

# THE EPWORTH TOWER

DECEMBER 2020

4855 W. Central Ave., Toledo, Ohio 43615 | 419.531.4236 | [epworth.com](http://epworth.com)



## Christmas Eve Worship Times:

2pm Classic Candlelight Service

3:30pm Children & Family Candlelight Service

*special guest: Santa! – FREE pictures with Santa after worship*

5:30pm Modern Candlelight Communion Service

*livestreamed @ [epworth.com](http://epworth.com) – FREE pictures with Santa before worship*

7pm Classic Candlelight Service

*broadcast live on CBS, WTOL 11 and livestreamed @ [epworth.com](http://epworth.com)*

9pm Classic Candlelight Service

*livestreamed @ [epworth.com](http://epworth.com)*

11pm Classic Candlelight Communion Service



# December 2020

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## Saturday Worship

- **4:30PM 30-MINUTE WORSHIP SERVICE** - Hear an inspiring message of faith and hope at this 30-minute service. Perfect for those who are on-the-go who still want to get a lift of Faith each week.

## Sunday Worship

- **8:30AM WORSHIP W/WEEKLY HOLY COMMUNION** - This classic service includes Holy Communion served every week
- **9:45AM CLASSIC** - Steeped in the warm-hearted Methodist tradition featuring choral and organ music
- **11:00AM MODERN** - Fast-paced and featuring our praise band
- **NEW! WORSHIP VIA TV** - Tune in to WTOL , CBS local **Channel 11** at 11:30am for a televised broadcast of our weekly worship

## Online Worship

- **WEBSITE OR FACEBOOK** - Participate virtually in our worship services every Sunday at 8:30 am at [epworth.com/Live](http://epworth.com/Live). Simply tune in online and watch and worship with us! If you can't view live at 8:30, the message is rebroadcast on facebook at 9:45 am and remains accessible on our facebook page throughout the week at [facebook.com/EpworthToledo](https://facebook.com/EpworthToledo). You can always access any of our streamed sermons 24/7 at [Epworth.com/sermons](http://Epworth.com/sermons). Invite family and friends and celebrate Sundays with your Epworth Family.

## Stay Connected

- **WEEKLY E-NEWSLETTER**  
*Sign up for the weekly e-newsletters!*  
Go to: [epworth.com/email](http://epworth.com/email)
- **OBITUARY NOTIFICATIONS**  
*Sign up to receive obituary notifications!*  
Go to: [epworth.com/email](http://epworth.com/email)
- **SOCIAL MEDIA**
  -  /EpworthToledo
  -  /EpworthChurchToledo
  -  /EpworthToledo

## January Tower Deadline:

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 18, 2020

E-mail articles & pictures to  
[communications@epworth.com](mailto:communications@epworth.com)

## Our Promise

*Help for today,  
Hope for tomorrow,  
And a place to call Home.*

## Our Pastors:

**DR. STEPHEN SWISHER**

*Senior Pastor*  
[steve@epworth.com](mailto:steve@epworth.com)

**REV. BETH IRWIN**

*Associate Pastor*  
[beth@epworth.com](mailto:beth@epworth.com)

**REV. DAVE PETTENGILL**

*Associate Pastor*  
[dave@epworth.com](mailto:dave@epworth.com)

## SUNDAY WORSHIP AIRING ON CBS CHANNEL 11

In an historic development, Epworth UMC began airing our weekly Worship services on WTOL, CBS Channel 11 at 11:30am beginning Dec. 6! For the first time in our Church's storied history, we will be reaching out to millions of people throughout the Midwest each weekend following CBS's top-rated Sunday morning show, Face the Nation. The funds for these and other media outreach have been provided by generous and faithful donors, outside of our Church budget. We are very grateful for this exciting and unprecedented achievement. Be sure to invite your friends and family to watch!

## OFFICE CLOSED

Holiday Hours: In celebration of Christmas, our office will be closed at noon on Thursday, **December 24**. The office will also be closed on Friday, **December 25** and Monday, **December 28**. We will reopen on Tuesday, December 29. For New Year's we will be closed on Thursday, **December 31**, Friday, **January 1**, and Monday, **January 4**. We will reopen on Tuesday, January 5.

