, God finally spoke, “I’ve kept still for a very long time. I’ve been silent and restrained myself. Like a woman in labor I will moan; I will pant, I will gasp.” (Isa. 42:14) In their book, *To Alter Your World: Partnering with God to Rebirth Our Communities*, authors Michael Frost and Christiana Rice write, “It is the stunning announcement that God, groaning like a woman in labor, will soon give birth to new life.” God birthed new life into Israel. God births new life into us. God births new life into the church.

If it is God’s mission to redeem and restore the broken world, birthing new life into us through the life, death, and resurrection of Jesus Christ, our job as the church is to partner with God in God’s mission. What does a redeemed, restored, whole world look like? God gave Isaiah a vision of a world made right, “...the wolf and the lamb will feed together...” (Isa. 65:25) What vision of a world made right is God giving to us today?

“Revitalization” then, is the new life God births in us and through us as we partner with God to birth God’s vision of a world made right.

You are invited join us in partnering with God on our **Hey, God! What’s Next for Epworth?** revitalization team as we discern God’s vision of a world made right and how God is inviting Epworth to join God in the delivery room. If you would like to serve on this team, please see Pastor Deb or Carole Burris.

Blessings,  
Deb

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The Care Team celebrates the recuperating of Dorothea and Joan. They are thankful for the thoughtful cards, calls, visits, and prayers from everyone. Please continue to pray for them as well as others on the prayer list!



The Care Team has discussed the possibility of creating an Advent Craft Group to possibly work with Methodist Angel Tree and/or other projects. We discussed meeting in either the morning or afternoon during the week.

Are you a crafter or a wannabe crafter? Does this interest you? Contact Sandy Kaptain (email [sakaptain@gmail.com](mailto:sakaptain@gmail.com) or 847.741.7375) to discuss.

**DECEMBER RAINBOW COVENANT  
Midwest Mission Distribution Center**

Midwest Mission Distribution Center is located just east of Chatham, IL. MMDC opened in March of 2000. Since then everything has been done with donations from individuals, churches and groups, and with volunteer labor. Since the beginning it has distributed disaster relief items to at least 21 states and 29 countries. In addition to disaster relief kits and supplies, school supplies, and the school desks, the Center also sends many blankets, hospital supplies, and sewing machines and bicycles that have been refurbished. MMDC is a cooperating depot in the UMCOR Relief Supply Network.

To contribute to this month's Rainbow Covenant mission, please place your donation marked for "Rainbow Covenant" in the offering basket during worship.

**CATCH UP ON YOUR 2018 FINANCIAL COMMITMENT!**



Please make sure all tithing you would like to include on your 2018 financial statement is mailed in time to be received by **Monday, December 31<sup>st</sup>**.

## *Current & Upcoming Events*

- ✓ **MEN'S FRIDAY BREAKFAST** - Come and enjoy a delicious breakfast, fellowship and discussion on topics of the day. We meet in M5 the 1<sup>st</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> Fridays of each month at 8:00am. All are welcome to attend; this is a casual group and regular attendance is not required.
- ✓ **SPROUTS** – All children 0-36 months are invited to join us for SPROUTS! We meet on Friday mornings at 9:15am in the Nursery. Children spend about 35-40 minutes playing together and then spend the final time singing, moving and reading a story. This is a wonderful time to spend connecting with your child or grandchild. Invite friends and family to join you! **If your older children are home for winter break, please feel free to bring them as well. We will not meet on Friday, December 28<sup>th</sup>.**
- ✓ **SPREADING THE CHRISTMAS STORY** - On **Saturday, December 1<sup>st</sup>**, First UMC has invited us to join them providing the Live Nativity for Elgin's Winter Wonderland Event downtown. The pageant will be presented four times that afternoon (2:30, 3:30, 4:30, and 5:30). 1st UMC will provide costumed characters, we are asked to be part of a choir of voices that sing Christmas Carols throughout the pageant. They provide lyric booklets to all of the guests watching and invite them to join us in the carol singing.

