

## **This Week at Epworth**

Sunday, December 24

### **Christmas Eve**

- 10:00am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:30am Worship
- 5:00pm Christmas Eve Service

Monday, December 25

### **Christmas Day**

Office Closed

Wednesday, December 27

- 10:00am Newsletter Folding

Sunday, December 31

### **New Year's Eve**

- 10:00am Coffee Fellowship
- 10:30am Worship

**Welcome!** If you're a guest, know that we're glad you're here, and that we'd love to get to know you better. If this is your first visit, welcome. If you are returning, welcome back!

**Coffee Fellowship** time is at 10:00 a.m. Enjoy coffee, lemonade, water, and a treat.

We welcome our visitors to join us!

**This service is livestreamed at [epworthvalleycity.com](http://epworthvalleycity.com)**



# EXPERIENCING CHRISTMAS

CHRIST  
IN THE SIGHTS  
AND SOUNDS  
OF ADVENT

### **Contact Information**

**680 8th Ave. SW  
Valley City, ND 58072  
Ph: 701-845-0340  
[epworthvalleycity.com](http://epworthvalleycity.com)**

## Sermon Series

### Previous Sundays—

*Bring in the Tithe*

*Do You See What I See?*

*Children's Christmas  
Program*

*Do You Taste What I  
Taste?*

### Today—

## Do You Feel What I Feel?

### Our Mission

To make disciples  
of Jesus Christ for the  
transformation of the  
world.

### Our Vision

Living, sharing and growing  
in God's love by bringing  
the world to Christ and  
Christ to the world through  
open hearts, open minds,  
and open doors.

### Our Strategy

Radical Hospitality  
Spiritual Growth  
Signature Ministries  
Collaborative Leadership

*Where + is indicated, standing or sitting, we praise God.*

*You are invited to read aloud the **bold text**.*

*Large print hymnals are available upon request to an usher*

*On the screen—Leader=white text, People=yellow text*

## The Church Gathers to Worship

### + Call to Worship –

Leader: Come let us worship in joy as the steadfast assurance that God is with us.

**All: We will embrace the goodness of God as we worship.**

Leader: With hands outstretched in praise and thanksgiving, we celebrate with shepherds and proclaim with angels.

**All: We embrace the goodness of God when we embrace both the holiest and the lowliest among us.**

Leader: The lights, the sounds, the feelings of the season remind us that God has come near.

**All: Let us rejoice as we embrace the goodness of God with all of our senses.**

*Based on a ritual by Matt Rawle in material for *Experiencing Christmas: Christ in the Sights and Sounds of Advent* ©2023*

+ Opening Song – No. 196 *Come, Thou Long-Expected Jesus*

## The Church Lifts Prayers to God

### Unison Prayer –

**Creative God, breath of all life, you walked this earth, you touched the soil, quenched your thirst, embraced this world, brought life and light, love, and laughter into dark and death-filled lives. We bring to you our sacrifice of contrite and willing hearts. May you help us to grasp the strength and power of the mysterious truth that you, who created butterfly wings, also entrusted your life to the care of ordinary people, that you became weak so we could know the power of your love. In the name of your vulnerable Son, Jesus Christ, Amen.**

*Based on a prayer by John Birch and published at [www.faithandworship.com/prayers\\_Christmas.htm](http://www.faithandworship.com/prayers_Christmas.htm)*

### Lifting our Joys and Concerns

Leader: Lord, in your mercy / in our joy

People: Hear our Prayer

### Announcements –

Call to Prayer – No. 229

*Infant Holy, Infant Lowly*

### A Time of Silent Prayer

### Pastoral Prayer

## The Lord's Prayer in Unison

Our Father, who art in heaven, hallowed be Thy name. Thy kingdom come, Thy will be done on earth as it is in heaven. Give us this day our daily bread. And forgive us our trespasses, as we forgive those who trespass against us. And lead us not into temptation, but deliver us from evil. For Thine is the kingdom and the power and the glory, forever. Amen.