Wishing you and your family a magical Christmas filled with many wonderful moments! Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

## Sympathies ~ recent deaths

- **THE COWIE FAMILY** for the passing of Mary Cowie.
- **THE SWISHER FAMILY** for the passing of Rev. Dr. Lowell H. Swisher.

## With Appreciation...

### THANKS!

Dear Epworth Friends,

As I have begun the process of being on an infused medication that runs 24 hours a day, and have been in the U of M hospital for 5 days, your cards, the meals you've brought to nourish us, your many good wishes, but above all your faithful prayers have helped me begin life anew. The diagnosis of an uncommon disease, pulmonary hypertension, has created challenges but also opportunities to experience your love. I am very grateful for everyone of you!

Thank you,

– *Marilynn Schroeder*

### THANK YOU, FRIDAY NIGHT FLIX

Thank you to all of those that participated in our fun Friday Night Flix Drive-In events. On top of enjoying some great family time during these strange COVID times, we were able to help another local charity. Each night we asked that movie attendees bring in paper products or food donations. Your generous gifts went to Leading Families Home – a local shelter that helps families transition from homelessness to permanent housing. Thank you, Epworth!



*If you'd like a thank you printed in the next Tower, send your note in an e-mail to [communications@epworth.com](mailto:communications@epworth.com).*



Hello friends,

In the second chapter of Matthew we read; "Now when Jesus was born in Bethlehem of Judea in the days of Herod the king, behold, there came wise men from the east to Jerusalem, saying, Where is He that is born King of the Jews?" And that is what wise people of every generation have been doing ever since that birth... seeking, hoping, inquiring,

Where is He? Clemenceau of France once spoke sneeringly of Woodrow Wilson at the time of the peace conference after the first World War. "This man," he said, "talks like Jesus Christ." I don't know if President Wilson spoke or acted like Jesus, but I do know if more people at that first peace conference had been more like Jesus we would not have had a second World War.

This baby born in Bethlehem never went to college, never wrote a book, never held elective office and never led an army. He didn't do anything as the poet said, "that usually accompanies greatness." Yet He is the wisest person in all of human history. Tagore the great Indian statesman said, "Jesus was the greatest teacher of truth in all ages." Then he amended his own statement by adding, "Jesus was truth itself." Jesus teaches us to have love in our hearts for God and for others, to have a sense of concern for human beings and to take every opportunity to make a positive impact in the world around us.

I recently met a new friend who has begun attending our Church. He owns hotels here in town and in a neighboring city. He greatly impressed me when he said, "Every time I leave my hotels at night to go home I look back and pray for the guests in

each room, that they might have a comfortable night and sleep well and that they have peace of mind and victory over the troubles of this world." This is the Spirit of Christ, the Presence of the Author of Christmas making a real, practical difference through the life of this business owner. You can make that kind of difference too.

Some people fail in life because they are not wise. The wisdom that Jesus teaches is that of self-sacrifice, generosity, kindness, understanding and love. It is so simple that people often miss it. The first step toward wisdom is an appreciation of the practicality of simplicity. Be sure to catch a hold of Jesus' simple truths and hold on tight.

The magic of Christmas lies in the fact that it is not just a one-time historical episode. Christmas is a continuing, repeated experience. Jesus is being reborn in your life and mine and in the lives of people here at home and around the world as we speak. In this time of crisis and increased concern about the health pandemic we face, people are turning to God and tuning into Church in greater numbers than ever before. Your Epworth team has worked diligently over the last 10 months to make sure we are ready for each of these new friends and that we are positioned to offer hope filled Worship through every media avenue available.

Plan to be with us each weekend of Advent and in our 6 Christmas Eve services as we count down to the wonderful Celebration of the rebirth of Jesus. You'll want to be a part of each joy-filled experience.

Have a Dynamic December,

Dr. Stephen Lowell Swisher  
**Senior Pastor**

### **"Epworth IS my family."**

- Beth Figley's Story

In this Thanksgiving month, it is only fitting to be mindful of blessings, provision and abundance. For me, those things cannot be considered without Epworth in the center.

I came to Epworth over 25 years ago. I had recently moved to Toledo, was looking for a church home (born and raised in the Methodist church in rural NW Ohio), and drove by the church while taking a different route to the mall! On my first visit, I was warmly welcomed by an older woman who took me under her wing for years to come! God knew!

