
 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

February 2024



From the Pastor's Pen

"Beloved, let us love one another, because love is from God; everyone who loves is born of God and knows God. Whoever does not love does not know God, for God is love. ... Beloved, since God loves us so much, we also ought to love one another. ... If we love one another, God lives in us, and His love is perfected in us." 1 John 4:7,8,11,12 (NRSV)

Welcome to February, the love month. There was a time when I would dread the reminders of my then lack of a romantic relationship during the coldest and seemingly cloudiest month. But even then, at my core, I understood the love of God. Now, engaged to be married, an uncle, a great uncle, and a soon-to-be step-dad, I think I understand love more fully.

God is love! That is a simple declarative statement that doesn't occupy even a whole Bible verse. Yet all of the verses in all 66 books of the Bible and all three of the monotheistic religions (Judaism, Christianity, and Islam) rest on the foundation of that one short, simple, declarative portion of a verse. All theology and doctrine seeking to define God and order human ritualistic life in response to God boils down to this: God is love.

So, when we experience love, we experience God. And when we experience God with any of our five natural senses (or even with what Methodist founder John Wesley called our spiritual sense), we experience love. Therefore, love becomes our chief aim and our highest priority. Everything else points to that.

Underneath every denominational mission statement is the Scriptural imperative to love. All of us Christians, whom Christ prayed to unify in His last hours before death, must live out that mission. It's easy in this day of troubling cultural and religious divides to lose sight of that. But God, who is love, calls us to love – love ourselves and love others. Perhaps the Beatles (and Charles Wesley before them) were right – love is all you need.

Love is the answer to all three of the following basic questions that guide various religious theologies: 1) What or who is God? 2) What is humanity (or what did God design it to be)? and 3) What is the nature of the relationship between God and humanity? All of that can be summed up in the idea that God is love, humans who love understand that, and humans are called to love others because God first loved us.

So, I hope this February, you will strive to lean into God's love for you, seek to deepen your understanding of God's love for all of us, and work hard to show your love for others. May you experience God's love, reciprocate love back to God, and reflect love out into the pool of humanity.

Love,

Pastor Duane Coates

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RETURN SERVICE REQUESTED
 DATED MATERIAL
 PLEASE DELIVER PROMPTLY

EPWORTH UNITED METHODIST MEN'S

FRENCH TOAST BRUNCH

SUNDAY, FEBRUARY 25, 2024

MENU		COST
French Toast		Adults \$8
Sausage		
Fruits		Grades 1-6 \$4
Assorted Syrups		
Beverage		Preschool Free

Epworth United Methodist Church
680 8th Ave SW Valley City, ND

SERVING FROM 9:00 AM UNTIL 12:30 PM

Proceeds will be used to support Epworth's Youth Ministries





OPEN: Monday– Friday

6 am-6 pm

Saturday

8 am-4 pm

Happy

VALENTINE'S

Day!



February 2024

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 10am Pastor's Bible Study 7pm Cub Scouts	2	3
4 9am Sunday School 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship	5 Pastor's Day Off 7pm Troubadours	6 9am Ministerial Association 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study 5:30pm SPR	7 1:30pm UWF 7pm Youth 7pm Choir	8 10am Pastor's Bible Study 7pm Cub Scouts	9	10
11 9am Sunday School 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship 1pm 4H	12 3pm Staff Meeting 5:15pm SLT 7pm Troubadours	13 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study	14 Ash Wednesday Valentine's Day 6:30pm Ash Wednesday Service 7:15pm Youth 7:15pm Choir	15 10am Pastor's Bible Study 7pm Cub Scouts Pastor Duane out of the office →	16	17
18 9am Sunday School 10am Coffee Fellowship 10:30am Worship (UWF Sunday)	19 President's Day Office Closed 2pm Prayer Vigil 7pm Troubadours	20 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study Newsletter Articles Due	21 10am Pastor @ Bridgeview 5:30pm Lenten Meal 6:15pm Lenten Service 7:15pm Youth 7:15pm Choir	22 10am Pastor's Bible Study 6:30 SPR Training 7pm Cub Scouts	23	24 10am Safer Sanctuaries Training
25 9am Men's French Toast Brunch 9am Sunday School 10:30am Worship	26 Pastor's Day Off 2pm Prayer Vigil 7pm Troubadours	27 1:30pm Tuesday Bible Study	28 5:30pm Lenten Meal 6:15pm Lenten Service 7:15pm Youth 7:15pm Choir	29 10am Pastor's Bible Study 7pm Cub Scouts		