Call for Children — No. 217

*Away in a Manger vs. 1 & 2*

Time Mostly for Children —

Musical Response — No. 217

*Away in a Manger vs. 3*

## The Church Hears God's Word

First Reading — Luke 1:26-38 (Gabriel announces to Mary)

*Response—Leader: The Word of God for the people of God.*

*People: Thanks be to God.*

Hymn of Response — No. 219

*What Child is This v. 1 & 2*

Sermon Scripture — Luke 22:21-35 (Simeon holds Jesus)

*Response — Leader: The Word of the Lord.*

*People: Thanks be to God*

Message —

*Do you Feel What I Feel?*

Pastor Duane Coates



**“The child to be born  
will be holy;  
he will be called  
Son of God.”**

Luke 1:35

## In Our Prayers This Week

### Fighting Cancer

Jan Barlow  
Jo Thorson  
Jill Olson  
Arin Lutiker  
Dale Neuberger  
Don Baasch

### Prayer Requests

Our 4GoG Ministries  
mental health concerns

Lori Glaser  
World Leaders  
Military  
Jaxon Horsager  
Kathy Mah  
Mark Ziebert  
Vivian Ziebert  
LeRoy Magnuson  
Wayne McKirdy  
Erin Reielbach  
Wyatt Tulp  
Karen Pullen  
Gail Pederson  
Ashley Enright  
Jerry & LaWanna Hieb  
Macy Raven  
Family of Matt Bernard  
Family of Christine  
Hermanson  
Family of Jim Leadbetter  
Sr.

### In Joy

The holiday season  
Time with friends &  
family

If you or a member of your family is going into the hospital or moving from one care center to another and you would like the church to know about this, please call the church office at 701-845-0340 or email [office@epworthvalleycity.com](mailto:office@epworthvalleycity.com). This helps our church family care for one another.

## Ministers of the Gospel

All members of the congregation.

## Appointed Clergy

Rev. Duane Coates  
pastor@epworthvalleycity.com  
Phone: 701-845-0156  
Cell: 605-695-5561

## Program Staff

Cassidy Fraedrich  
Office Administrator  
office@epworthvalleycity.com  
701-845-0340

Hayley Winkler  
Christian Ed. Director  
christianed@epworthvalleycity.com  
Cell: 701-840-7073

Paul & Brenda Lint  
Youth Ministries  
youth@epworthvalleycity.com  
Cell: 701-840-0410

VirLyn Hoff  
Congregational Care Coordinator  
virlynhoff@yahoo.com  
Cell: 701-840-9285

## Northwest District Superintendent

Rev. Joel Winckler

## Dakotas Bishop

Bishop Lanette Plambeck

You can use your smartphone to give electronically today. Just scan the QR code below.



epworthvalleycity.com/giving

Guest wifi: Epworth Guest  
Password: epworth@guest

# The Church Responds to God's Word

**Offertory – “All is Well”**

Sung by Laura Owen Pretsell  
Accompanied by Peter Nielson

**+ Doxology No. 95**

**+ Prayer of Dedication**

**+Closing Song — No. 240**      *Hark! the Herald Angels Sing*

**+Dismissal with Blessing —**

Leader: Servants of God, go forth in peace, for our own eyes have seen our salvation in body and spirit.

**All: It was a revealing light for outsiders and a glory for all God's faithful people.**

Leader: Grace, mercy, and peace from the Creator, Savior, and Counselor, who will be with you now and forever.

**All: Amen!**

*By Bruce Prewer. Posted on [Bruce Prewer's Homepage](#).*

**+Postlude —**



## **We Care For Our Community**

Please share with the church office if you, a family member, or another in our church family are experiencing illness, hospitalization, or need of pastoral care.