Soon after joining, I was approached by then youth pastor, D2 (David David!), to come on board as a youth leader. That seemed way out of my comfort zone, but I trusted his invitation and said yes. God knew! This led to years of memories, work teams, multiple small group opportunities, lasting friendships with youth and many families, and more. To see youth living for Christ was a blessing beyond words. As a single person, many of these youth became like the children I would never have on my own! God knew!



A treasured friend who was also involved in youth ministry continued to invite me to attend an Emmaus weekend. I finally did, and then became involved (again from the same friend's encouragement) in serving that ministry and Chrysalis as a team member. I cannot overstate the value of pouring into fellow Christian friends! I met even more people through that ministry who have had a profound impact on my life. Christian friends are the BEST accountability partners. God knew!

Epworth IS my family. Virtually every part of my life has Epworth woven into it. From Sunday morning worship and Sunday school, Emmaus share group, Wesley group, social activities and more, I am surrounded by Epworth and its people. When my mom passed away a couple years ago, guess who drove 2 hours to support me (not to mention those who prayed from a distance)...many from my Epworth family.

I am so thankful for the unexpected twists and turns of my life...they led me to Epworth, to opportunities to step out of my comfort zone for Christ, amazing and wonderful friendships, chances to grow in my faith, to serve the least and lost, and so much more. God knew!

I hope you see Epworth among your multitudes of blessings in this season as well.

# Christmas Eve Worship Times



- |        |  |
|--------|--|
| 2pm    | Classic Candlelight  |
| 3:30pm | Children & Family Candlelight<br><i>special guest: Santa!</i><br><i>- pics w/ Santa after worship</i>      |
| 5:30pm | Modern Candlelight Communion<br><i>livestreamed @ epworth.com</i><br><i>- pics w/ Santa before worship</i> |
| 7pm    | Classic Candlelight<br><i>broadcast live on CBS, WTOL Channel 11 &amp; livestreamed @ epworth.com</i>      |
| 9pm    | Classic Candlelight<br><i>livestreamed @ epworth.com</i>   |
| 11pm   | Classic Candlelight Communion  |

For many of us, 2020 has been an unusual year. What better way to bring some normalcy and tradition back to you and your family's life than to attend Christmas Eve worship? We know Christmas planning often begins well in advance so we wanted to let you know, we're offering SIX different worship services this Christmas Eve to help fit your busy schedule as well as help provide less crowding to allow for as much social distancing as possible. We'll also have FREE pictures with Santa following 3:30pm worship and before 5:30pm worship! Planning to go out of town, or not ready to join us in person? Join us this Christmas Eve on the road or from the comfort of your home on CBS, WTOL 11 at 7pm or stream our 5:30pm, 7pm, or 9pm worship services online at epworth.com. Our message this year by Dr. Swisher is "Christmas Is Really All About You."

## UPCOMING GUEST PREACHERS

Dr. Swisher welcomes longtime friends to join him at upcoming Worship Services. **Visit our website** to learn more about each guest preacher.



**Dr. Timothy Bias to Preach on  
December 13 @ 8:30, 9:45 and 11am**

Dr. Tim Bias is the District Superintendent for the Capitol Area South District within our West Ohio Conference. He is the former General Secretary of the UM Board of Discipleship. Prior to that position he

served as the Senior Pastor of Hyde Park Community UMC in Cincinnati and First UMC in Peoria, Illinois which became one of the largest UMC churches.



**Rev. Calvin Alston to Preach on  
Ash Wednesday, February 17  
@ 7pm**

Rev. Calvin Alston is the District Superintendent for Shawnee Valley within our West Ohio Conference. Dr. Alston served for nine years as the Senior Pastor of New Vision United Methodist

Church in Cincinnati and for seven years as the Senior Pastor of Christ UMC in Columbus.



**Dr. Jocelyn Roper to speak on  
January 17 @ 8:30, 9:45 and 11am**

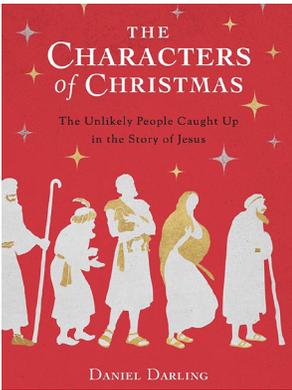
Dr. Joycelyn Roper is the District Superintendent for the Miami Valley within our West Ohio Conference. Prior to that appointment she served as the Director of Diversity for our West Ohio Conference and the Assistant District Superintendent for Ohio River Valley District.



