

Epworth United Methodist Church
 680 8th Avenue SW
 Valley City, ND 58072
 www.epworthvalleycity.com

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Epworth Events

Living, Sharing, and Growing in God's Love

January 2024

From the Pastor's Pen

People say you don't realize how important health is until it suddenly turns poor. We don't realize how vital respiration is until we are short of breath. At this time of year, I realize the importance of light. Throughout the year, I crave light. I expect it. And I take it for granted until the dark early mornings and sudden evenings of winter steal much of our daily light supply. Not only are there fewer daylight hours during the winter, but the skies are more apt to be overcast during this season.

As I've preached before, that is one of the reasons the early Christians placed Christmas so close to the winter solstice on the calendar. Early Christians liked the pagan Roman idea of having a festival of light (Saturnalia) in the midst of a dark season.

We are living now in a dark season, not just in our weather, but in our world, as well. But in the midst of that, we celebrate Epiphany on Jan. 6. Before Jan. 6 represented the anniversary of 2021's deadly riot at the U.S. Capitol, it meant Epiphany – the end of the 12 days of Christmas. Those 12 days represent the journey of the magi, who took as long as two years to travel from Persia to Bethlehem, following the light of Christ.

We still have that light. In fact, this time of year, we need that light, literally and spiritually. God shines light into our dark world. God continually chases away the darkness and creates something new when we thought there was no way. Christmas represents that. Epiphany represents that, too, in a slightly different way. Epiphany reflects the effect of God's incarnation into human flesh. Epiphany means that the darkness of this world will not last forever. That gives us hope – hope that already the earth is tilting this northern hemisphere back toward the sun. So, the days are already lengthening. God will not abandon us to the darkness forever. We have the light of Christ shining through into our lives, into this new year, into our future.

The few weeks between Epiphany and Lent, I often think of as a season of Epiphany. Liturgically, we display green paraments because it is a season of using the light for growth (of spiritual and discipleship natures). Experts in liturgy call it "ordinary time" (meaning the weeks fall in a certain order – first Sunday after Epiphany, second Sunday after Epiphany, etc.), but I like to think of the whole season as a season of light. That's what I crave during this season.

So, let us celebrate the light as we move together into what I like to think of as an Epiphany season.

Looking for the light,

Pastor Duane Coates



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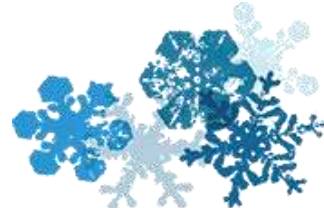
RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
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 PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY



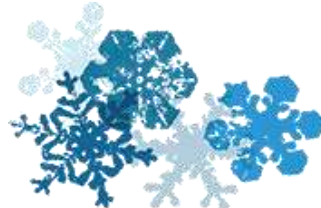
Epworth's
 HOLY GROUNDS

OPEN: Monday– Friday
 6 am-6 pm
Saturday
 8 am-4 pm





January 2024



Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
	1 New Years Day Office Closed	2 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study	3 7pm Youth	4 10am Pastor's Bible Study 5:30pm Staff Christmas Party	5	6
7 9am Sunday School 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship	8	9 9am Ministerial Association 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study	10 7pm Choir 7pm Youth	11 7pm Cub Scouts	12	13
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; background-color: #0056b3; color: white;">Pastor Duane out of the office</div> 						
14 9am Sunday School 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship	15 Martin Luther King Jr. Day Office Closed	16 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study 5:30pm SLT	17 7pm Choir 7pm Youth	18 10am Pastor's Bible Study 2:30pm Staff Meeting 7pm Cub Scouts	19 Newsletter Articles Due	20
21 9am Sunday School 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship	22 Pastor's Day Off	23 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study 5:15pm Back- pack Program Board Meeting 6pm Girl Scouts	24 7pm Youth 7pm Choir	25 10am Pastor's Bible Study 7pm Cub Scouts	26	27
<div style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px; display: inline-block; background-color: #0056b3; color: white;">Winter Connection Youth Event</div> 						
28 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship	29 Pastor's Day Off	30 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study	31 7pm Youth			



JANUARY BIRTHDAYS

Koltyn Grebel
 Noreen Smestad
 Camille Zachrison
 Henry Ranum
 Avis Richter
 Pastor Duane Coates
 Dottie Werkhoven
 Joseph DeMasi
 Emma Cook
 Kaylee Vareberg
 Randie Markuson
 Alison Ranum
 Darlene Bloom
 Heather Kvilvang
 Rob Marshall
 Gordon Hoff
 VirLyn Hoff
 Dennis Pederson
 Andrew Bruns
 Anika Nielson
 Darlene Mueller
 Dee Ranum
 Tanner Clark
 Jill Rischmiller
 Ben Northridge
 Trevor Breske
 Lane Nielson
 Ellen Lint
 Abigail Martineck
 Judy Nicholson
 Neil Skarloken
 Scott Cummings
 Anita Tulp
 Phil Mueller
 Mae Ranum
 Grace Michele Olauson
 Liz Fick
 Brittney Torbenson
 Dennis Fick



Your serving group provides fellowship for Sunday mornings and the comforting presence that all need following a funeral or memorial service. These are important ministries that we provide for one another within the community. It is a way to reach out to those who have not found that gift of the Holy Spirit as being real in their own lives. If the month is not a fit for you, please contact VirLyn Hoff, or leave a note in the office.