Pastor Duane Coates, Office: 845-0340 Cell: 605-695-5561



# DECEMBER

Birthdays & Anniversaries

Carol Peterson  
Eden Cuypers  
Ellen Drevecky  
Patricia Triebold  
Kyle Vareberg  
Abby Rohrbeck  
Wayne Winkler  
Celeste Breske

26<sup>th</sup> Deb & Jim  
Hegdahl  
28<sup>th</sup> Avis & Dwayne  
Richter



## Address Change?

If your address has changed, please notify the church office @ 845-0340 or e-mail: office@epworthvalleycity.com

Please help us keep our postage costs down by notifying the church of your address change.

# WE'RE IN THIS TOGETHER!

## Epworth Ministry Review

**Attendance: Sun. December 17**

In-person— 73 Online—18

**Attendance: Wed. December 20**

Youth— 10

**Stewardship: December 17—December 23, 2023**

Daily Expenses— \$17,193.20

Glory of God's House— \$10,430.00

Building & Maintenance— \$130.00

Parking Lot— \$50.00

Sunday School— \$5.00



## In Ministry Today

Organist— Peter Nielson

Tech Team—

Lector— Alyssa Thomsen

Ushers— Bev & Don Enger

## Ushers Needed



## Church Staff Thanks Parishioners for

**Gifts**—Thank you, so much, for the generous gifts and kind words that the pastor and staff received this past Christmas. We also thank those of you who brought food



to the staff-appreciation potluck on Dec. 10. Knowing we are appreciated really helps us feel as though the work is worthwhile and keeps us going. These gifts also help us feel seen and loved for the persons we are, distinct from the work we do.

## Practices Changing to Keep Us All Safer—

In our effort to offer a safe, secure environment that spiritually nourishes everyone, including vulnerable populations, Epworth has made some changes to certain practices as of Dec. 10. This was a result of a recent awareness that some of our previous practices put our children, youth, and vulnerable adults at risk, especially to those persons unknown to us who may find our materials on the Internet. Some internet users unfortunately are becoming increasingly crafty in using online-posted personally identifiable information to steal identities or harm people in other ways. We wouldn't want that to happen to anyone because of participation in worship here.

We will soon empanel a task force of people with knowledge and vested interest in these topics. That task force will update their training in these issues and then update our Safer Sanctuary Policy (designed to protect everyone, especially vulnerable populations). I imagine these practices will be part of our discussion about what we do and why.

So, until further notice, we will not publish children's names in the worship guide, nor dates listed in the birthdays.

— Pastor Duane Coates

## Christmas Eve Offering to Feed

**People**—Undesignated offerings received at our Christmas Eve service do not go to current expenses. These offerings are a gift to some other agency or person to accomplish a specific ministry. For instance, in 2022, we raised more than \$3,300 from our three Christmas Eve services and specific gifts. These offerings supported Rydel Samuelson, who was finishing his seminary career. (Rydel is now a licensed local pastor serving the Wagner-Tyndall charge in southcentral South Dakota).

This year, the Servant Leadership Team has decided to split the offering between the Backpack Program and the Barnes County Food Pantry. So, any undesignated gifts given during the Christmas Eve service (at 5 p.m. on Dec. 24 in the Epworth Sanctuary) will be split between these two feeding ministries. Also, as always, we will distribute any gifts given specifically to these causes regardless of when they are given.

The Backpack program currently provides 226 packs of meals each month in the backpacks of children on the last day of school each week. This is to supplement nutrition in homes that may be food-insecure. Some of these homes wouldn't be able to provide adequate nutrition to these students without the backpack meals. When the major benefactor to this program shifted its generosity away from this non-profit, opportunities opened to broaden the donor base for this program.

The Barnes County Food Pantry, a program of the non-profit South Central Adult Services, provides nutritional sustenance and personal items to eligible individuals and families in need. Monetary donations will be used to purchase price-reduced, overstocked items from area grocery food distributors. So, these donations provide the Food Pantry with the flexibility to purchase those needed items in short supply.