**Bishop Will Willimon to Preach on  
Palm Sunday, March 28 @ 8:30,  
9:45 and 11am**

Bishop Will Willimon is currently Professor of the Practice of Christian Ministry and Director of the Doctor of Ministry Degree Program at Duke Divinity School. He is considered by many one of America's best known and most influential preachers.

WEDNESDAY OASIS / ADVENT STUDIES



**The Characters of Christmas, Led by Dr. Swisher**

Our ADVENT Wednesday Oasis class began on **December 2** at 6:30pm. Dr. Swisher is leading a class based on the book “The Characters of Christmas.” In this class, which runs through December 23, we will take a fresh look at the Christmas story by getting to know all the characters who played a part in Jesus’ birth; people like Zechariah and Elizabeth, Simeon and Anna, Mary, The Innkeeper, the Angels, Joseph and Jesus’ Surprising Ancestors. Join our Senior Pastor and “break free from the familiar, and discover untold treasures in the story you thought you knew.” This study is perfect and engaging for the whole family! Please RSVP to [cindy@epworth.com](mailto:cindy@epworth.com). With one-week advance notice, socially-distanced childcare will be available, email [childcare@epworth.com](mailto:childcare@epworth.com).



**Do Not Be afraid: A Family Advent Study, Virtual**

This self-guided study, being offered virtually, continues through advent. This hands-on family advent study is an opportunity for families to take time each week during the Advent season to be intentional and focus on their faith. These weekly reflections are great for families of all ages and explore the theme, "Do Not Be Afraid," which is found in Jesus’ birth story in the Gospel of Luke. To sign up to receive your digital kit, Email [mary@epworth.com](mailto:mary@epworth.com).

**THIS STUDY INCLUDES:**

- **Five Family Devotions:** Weekly family devotions include a suggested scripture to read, a short reflection, discussion questions, an activity, a coloring page, and a prayer.
- **Paper Crafts:** Each paper craft connects to the weekly themes of Hope, Peace, Joy, and Love.
- **Advent Calendar:** Our Advent Calendar started on December 1, and each day brings an opportunity to complete a simple activity as a family. We consider families' busy lives, so the activities are short and meaningful without distracting from the real purpose—family time.

**SCRIPTURE BY HEART CLASS WITH PASTOR BETH**

Mark your calendars for Scripture by Heart at Wednesday Oasis, coming in January 2021! Pastor Beth will facilitate a four-week class on **Scripture by Heart** – telling the stories of the bible from your heart. It’s not about perfection, it’s about passion and the guidance of the spirit. This class can be a refresher for previously-trained storytellers or an adventure for new storytellers. **Scripture by Heart** is a great tool for deepening your personal spiritual journey. The class will run for four weeks beginning **January 13<sup>th</sup>**. For more information, contact Pastor Beth at [beth@epworth.com](mailto:beth@epworth.com).



**CHARGE CONFERENCE UPDATE**



We enjoyed an uplifting Charge Conference Worship Experience last month. Many people attended in person and many more tuned in LIVE. However, we know that several were not able to attend due to COVID restrictions or other previously scheduled commitments. Below please find a rundown of what was accomplished at the event. Each of these presentations passed unanimously and with great enthusiasm: Renewal of our Certified Lay Speakers, New member presentation, the 2020 Trustees Legal and Property Report, Lay Leadership Teams/Action teams alignment and assignments and our Safe Sanctuaries Policy.

A list of Standing committee chairs and other information on ministry action teams will be available online in the days to come. We look forward to continued and growing impact in mission and ministry in 2021 with each of you and our entire Epworth UMC community.

## EPWORTH KIDS: DECEMBER

### Elementary:



This month, we continue gathering through our weekly virtual Large Group Sundays at 10:00 a.m. on the children's facebook page [facebook.com/Epworthkids](https://facebook.com/Epworthkids) and digital devotional materials at [epworth.com/kidsathome](https://epworth.com/kidsathome).

Epworth's Elementary kids will explore the life app Christmas. We define the Life App Christmas as: Celebrating Jesus, God's greatest gift.