The next funeral will be served by the September serving group.

Kitchen Care—Please refer to the poster in the kitchen for care and cleanup after kitchen use.

Serving Groups

Serving for January
CO-CHAIRS—
Mary Lee & Steve Nielson
 Liz & Dennis Fick
 Rose & Brad Knutson
 Scott Miller
 Avis & Duane Richter

Serving for February
CO-CHAIRS—
Bonnie & Bruce Ranum
 Sheryl Hanson
 Rhonda & Rob Marshall
 Barb & Jon Owen
 Craig Ranum
 Anita & Kevin Tulp
 Paul & Brenda Lint
 Alison & Jordon Ranum

Epworth's 2024 Leadership Team

Class of 2024
 Holly Neuberger—Trustees
 Bill Bertram—Staff-Parish
 Phil Mueller—Finance
Class of 2025
 Bruce Larson—Trustees
 Jan McCarthy—Trustees
 Bev Enger—Staff-Parish
 Katy Van Dyke—Finance
Class of 2026
 Justin Horsager— Trustees
 Alyssa Thomsen— Staff-Parish
 Gail Pederson—Finance

 Pastor Duane Coates
 Barb Owen—Lay Leader
 Anita Tulp—Lay Member to AC
 Avis Richter—Treasurer
 Recording Secretary—Randi Watterson

Ministry in Review

November 28, 2023—December 23, 2023

Daily Expenses	\$25,564.55
Glory of God's House Campaign	\$11,205.00
Building & Maintenance	\$230.00
Memorial	\$60.00
Sunday School	\$55.00
Endowment	\$50.00
Upper Room	\$50.00
Parking Lot	\$50.00
Study Books	\$25.00

Sunday Worship Attendance

December 3—91	Online— 9
December 10—121	Online— 29
December 17—73	Online—18

Sunday School Attendance

December 3—15	Adults—9
December 10—16	Adults—4

Youth Attendance

December 6— 17
December 13—15
December 20—10



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

Contact Information Sought

Epworth seeks to stay in touch with all of its members, regardless of whether they live in the vicinity of Valley City. So, we need your help in providing contact information (mailing address, phone number and/or e-mail) for those of our members in your family or circle of friends for whom we lack updated information.

Below is a list of those members for whom we have insufficient data. We would appreciate you looking over the list and sending to the office any contact information you might have about any of them. You may reach Cassidy in the office at 701-845-0340 or office@epworthvalleycity.com.

Cassie Earls	Brittany Grieger	Lucas McClean	Joshua Skarloken
Jamie Bowen	Nicole Grieger	Allyson Meendering	James Stoen
Allison Baasch	Leah Haak	Ed Meendering	Nathaniel Storbeck
Benjamin Baasch	Corey Hansen	Emma Mielke	Laura Suchy
Trevor Breske	Deena Hansen	Evan Mielke	Heidi Tougas
Samantha Brobst	Shelby Hatch	Mark Miller	Gabrielle Wavra
Braylen Bruns	Alyssa Hatcher	Melissa Miller	Dustin Werkhoven
Courtney Bruns	Joshua Hegdahl	Jeffrey Noeske	Destiny Winkler
Mindy Jo Bultema Anderson	Easton Hesch	Jenessa Noeske	Devin Wright
Katie Clark	Tiffany Hieb	Lindsey Noeske	Tayrn Wright
Joseph Cummings	Tyler Jacobson	Chelsey Olauson	Kristin Young
Meredith Cummings	Lucas Jury	Jacob Olauson	Preston Young
Amy Egeberg	Aaron Klien	Steven Owen	Austin Zubrod
Tracy Eggert	Sarah Klien	Brandon Pierce	Carson Zubrod
Abbey Fick	Heather Knutson	Kaylee Schlittenhardt	
Cassandra Fick	Kyle Knutson	Talon Schlittenhardt	
Andrew Glaser	Mackenzie Kunze	Daniel Schwehr	
Kael Grebel	Rachel Levy	Laine Schwehr	
	Katie Marshall	Charles Senne	

Matt Bernard, Former Member's Husband, Dies

Matt Bernard, 78, the husband of former Epworth member Linda (Pomeroy) Bernard, died on Saturday, Dec. 9, in Pierre, SD, following a brief illness. His memorial service was held on Dec. 18 at Saints Peter and Paul Catholic Church in Pierre. His remains will be interred near Valley City this coming spring or summer. His obituary may be found here: <https://www.feigumfh.com/obituaries/Matt-Bernard?obId=30100236#/obituaryInfo>
Cards may be sent to Linda at 726 S. Harrison Ave., Pierre, SD 57501.