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

Christopher Glaser
Jenna Elston
Jada Zahn
Kael Grebel
Paul Lint
Griffin Kvilvang
Holly Neuberger
Todd Clark
Hilde van Gijssel
Ana Duffy
Sheila Cummings
Steven Nielson
Jennifer Elston
Noah Tulp
Grace Lint
Lauren Hoganson



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

10th Heather & Tim Schwehr



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 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

Serving for March

CO-CHAIRS—
Mike & Randi Watterson
Margie Jansen
Annette & Matt Nielson
Diana Vagle
Cindy & Kevin Zahn

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— Finance
Alyssa Thomsen— Staff-Parish
Gail Pederson—Staff-Parish

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

Ministry in Review

December 24, 2023—January 22, 2024

Daily Expenses	\$24,300.85
Glory of God's House Campaign	\$21,757.00
Parking Lot	\$3,100.00
UMCOR	\$1,500.00
Memorial	\$1,000.00
Christmas Eve	\$920.00
Building & Maintenance	\$892.00
Staff Appreciation Gifts	\$660.00
UWF	\$650.00
Sunday School	\$170.00
Matthew 25	\$147.00
Human Relations Sunday	\$136.00
Choir	\$75.00
Upper Room	\$10.00

Sunday Worship Attendance

December 24— 58	Online— 36
Christmas Eve— 121	Online— 32
December 31— 42	Online— 26
January 7— 78	Online— 19
January 14— N/A	Online— N/A
January 21— 84	Online— 31

Youth Attendance

January 3— 15
January 10— 16
January 17— 14
January 24— 15

Former Pastor Dies in Arizona

The Rev. Dr. Richard Unkenholz died Jan. 6, 2024, in Prescott, Arizona, at the age of 96. Rev. Unkenholz was pastor of Epworth from 1963 to 1969 during the construction of our current building. He is survived by his wife, Pat, of 72 years, who is a retired diaconal minister in our conference. Condolences may be sent to her at 1039 Scott Drive A218, Prescott, AZ 86301. He is also survived by Mark (Karla) Unkenholz, Jeanne (Robert) Kolberg, Carol Sue (Dan) Morgan, David (Lisa) Unkenholz, seven grandchildren and five great-grandchildren.


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 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.



Church Offices will be closed **February 19** for President's Day

Will Be Closed:

Multiplying Love Becomes Theme of Lenten Services

During Lent, Epworth will follow the lead of the bishop's appointive cabinets of both the Dakotas and Minnesota Annual Conferences when we bring our study focus to the basic love mission Holy Scripture gives to all Christians.

Spreading love was the heart-rending message our Methodist founder John Wesley preached to lonely, overworked, unchurched people in the coal mines and on the streets of 18th century England. Those who heard that message then flooded his society meetings to hear and learn more. Love is the heart of what Wesley worked out as a practical theology even as the structure of his movement took on his Enlightenment-informed logical structure.

Award-winning Wesleyan theologian Dr. Paul W. Chilcote explains this in his book: "Multiplying Love: A Vision of United Methodist Life Together," which forms the basis of our Lenten church-wide study.

