



## Epworth United Methodist Church

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

# Connections

January 2019

Greetings!

You've probably heard by now that Wesley UMC is the congregation with whom we are beginning to explore a potential merging. When we learned just prior to Thanksgiving that they are having some of the same conversations we are having about their future, especially their desire to revitalize, we reached out to them to learn more about what they are thinking and to discern if merging might be a possibility.

Merger experts tell us that "vital mergers" are the most successful. A "vital merger" is one in which all of the congregations involved in a merger sell their property and relocate to a neutral location, primarily to avoid a "this is yours" and "this is mine". The Task Force believes this is probably not feasible for an Epworth/Wesley merger for several reasons. For starters, the opportunity for a "vital merger" of this type just isn't an available option for us (do we really want to start all over with a new building program?). It doesn't mean that we can't be successful in merging, it means that we simply need to be intentional about making it successful.

There are other markers of a successful merger, particularly when it's grounded in God's mission. In these very early conversations, it was apparent to our Task Force that Wesley and Epworth are missionally compatible. This means that how they think about and are in mission is similar to the way we think about and are in mission. One of the things that excited me about this possible merger with Wesley is their neighborhood location (we would most likely move into their location and make it "this is ours"). I've always believed Epworth is a community-minded congregation and we thrive on being engaged in a local community. Children and family are important to us; education is important to us; healthy lifestyle, including healthy meals, are important to us.

I believe in this merger potential there is the opportunity for dreaming new ministries in the community. What do these families need most that we can help them with? What can we do to build relationships with them and the schools? What kinds of businesses are in the neighborhood?

*Engaging Your Community: A Guide to Seeing All the People* by Junius B. Dotson of Discipleship Ministries writes about churches being engaged in their communities. He tells the particular story about high school students who "slip through the cracks." A High School Administrator says, "Schools lose students, to a raft of issues, from poverty to gangs, from peer pressure to pregnancy. The common denominator in each loss was a kind of invisibility or anonymity at school for that student....Often simply having a connection was enough to save a student."

What about a community block party? What about expanding K-Motion? Junius B. Dotson asks, "How do we move beyond a program to sustained effort to develop and build relationships with students and teachers (with families and others in the neighborhood)? How will we demonstrate that you see them and we care for them?"

You know, *we are really good at this!!!!* We may not have the physical stamina to do all of this, but what if...What dream is God putting in our hearts for God's community?

Shalom,  
Deb

"I know the plans I have in mind for you, declares the Lord; they are plans for peace, not disaster, to give you a future filled with hope. When you call me and come and pray to me, I will listen to you. When you search for me, yes, search for me with all your heart, you will find me. I will be present for you, declares the Lord..."

Jer. 29:11-13

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The Mission Team would like to thank the UMW and their proceeds of just over \$3000 from the Gingerbread Bazaar. The mission team distributed the funds to complete an ark from Heifer International (\$5000.00) and more than \$500 locally to Food for Greater Elgin. We would also like to thank everyone who participated in the fundraiser! The people of Epworth together do great job of being the hands and feet of Jesus in the world!

### **-Mission team**

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Thank you to SO MANY for your generous gifts you brought to share with others this Christmas season! The pajamas went to the Salvation Army who was sharing them with Elgin area families in need, the hats and mittens will go to the Community Crisis Center to keep children and women warm and knowing there are many people who care about them. Thanks to Allison Cherry for sharing contributions from her school of hats and gloves, toys, and shoes also! The shoes will go to the YWCA for local people in need and the toys also went to the Crisis Center.

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Thanks to all who went Caroling bringing joy to members and friends at 8 different locations during this very special season. Truly the sound of music reaches people's hearts and reminds them of so many special moments in their lives!

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Thanks to the Group of folks who provided for Fellowship time this month and all who shared their special "treats" on Sweet treat Sunday. Sharing God's love happens in so many ways! We pray you have experienced it this season through giving and receiving!



epworth green team

Thank you for all the Styrofoam recycling! To help with transporting it from Epworth to Chicago Logistics please place any loose Styrofoam in containers if the plastic bin is full.

Care  Team

The Care Team at Epworth has been busy trying to visit people in the hospital, nursing homes and at home! Thanks to all who join us in this! If you know of anyone who needs a visit, please let us know.

Many of our church members could use prayers; please look at the prayer list on page 5 of this newsletter.

## *Current & Upcoming Events*

- ✓ **FOOD PANTRY SUNDAY** is next **Sunday, January 6<sup>th</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.
- ✓ **FRIENDSHIP LUNCHEON** - Over 55? Join us for our next Friendship Club Luncheon at **12:30pm on Wednesday, January 9<sup>th</sup>** at Sweet Berry Café (720 N. McLean Blvd; Elgin). 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.
- ✓ **KMOTION** – Our next event with families from Highland Elementary will be on **Saturday, January 12<sup>th</sup> from 11:00am – 1:00pm**. Volunteers are needed to help with crafts, games, and lunch. Come at 10:30am and help where you can.
- ✓ **UNHANGING OF THE GREENS**– Unhanging of the Greens will happen **Sunday, January 13<sup>th</sup> @ 10:15am**. Please help pack away the decorations that helped us celebrate the birth of the Babe.
- ✓ **MARTIN LUTHER KING FOOD DRIVE** – Food donations for this year's food drive are to be turned in no later than **January 20<sup>th</sup>**. Food will be distributed to local food pantries. If you are interested in participating, please pick up a MLK bag from Andy Lindstrom.
- ✓ **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! We will begin meeting in 2019 on January 11<sup>th</sup>.
- ✓ **SHOEBOXES FOR SPIRIT LAKE** - It is time to start collecting items for shoe boxes. Each month we will have a theme of items to bring. In January we will be collecting stuffed animals. We also have about 200 shoeboxes that can be wrapped. Please see Andy Lindstrom for more details.