Human Relations Offering to be Collected Jan. 14

The 2024 Human Relations Sunday offering will be received on Sunday, Jan. 14. This is one of the eight special offerings each year requested by our connectional structure. Human Relations Day is observed each year on the Sunday before the Martin Luther King, Jr. Day holiday. The observance of this special Sunday with offering calls United Methodists to recognize the right of all God's children to realize their full potential as human beings and in relationship with one another. This special offering benefits neighborhood ministries through community developers, community advocacy and ministry with at-risk teens.



Christian Education, Hayley Winkler, Director

Hello Everyone!

Wow! We sure have been busy in Sunday School this past month! All our kiddos did an absolutely amazing job in their Christmas Program, and I am so incredible proud of them all! They all worked so hard on this performance, and they all were amazing! Thank you to Holly, Paul, and Carson for their help with the kids for their program!

Looking to the future, we are starting to look for volunteers for Vacation Bible School in June. As a reminder, VBS will take place June 10-14 this year from 5:30pm to 8:00pm with a meal being served from 5:30pm-6:00pm each night. If you are interested in helping out this year with VBS, please let me know! I will have a sign up sheet in my office.

Our Library Adult Sunday School group will finish up the Advent book study on Jan. 7 and now we are looking towards what we would like to do for that group. If you have ideas of books for this group to do a book study on please let me or Pastor Duane know as soon as possible so we can get those books ordered for you.

We will resume Sunday School on January 7th at 9:00am after the break. We will continue on our journey through the Bible and all of Jesus' teachings!

I hope everyone had a wonderful holiday and a happy new year! I look forward to see all of our kiddos back on January 7th!

Blessings,
Hayley Winkler
Director of Christian Education
christianed@epworthvalleycity.com



College Scholarship Applications Available

The General Board of Higher Education and Ministry of The United Methodist Church is now accepting college and graduate-school applications. Any active members of The United Methodist Church may apply.

Each year, \$5.5 million is awarded to help students in the United States and abroad pursue their dreams through higher education.

GBHEM's Scholarships Office administers more than 70 [scholarship programs](#) with one general application. Students are permitted to submit one application per year where it will be screened for all possible eligible programs. Scholarship programs are divided into the following three categories:

[General Scholarships](#)

[HBCU Scholarships](#)

[Ministry as a Career Scholarships](#)

The deadline to complete the application is March 13, 2024. Please email umscholar@gbhem.org for more information.

Five New Members Join Epworth

On Sunday, Dec. 17, the membership of Epworth grew by four professing members and one associate member. Each of the new members had years of affiliations with Epworth, but recently took classes to join. Our membership now stands at 393 professing members.

Joining as full professing members are Annette Nielson, Anne Osborne, and Jo and Marvin Thorson. Marlys Christ joined as an associate member because her professing membership is retained by the Kathryn Lutheran Church.

An associate member is a member of another denomination who wishes to come into official fellowship of a United Methodist Church, expect its pastoral care and oversight and to participate in its activities, including the holding of office, except as a voting member of the local church governing body or a United Methodist structure beyond the local church. Furthermore, associate members do not enjoy the same due-process rights as professing members. Therefore, the associate membership may be terminated at the discretion of the local church or when the member moves from this vicinity.

Nielson joined by transfer of membership from Berthold Baptist Church in Berthold, N.D. Osborne joined by transfer of membership from St. John's United Methodist Church in Wimbledon, N.D. The Thorsons had been members of the now closed Page (North Dakota) United Methodist Church for years, but officially joined on profession of faith because there was no record of their membership being appropriately transferred to an open United Methodist Church at the time of Page's closing.

When you see these persons, please extend an official welcome.