The book is distributed by Cokesbury. Here is what they say about it: "Our world needs love during these desperate days of radical polarization and division. Our United Methodist churches yearn to embrace love more completely because God first loved us. Our 'faith' (including doctrine) is important; Christian 'hope' (including renewal) is important; 'love' of God and neighbor is more important. *Multiplying Love underscores what matters most and stands in contrast to divisive misreadings of essential Methodist teachings. Chilcote helps us embrace anew the Wesleyan vision of love of Jesus as central to what we believe and how we live.*"

So, we will engage this book during the Wednesday night Lenten services between Feb. 14 and March 20, inclusive. These services will involve live music and recorded preaching from cabinet members of both conferences (which includes our former pastor Rev. Dan Bader). The titles of sermons from which we can pick include: "Our Purpose," "Always Renewing," "Love Is the Highest Gift," "Why We Need to Embrace Unity," "The Peaceable Reign of Christ," "The Opportunity Before Us," "The Church as an Inclusive Community of Love and Grace," "Discovering Love Again for the First Time," and "A Vision for the Refreshed United Methodist Church."

Ash Wednesday's worship involves a traditional service complete with imposition of ashes. That service starts at 6:30 p.m. on Wednesday, Feb. 14 in the sanctuary. The other Wednesday Lenten services start at 6:15 p.m. in the Gathering Space, following a 5:30 Lenten meal in the dining room.

This study will also be part of the adult class that meets in the library (Feb. 25-March 24) and possibly the Thursday, 10 a.m. Bible study in the dining room (Feb. 15-March 28). Both studies are open to adults. The church will have books available for purchase for \$16, or you may order them from Cokesbury at www.cokesbury.com.

Pictorial Directories Arrive

The free church directories arrived, and we first want to get them to the people who are photographed in them. So, if you haven't gotten yours yet, please stop by the church office. There are a few extras that we will use for our new members and as a ministry tool to acquaint future newcomers with our existing flock of people.



Christian Education, Hayley Winkler, Director

Hello again everyone!

Well we have been pretty active in Sunday School the last few weeks. Getting back into the swing of things has been pretty fun and exciting for everyone.

I have handed out our new Acolyte schedule to our 4th grade and up kids; so if you didn't get one, please let me know and I can get you a copy for at home.

We are looking for volunteers for our VBS this year that will be held the second week of June this year. We have lots of openings for group leaders, classroom leaders, as well as kitchen/food help. If anyone is interested in helping us out, let me know. We would love to have some of our youth help again this summer with VBS. The kids really enjoyed seeing them at VBS last summer.

It is with a sad heart I inform you all that this will be my last year as the Director of Christian Education. My last day will be the last day of VBS, June 14. I want to thank everyone for this amazing opportunity to work with you all and to get to know all these kids more through the past few years. I will greatly miss working as the Director of Christian Education, but with me student teaching this coming fall, I will sadly not be available to fulfill the duties of this position to its full potential. I will still be around volunteering with Sunday School, Christmas Program as well as VBS in the coming years; so, I will still be around. Again, I want to thank you all for all the love and support you have given me over the past few years. My family and I have grown so much in our faith during the past few years from all your love and kindness you have given us; we will always be thankful for everything you all have done for us.

I hope everyone has a wonderful month!

Blessings,

Hayley Winkler
Director of Christian Education
christianed@epworthvalleycity.com



Food Drive Seek to Love our Neighbors

During the month of Valentine's Day, we ask the congregation to show Christian love to neighbors by collecting food for the Barnes County Food Pantry. Everyone is encouraged to bring various items as donations. Please think in terms of no extra ingredients, supplies, or utilities needed. As such, we invite you to think about how persons would access the items without a can opener, a pot, electricity, or even running water.

This drive started on Sunday, Jan. 28, and run through the month of February.

Here are suggestions of various categories of items to bring:

Easy-to-open: Beef jerky, crackers, canned fruit, vegetables with pull-up lids, tuna pouches or kits.

Dry good: Pasta, rice.

Breakfast items: Cereal, Pop-tarts, bread, peanut butter.

Paper products: Facial tissue, toilet paper.

Personal-care items: Toiletries, baby wipes.