We want your kids to know the real meaning of Christmas is simple: we celebrate Jesus, God's greatest gift. We can find hope, joy, love, and peace when we remember that God sent Jesus to be our Savior. To help learn about Christmas, the kids will work to memorize this month's memory verse: "Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you. He is the Messiah, the Lord." ( Luke 2:11 NIV) Our prayer is that your kids will learn that no matter what is going on in the world around them, or what may or may not be under the tree, the real meaning of Christmas can always be found in God's greatest gift: Jesus.

### Preschool & Toddler:



We will continue gathering through our weekly virtual Large Group Sundays at 11am on the children's facebook page [facebook.com/Epworthkids](https://facebook.com/Epworthkids) and digital devotional materials at [epworth.com/kidsathome](https://epworth.com/kidsathome).

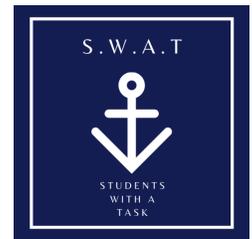
Epworth's Preschool and Toddler kids will explore the Biblical truth: Jesus is God's Son.

Each week we will post interactive Bible stories, and follow-up activities all using cookies to help teach your child that Christmas is all about Jesus! This hands-on, action packed virtual Bible story time will also help your early childhood kiddos memorize this month's Bible Memory Verse: "God loved the world so much that he gave his only Son." (John 3:16) It is our prayer that we will all enter this month with the same wonder the shepherds had when they heard the good news for the first time; a wonder that will inspire us all to go tell everyone, everywhere that Jesus is God's son! Merry Christmas!

## STUDENTS WITH A TASK

### The Youth Ministry for Students in Grades 6-12

Because of the rise in COVID-19 cases around our area, we had to make the difficult decision to suspend in-person SWAT gatherings through Christmas. Although we will not be meeting in person, we will still connect virtually. We will meet online on the following nights for fun, fellowship, and study: 11/22, 12/6, 12/13. After Christmas, we will re-evaluate and aim to be together again for our SWAT New Year's Party. If you have any questions or suggestions, please contact Pastor Dave at [dave@epworth.com](mailto:dave@epworth.com).



### SENIOR HIGH SERVICE OPPORTUNITY!

Looking for service hours? We have a great opportunity for you with our Furniture ministry! You can sign up for a variety of Saturday mornings where you would meet in the Central Ave. parking lot at Epworth a little before 8 am and you would go with our furniture ministry team to pick up donated furniture. You would return to the church at Noon. You can even sign up with a friend! If you are interested please email [furnitureministry@epworth.com](mailto:furnitureministry@epworth.com).

## EPWORTH PRESCHOOL



### We Love Our Preschool-Care Bear Scholarships

Looking for a way to make a difference in the lives of a family or giving a meaningful gift? Consider donating to the "Care Bear Scholarship Fund" for Epworth Preschool. Preschool helps build the foundation for successful learning all through life. Children learn prereading skills and how to be a kind, caring friend. During these difficult times, families sometimes need to make tough decisions and struggle to keep their child in school. Your gift could help keep a child coming to Epworth Preschool.



Checks can be made out to "Epworth Preschool" with a notation for "Care Bear Scholarships".



**ARTS & CRAFTS BAZAAR SUCCESS!**

Our annual Arts & Crafts Bazaar raised slightly over \$13,000 this year. We are delighted with the total as there were 24 fewer vendors and fewer shoppers than in past years. It was a rewarding day for Epworth’s United Methodist Women and the missions we support. The Bazaar is a huge undertaking, and was even more challenging this year.



We appreciate our vendors, Priscilla Circle, and our Pantry, Silent Auction, and vendor lunch teams, and thank everyone who planned, volunteered, donated and shopped. Donations to the Silent Auction by Epworth members exceeded past years, and we are grateful for this support.

As always, 100% of the proceeds were given to local non-profit organizations. Receiving funds on Giving Tuesday are Mildred Bayer Clinic, St. Paul’s Community Center, Leading Families Home, Church Women United Thrift Shop, Monroe Street United Methodist Church’s Monroe Street Neighborhood Center and Freedom School, Sylvania Area Family Services, Feed Your Neighbor, YWCA Battered Women’s Shelter, Family House, Epworth’s Good Samaritan Fund, Team Recovery, Good Grief and Nightingale’s Harvest.