Poinsettias Decorating the Chancel

- In memory of **Mason Enger** and our parents
—Don & Bev Enger
- In memory of **Milly Hanson**
—Hanson family
- In memory of **loved ones**
—Gordon & VirLyn Hoff
- In memory of **Darin and Pat Malec**
—Malec families
- In memory of **Connie Olson and Dorothy & Vince Olson**
—Perry, Becky, & Berkley Kuss
- In memory of **Dorothy Roorda**
—Perry Roorda
- In memory of **Herb Triebold**
—Pat Triebold, Kathy & John, Erik & Kathy, Denise & Bill, Diane & Art, Jeff & Pam, and Duane
- In memory of **Allen and George Nielson**
—Pat, Steve, & Mary Lee Nielson
- In memory of **Ty and Alex Peterson**
—Steve & Mary Lee Nielson and Carol Peterson
- In memory of **Bonnie Burchill**
—Family of Bonnie Burchill
- In memory of **parents and sister**
—Linda Seidel
- In memory of **Omund & Peggy Jacobson**
—Bruce & Kay Jacobson
- In memory of **Roy & Doris Jacobson, Carol Jacobson, and Mike Jacobson**
—Charles Jacobson family



After a whole month of holiday challenges, the youth rested the week of Christmas and will be back at it January 3rd. Our December theme of Holiday Bake Off included rules like answer questions about the Christmas story to get more ingredients. Teams worked well together and ended up making some beautiful and/or tasty creations. The true winners were the judges who got to eat all of them and the youth who got to have fun (and I do believe switched some goodies). Well, and Pastor Duane who got to sample the treats. All in all it was a good time.

January will bring a new theme of resolutions vs. habits and how we can become the people God created us to be. We continue to grow in faith and fun. Merry Christmas from the youth!






Wednesdays

@ 7pm





United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith – VirLyn Hoff, Unit President

Mary had a baby – not a doll in a symbolic manger – a real baby who had to be fed, diapered, swaddled, cuddled, rocked. A real baby! I feel tired remembering bringing home a baby. Jesus grew into adulthood. So there were years of feeding, clothing,

teaching, training, mentoring, encouraging.

Maternal health, infant mortality, food insecurity, education, job training, opportunity, physical and mental health care for women, children and youth are priorities for the mission work of United Women in Faith. These issues are true for our Valley City community.

Our Christmas program was December 6. Darlene Mueller hosted brunch. Holly Neuberger read the birth of Jesus as recorded in the Gospel of Luke. Michelle Grebel led the program about bells. Bev Enger shared about the new books for the reading program. We sang. Thank you, Sisters in Faith, for leading us into the holidays.

We donated hats, mittens and gloves for the local schools. We donated \$1,000 to the Back Pack Program for which the grant ended so the program now depends on donations.

No meetings set for January. 2024 will unfold. Let's keep our hearts and minds open to God's will for our mission service – Love in Action!

"The child grew and became strong." (Luke 2: 40) As should all children!



Thank you to the visiting angels of Epworth who visited the care center, Legacy, Bridgeview, and delivered cookie trays to homebound friends: Bev & Don Enger, Michelle Grebel, VirLyn Hoff, Tami Hanson, Holly Neuberger, Randi Watterson, and Pastor Duane.

Thank you for all the treats donated for this ministry. 28 trays were delivered including the staff.



Prayer for New Year

Methodist founder John Wesley began a tradition of watch-night services. So, as one year passed to the next, Methodists would be in worship, praising God for the year that was and praying with hope for the year that is beginning. During January, it is fitting for us to look back to what we accomplished in 2023 and set some goals, spiritual and otherwise, for 2024. To assist in that activity, we offer the following "Covenant Prayer in the Wesleyan Tradition." It helps us to focus not on human efforts, but on God's will.

I am no longer my own, but thine.
Put me to what thou wilt, rank me with whom thou wilt.
Put me to doing, put me to suffering.
Let me be employed by thee or laid aside for thee,
exalted for thee or brought low by thee.
Let me be full, let me be empty.
Let me have all things, let me have nothing.
I freely and heartily yield all things to thy pleasure and disposal.
And now, O glorious and blessed God, Father, Son, and Holy Spirit,
thou art mine, and I am thine. So be it.
And the covenant which I have made on earth, let it be ratified in heaven. Amen.



Church Offices will be closed **January 1** for New Years Day

Church Offices will be closed **January 15** for Martin Luther King Jr. Day

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.

Congregational Care

We have suspended the so-called "church family suppers" for the winter months. However, in place of the suppers, we are seeking to conduct potluck dinners and Lenten meals. So, the next potluck will be Sunday, Jan. 21 after worship.

All are invited to these times of food and fellowship. Please join us.

VirLyn Hoff,
Congregational Care Coordinator



In Memory of **Becky Lutz**
—Jerome & Amy Jo Noeske, Endowment
In Memory of **Hans, Laura, & Tom Vagle**
—Diana Vagle, Memorial
In Memory of **All Church Staff**
—Diana Vagle, Memorial

*Memorial gifts given to "Memorials" are undesignated funds that are used to purchase physical items used in worship, in the sanctuary, or in the church building at the discretion of our Servant Leadership Team.

Memorial gifts can be given at any time and either designated or undesignated.