Lenten Prayer Vigils to Be Held on Mondays, 2:00 pm

A prayer vigil will be held the six Mondays of Lent for Epworth and our community. You are invited to join in these vigils at the church or keep in your own home. You may come and go during the hour at the church or keep the entire hour in prayer. A guide will be available for each week. Prayers will be for our church families and church ministries.

John Wesley, founder of Methodism, taught that those who desire the grace of God are to wait for it in the way of prayer. Wesley believed that prayer is not so much to move God – who is always more ready to give that we to ask – as to move ourselves, that we may be willing and ready to receive the good things God has prepared for us.

Prayers will be offered for the congregation's ongoing spiritual growth and physical wellness, for the church's financial security to meet expenses and building maintenance, for the safety of property and our buildings, for vision and discernment of ministry, for "Open hearts, Open minds, Open doors," specific requests or concerns given to pastor, for Pastor Duane, and for our church families grouped by first letter of last name as follows:

February 19 - A,B,C,D

February 26 - E,F,G,H,I

March 4 - J,K,L,M

March 11 - N,O,P,Q

March 18 - R,S,T,U

March 25 - V,W,X,Y,Z

The focus will not be on "how to pray" but on "to whom" we pray.



Safer Sanctuary Training

We all want our church to be safe for all who enter. In 1996, The United Methodist Church declared that having a Safe Sanctuary was necessary. By 1998 all United Methodist Churches were expected to have policies and practices to protect children and others. In 2023, it was time for a revision of the training and a check-in with every church to see if churches are continuing to update policies and training called Safer Sanctuaries.

This past November Brenda Lint attended an event to train the trainers for Safer Sanctuaries. She is offering this training to Epworth and area churches on Saturday, February 24 at 10:00 a.m.

Our employees who work with children, youth, and vulnerable adults are required to attend this training along with a group of people from our church who are interested in the topic. As Brenda is beginning to share this training in several events conference-wide, there may be people from other United Methodist Churches joining in the event. And the event is open. So, if you have an interest in this topic, please come to this free training.

After the training, Epworth will begin updating and implementing changes in our protection policy. If you have comments, questions, or concerns about that, please talk to either Brenda, Pastor Duane or Pastor Paul.

Camp Registration Open

The Dakotas-Minnesota Area United Methodist camp brochures have been published, and are available in the Gathering Space. While camp registration costs at our fully accredited campsites have increased through the years to replace the loss of conference apportionments and to ensure the health and safety of all who attend, Epworth's men's and women's groups combine to pay half the cost of any summer Dakotas or Minnesota United Methodist camp registration from people connected to this church. Furthermore, there are a limited number of camp scholarships available from the conference.

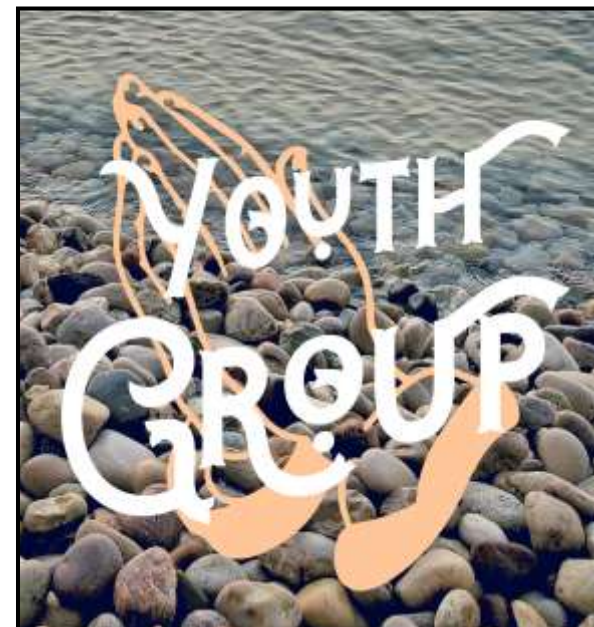
Camp is a dedicated place and time apart for enjoying God and nature in specialized settings with relevant themes and impactful worship. Many made their first real commitment to Christ at United Methodist camps. Therefore, this is a vital ministry in our disciple-making mission.