**SACK LUNCH PROJECT**

Epworth continues to serve our community through the Sack Lunch Project hosted by St. Paul’s United Methodist Church. This program provides a sack lunch, including a hot portion, along with coffee, to our homeless community and others who food insecure. Epworth volunteers continue to meet at St. Paul’s United Methodist Church, every Wednesday at 8:30am to prepare sandwiches, veggies and dip, snacks, coffee and package up the hot portion of the meal. From 10:00-11:30am several members of the team remain to pass out the meals. If you are interested in joining this ministry, need additional details, or there are days other than Wednesdays you would be willing to volunteer, please contact Jennie@epworth.com



*THANK YOU to all who have volunteered, contributed funds, water and coffee – you have blessed this community and ministry beyond measure!*

**Thank you for your continuing support of Epworth Furniture Ministry!**

**Items needed for blessings area: crockpots, queen comforters and queen blankets**

STATISTICS	NOVEMBER:	2020:
Families:	14	117
Adults:	18	147
Children:	19	148
Furniture:	154	1264

**LOCAL BUSINESSES – FOR THE WIN!**

Many businesses were key to the success of our Silent Auction by donating gift cards, certificates, or items. Please show your support by **patronizing** these generous donors and **thanking them** for their donation to the Epworth Arts & Crafts Bazaar and Silent Auction.

- |   |                                    |
|---|------------------------------------|
| Ambrosia's Automotive                         | Maumee Quilt Foundry               |
| Barry Bagels                                  | Mayberry Diner                     |
| Carruth Studios - Garden Smiles               | Meijer                             |
| Christine's Hair Designers                    | Memory Transfers                   |
| Ciao! Restaurant                              | National Museum of the Great Lakes |
| City Barbeque                                 | Nature's Corner                    |
| Clara J's Tea Room - Maumee                   | Organic Bliss                      |
| Claudia's Health Foods                        | Peggy Lemley Salon - Mayberry      |
| Consign-It Home Interiors                     | Ralphie's Food, Sports, and Fun    |
| Copper Moon Gallery and Gifts                 | Rick's City Diner                  |
| Costco  | Ron Salon - Renee McIlhargie       |
| Country Grains Bread Company                  | Ron Salon - Tiffany Hayward        |
| Creative Headlines                            | Rudy's Hot Dog                     |
| Earth to Oven Bakery-Sylvania                 | Sabrina Hair Salon                 |
| Element 112                                   | Sautter's Food Center              |
| Espresso Car Wash                             | Scrambler Marie's                  |
| Firenation - Holland                          | Sheer Perfection Hair Studio       |
| For the Love of Art                           | Skyzone Trampoline Park - Holland  |
| Fortune Inn - Central                         | Star Diner                         |
| Fresh Market                                  | Stoll Rug and Furniture Cleaners   |
| Frisch's Big Boy                              | Stone Oak Country Club             |
| Hafner Florists                               | Sundown Cantina                    |
| Handel's Ice Cream                            | Sunrise Gymnastics                 |
| Harmony in Life - Yoga                        | Sylvania Ace Hardware              |
| Hoen's Greenhouse & Landscaping               | Sylvania Advantage                 |
| Jackie's Crafts and Candies                   | Sylvania Playland                  |
| Jing Chuan Restaurant - Secor Rd.             | The Look Salon on Central Ave.     |
| JoJo's Pizza - Mayberry                       | The Seafood                        |
| Knapp Motors                                  | Toledo Lucas County Public Library |
| Kristie Walker @ Hair Salon - Sylvania        | Toledo Museum of Art               |
| LaSalle Cleaners                              | Toledo Symphony                    |
| Leonard Marty Glass Artist - 1111Adams Studio | Toledo Yoga                        |
| Loma-Linda                                    | Toledo Zoo                         |
| Mexican Restaurant                            | Tony Packo's                       |
|   | Werner's Hallmark - Sylvania Ave.  |

**“WE THREE TREES” ADVENT 2020**

While our Advent projects may look a little different this year, Epworth is still committed to giving to our neighbors in need. This project is inspired by the three magi who traveled to meet the baby Jesus with precious gifts to honor and worship him. The three giving trees will be up starting Sunday, November 29. Two of the trees will be located in the lobby and one will be located near the Central Ave. entrance door. We are soliciting monetary donations this year. The trees will have “ornaments” hanging on them describing the projects we are supporting this Advent season. Take as many tags as you would like . Please make donations by Sunday, **December 27**. If you have questions, please contact Susan Kanwal susan.kanwal@gmail.com.