This is not anything that requires a specific time commitment or a practice session, it is merely an opportunity for us to come to the corner of Spring Street and Chicago Street (The Advocate Park corner parking lot across from the Blue Box Cafe) stand and sing with those gathered as the choir. It is a fun and rewarding thing to do as the little children get so excited and people's lives are touched! Besides the pageant, there will be a petting zoo and free cookies and hot chocolate. This has been an outreach activity and is growing into an even more respectable praise activity. Please join the fun! Questions? See or call Carole Burris.
- ✓ **FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY** is next **Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup>**. Please bring your donation of pork & beans, dried fruit and meat or any other non-perishable food items of your choice! Donations can be placed in the Food Pantry basket outside the sanctuary.
- ✓ **SATURDAY MEN'S BREAKFAST CANCELLED** – Due to lack of participation, we will no longer be meeting for our monthly Saturday Men's Breakfasts.
- ✓ **HOLIDAY CAROLING** – We all enjoy the sounds of the Advent and Christmas Season! There are many who are unable to get out and about to share in this joy. Join with others to share the musical message of the season as we go visit these folks and bring them our Love of the Lord's birth! Sign up today for caroling on **Sunday, December 9<sup>th</sup>, at 3:00pm**. We will meet in the upper parking lot then car pool to spread God's love through song. All you need is a smile and the desire to bring Love, Hope and Joy to others! You know someone who would enjoy a visit? Let the office know by December 6<sup>th</sup> please. Song sheets are provided.
- ✓ **FRIENDSHIP LUNCHEON** - Over 55? Join us for the last Friendship Club Luncheon of the year! We will meet at the Village Squire (480 Randall Rd, South Elgin) on **Wednesday, December 12<sup>th</sup>, at 12:30pm**. Please sign-up on the Epworth bulletin board in the Community Room in the next week. You don't have to be a member of the church to come. Questions, call the church office at 847-931-5400.
- ✓ **SWEET TREAT SUNDAY** – The Advent season brings the sweet tooth out in all of us! Join us on **Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup>**, after worship for this festive way to share your favorite holiday baking treats with your Epworth family at our coffee & fellowship time. Simply drop off your treats before service on the 23<sup>rd</sup> and all are welcome to enjoy sharing conversations and delicious goodies after the service!
- ✓ **PJs FOR THE HOLIDAYS** - Altrusa Club of Elgin and the Salvation Army together are collecting pajamas for families with children in need this holiday season. Now through Thursday, December 13<sup>th</sup>, we will be collecting pajamas size newborn - adult XL. Collection bins are located in the Community Room. Contact Mary Rees Freeman at 224.239.4320 with questions.
- ✓ **HAT & MITTENS TREE** - There stands a tree outside the Sanctuary ready to be filled with winter hats and gloves to be taken to the Crisis Center to share warmth and God's love. Pick some up while you are out shopping and hang them on the tree the following Sunday. Let's hide the branches and warm the heads, hands and hearts of many who are in need this Christmas season! A variety of sizes will be appreciated!

## DECEMBER GIVING / SERVING OPPORTUNITIES

**PADS** - PADS of Elgin provides overnight shelter and coordinates support services for the homeless in Elgin and surrounding areas. The shelter is open 7 days a week to all individuals who have a non-felony record and can pass a breathalyzer test. For two hours one evening our servants help serve food to the residents of PADS.

**When: Sunday, December 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 6:30-9:00pm**

**Where: 1730 Berkley Street in Elgin**

Please contact Andy Lindstrom at [andrewlindstrom@yahoo.com](mailto:andrewlindstrom@yahoo.com) for more information.

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**FOOD FOR GREATER ELGIN** - Provides food assistance to 1200 low income families (approx. 5500 individuals, 1/2 of which are children) in the Elgin, South Elgin and West & East Dundee areas each month. The following time is available to serve at Food for Greater Elgin:

**When: Monday, December 17<sup>th</sup> @ 5:30-8:30pm.**

**Where: 1535 Commerce Dr. in Elgin**

Please click on "Food for Greater Elgin" under the "Serve" tab on our website for more information on how to serve.

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**SOUP KETTLE** - Provides hot meals and warm smiles to 60-100 people in need every day. Epworth Church staffs the Soup Kettle at Zion Lutheran Church the 3<sup>rd</sup> Tuesday of each month.

**When: Tuesday, December 18<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30-6:45pm.**

**Where: 330 Griswold in Elgin**

Those wishing to serve, please see Janina Hoffman for more information.

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**CRISIS CENTER MEALS** - Epworth Mission Team provides meals for the Crisis Center on the 4<sup>th</sup> Sunday of every month. We are in need of volunteers to make a main dish to pass, a vegetable or dessert.

**When: Sunday, December 23<sup>rd</sup> @ 5:00pm.**

Please contact Mary Rees Freeman at [mrf647@hotmail.com](mailto:mrf647@hotmail.com).

### MANNA ORDERS!



Do you enjoy sharing a double gift to a friend or loved one? Do you want to have a small token of appreciation for your mail person, trash collector, teacher, maintenance helper, or neighbor? A gift card is perfect! You bring that special person joy with the gift then that person receives joy when purchasing something with you in mind. Every

Sunday through December 16<sup>th</sup> orders are accepted and will be available the following Sunday or can be picked up from Carole after Wednesday of that same week. Epworth receives 2% - 20% of the price you pay so you are giving even another gift! Not sure how it all works, ask Carole Burris anytime!!

## Bible Study



You may not know what you are missing by not spending some time with others exploring the wonderful messages God shares with us through His Word!

### MONDAY MORNING @ 6:30AM

Join us on Monday mornings at 6:30am at the Centre of Elgin for our Walking Bible Study. Come be part of your church community, Walk to better yourself physically and mentally and Talk to grow spiritually! Meet others at the walking track on the upper level of the Centre, you'll be glad you made the effort! Questions, ask Mary Becker, Ginny Jensen or Carole Burris.

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### WEDNESDAY MORNING @ 6:00AM

You are most welcome to come and sit at the South Elgin Panera Bread on the east side of Randall Rd. in front of Jewel to converse about the scripture for the upcoming Sunday. It's always great to get into the scriptures and really find a new understanding with others!

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### ADVENT BIBLE STUDY

This year's Advent Bible Study will be on James Moore's book, "Christmas Gifts That Won't Break". Four of the gifts match those of the four outer candles of the Advent wreath: Hope, Love, Joy and Peace. The fifth gift focuses on the greatest gift of all, the gift of Jesus! Classes begin the week of November 25<sup>th</sup>. You may sign up on the bulletin board in the Community Room.

### Interested in participating?

Classes will be held on  
Monday evenings @ 7:00pm in U1  
Thursday afternoons @ 1:00pm in U1