There are camps for children (as young as kindergarten) and youth interested in a variety of activities from archery, canoeing and other water craft to hiking, fishing, Minecraft, missions, and arts and crafts. But there are also camps for adults, families, and individuals with special needs.

Employment opportunities are also available at each of our three campsites in the Dakotas and three in Minnesota. You may check it out in the brochures in the Gathering Space, at www.dakcamps.org (for Dakotas camps), or www.campminnesota.org (for Minnesota camps).



The youth spent January thinking about New Year New Habits. We talked on how we make great habits and why we should put effort into creating healthy habits in our faith journey. The last weekend of January brought about the conference Winter Connection. This event is held the same weekend in three places in our conference. The event includes worship, fun, and mission work. We have four people representing Epworth United Methodist Church attending the event. In February we will be taking a sneak peek into next summer's camp curriculum entitled "Linked by Love".



**Wednesdays
@ 7pm**





United Women in Faith

United Women in Faith – VirLyn Hoff, Unit President

February programming has the Call to Prayer and Self Denial for 2024. The benefit of this special offering will be designated to “Just Energy for All” projects. United Women in Faith has for decades led Climate Justice efforts. The work of “Just Energy for All” will

focus on reducing greenhouse gas emission, supporting clean renewable energy. a just energy transition, equitable investments, community participation in decision making processes. What can we share that both people and creation will be healthy? What does it mean to you to be healthy?

The program lessons for this year deal with being around the table together – both food and relationships as in Holy Communion. The question will be what can we share that all may be at the table (The Table)? How do we make a table with enough for all, not just food but acceptance, grace, love and opportunity for all? God’s Word says all are invited to the Banquet! What does a meal mean to you? Whom do you dine with to celebrate?

Come and join the table – **Wednesday, February 7 at 1:30 pm.** Bring an article or info on a climate change/ climate justice issue.

We will recognize and honor our mission service on Sunday, February 18 during the worship service.

Ash Wednesday is Wednesday, February 14. Lent services begin February 21. Let us consider hosting a Lent supper for missions.

It seems as if the kitchen needs a scrubbing and drawer cleaning. With a few of us working together, the chore is sociable and gets done.

There are some sales from the holidays so begin baskets for bazaar! Faith – Hope – Love in Action!

“While they were eating, He-Jesus, took a loaf of bread, and after blessing it He broke it and gave it to them....Then He took a cup, and after giving thanks He gave it to them.” (John 14: 22 & 23)



- In Memory of **Christine Hermanson**
—Bev & Don Enger, Glory of God’s House
- In Memory of **James Leadbetter**
—Bev & Don Enger, Glory of God’s House
- In Memory of **David Dunham**
—Pat Nielson, Choir
- In Memory of **Bonnie Burchill**
—Pat Nielson, Choir
- In Memory of **Tom Vagle**
—Pat Nielson, Choir
- In Memory of **Herb Triebold**
—Pat Nielson, Parking Lot
- In Memory of **Dave Zeller**
—Pat Nielson, Parking Lot
- In Memory of **Betty Thompson**
—Pat Nielson, UWF
- In Memory of **Becky Lutz**
—Pat Nielson, UWF
- JoAnne Bear, Memorial
- In Memory of **Pat Malec**
—Pat Nielson, Sunday School
- In Memory of **Jacob Retterath**
—Pat Nielson, Sunday School

*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.



Congregational Care

We have suspended the so-called “church family suppers” for the winter months. However, Lent services will be preceded by Wednesday suppers at 5:30pm. Lent Services will be held at 6:15pm.

Congregational Care will host the first Lent supper on Wednesday, Feb. 21.

Groups or individuals are invited to host a Lent supper. Contact the church office if you are interested.

VirLyn Hoff,
Congregational Care Coordinator



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.