## *Altar Flowers*

Our Flower Chart is on display on the "Epworth" bulletin board in the Community Room. If you would like to purchase flowers for a Sunday in 2019, all you need to do is sign-up and pay. Someone will pick them up and deliver them to church for you. You are welcome to take your flowers home with you after service. If you would prefer to make a donation to Missions in lieu of flowers, list it as Bread and Water when you sign-up. A pitcher and loaf of bread will be placed on the altar to symbolize your gift.

To cut down on administration time we ask that you pay when you sign-up. Please place the \$10 payment labeled for flowers or bread and water in the envelopes provided and place this into the large white envelope next to the flower chart or in the offering basket.

If you have any questions, please contact the Church Office at 847-931-5400.

### **MANNA ORDERS!**

Manna orders will be taken on January 6<sup>th</sup> & 20<sup>th</sup>. Order forms can be found in the attendance folder as well as on the west wall in the Community Room.

Purchase a gift card to give as a gift or purchase them to use for your everyday shopping at the grocery store and/or gas station! Epworth receives 2–20% of the price you pay.

Give it a try!

Questions? Contact Carole Burris or the Church Office.

## 2019 FOOD PANTRY ITEM OF THE MONTH

The first Sunday of each month we will be collecting different non-perishable food items that will be given to our local food pantries. Below is a list of the designated food items that we have selected for each month of 2019; however, please feel free to donate any non-perishable food items.



**January** - Baby Items: Formula, Baby Food, Baby Cereal, etc.

**February** - Canned Vegetables

**March** - Canned Fruit, Jell-O

**April** - Canned Meat & Fish

**May** - Rice, Boxed Potatoes, Sides, Pasta

**June** - Cereal, Oats

**July** - Condiments: Peanut Butter, Jelly, Sauces, Spaghetti

**August** - Crackers, Soups, Dried Beans

**September** - Juices, Coffee, Tea

**October** - Baking Items: Flour, Sugar, Cornmeal

**November** - Paper Goods: Toilet Paper, Plates, Diapers, Wet Ones

**December** - Pork and Beans, Dried Fruit and Meat

All food items can be placed in the designated baskets at the back of the Sanctuary before worship.

## JANUARY RAINBOW COVENANT – UNITED METHODIST VOLUNTEERS IN MISSION

United Methodist Volunteers in Mission-North Central Jurisdiction is charged with resourcing individuals, teams, leaders, and UMVIM projects in this jurisdiction. This office maintains a future teams list, sends out e-newsletters, and maintains the National Project List. It also assists Emergency Response Training (ERT) and VIM leader training. [umvimncj.org](http://umvimncj.org)

To make a donation to this month's Rainbow Covenant organization, simply place a donation marked for "Rainbow Covenant" in this morning's offering plate.

## 2019

## MISSION OF THE MONTH

### January

UNVIM North Central Jurisdiction

### February

Habitat for Humanity

### March

Abounding Ministries

### April

Lithuania in Mission Together

### May

UMCOR

### June

Albert Willicor

### July

Native American Ministry of Presence

### August

Easy Care Youth Program

### September

UM Global Aids Fund

### October

Midwest Mission Distribution Center

### November

Faith Community Homes

### December

Solar Oven Partners

Full details of each mission is on our website: [www.eumcelgin.org](http://www.eumcelgin.org) under the "SERVE" tab.



Are you looking to recycle clothing, shoes and / or other textiles which you no longer need? Consider placing items in the blue USAgain collection bin located at the far west driveway. USAgain resells donated items here in the US and abroad. Epworth receives 5 cents per pound of textiles collected. Last year we earned over \$200.00 per quarter from donations. It's a great way to help our church and, more importantly, help prevent textiles from ending up in our landfills!



## JANUARY 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, January 6<sup>th</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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**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, January 15<sup>th</sup> @ 4:30-6:45pm.**

Those wishing to serve, please see Janina Hoffman 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 East Dundee areas each month. The following time is available to serve at Food for Greater Elgin:

**When: Monday, January 21<sup>st</sup> @ 5:30-8:00pm**

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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**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, January 27<sup>th</sup> @ 5:00pm.**

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

## WEEKLY 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!

## BLANKENSHIP SCHOLARSHIP APPLICATIONS WILL BE AVAILABLE ON JANUARY 7<sup>TH</sup>!!

Applications are open to individuals who:

- Are a member or have been active in Epworth UMC for at least 6 months prior to the March 31<sup>st</sup> deadline.
- Will be attending an accredited 4 year college or university, seeking a Bachelor level degree.
- Demonstrate financial need (as calculated using the Federal Application for Student Aid).
- Have established a minimum 2.5 GPA.



**Applications and references must be submitted by March 31<sup>st</sup>.**

Scholarships will be awarded by June 1<sup>st</sup>.

Please contact the church office with questions.