- **Hawkins Elementary STEMM Academy**  
We hope to raise enough in donations to reward a boy and girl in each class at Hawkins STEM Academy with a \$25 reward for showing the most growth in their computerized literacy program.
- **Feed Your Neighbor**  
Consider a monetary donation to assist our local Feed Your Neighbor Food Pantry. They are in need of funds to purchase needed food items for clients since food donations have decreased with many churches still closed. Our partner pantry is located in Epiphany Lutheran Church on Reynolds Rd. and serves persons in our local neighborhoods.
- **St. Paul’s Community Center**  
Our long-time partner would like our assistance with making donations that will go toward necessary toiletries for their clients such as towels, razors, T-shirts, deodorant, etc. Donations of any kind are much appreciated!
- **Heifer International**  
Heifer International is a non-profit, humanitarian organization dedicated to ending world hunger and saving the earth by providing livestock, trees, training and other resources to help poor families in the USA and around the globe. You can purchase heifers, llamas, goats, tree seedlings, honey bees, pigs, chickens, and more! Check out the tree “ornaments “ for specific amounts to “purchase” these animals.

These donations can be dropped in the offering plate or brought to the church office during the week. Please be sure and write “Advent” and the agency you would like your donation to go towards in the memo section. OR donations can be made at the Epworth website, making sure you write in “Advent “and/or the agency you want your funds designated for.

**OTHER ADVENT GIVING OPPORTUNITIES:**

- **St. Paul’s: Donate Hams For a Christmas Dinner**  
Thank you for helping St. Paul’s Community Center as they prepare and serve a Christmas meal to people without homes in our community. Mark your ham (traditional or football style) and put it in the church refrigerator. Hams will be delivered to St. Paul’s through Monday, **December 21**.
- **Hat, Mitten, Scarf Collection**  
We will be collecting new hats, mittens, and scarves for children and adults in our area. Bins will be placed in the narthex on Sundays and near the Central Ave. door on weekdays starting Sunday, **November 29**.



**HAWKINS STEMM ACADEMY PARTNERSHIP**

The Epworth-Hawkins Partnership Leadership Team is excited to welcome two new members with extensive professional and volunteer experience.

**Cynthia Bishop** has volunteered since her children were young, assisting with school and sports related activities, and most recently served as a site coordinator with Partners in Education for the reading/tutoring program at Longfellow School. “If it has to do with children, I’m all in” she said. As a retired customer service supervisor and trainer with Paramount Health Care, Cynthia is looking forward to engaging with Epworth’s Hawkins volunteers.

**Kay Bennett** recently retired as a Volunteer Coach for the Lucas County Juvenile Court CASA (Court Appointed Special Advocate) program. She served as Executive Director of The ARC of Lucas County and The ARC of Ottawa County, and was a member of the Toledo/Lucas County Commission on Disabilities and the Mayor’s Council on Disabilities. Kay’s volunteer experience includes Hospice of Northwest Ohio, Partners for Inclusion, and service as a Court Appointed Special Advocate for the Lucas County Juvenile Court.

### LOVE OFFERING FOR REV. BAILEY

We said farewell to Rev. Jennifer Bailey on November 22 in all Worship services and wished her well in her next step of ministry. If you would like to contribute to a Love Offering for her please make your donation to Epworth UMC with **"Love Offering"** in the memo line. We will send one check for the total amount to Rev. Bailey by mid-December.



### YEAR END GIVING STRATEGIES FROM THE EPWORTH LEGACY ENDOWMENT FUND

**This year is a special year to consider your charitable donation planning.** Under the CARES Act which was enacted earlier this year, the annual limitation on cash gifting has been eliminated. But only for 2020. So, there is no limitation on the amount of any gift made in cash.

There are also planning strategies that will work with appreciated securities. If you are interested in these, please reach out to a trustee member of the Endowment Fund Board.

Additionally, Congress created a \$300 above the line deduction for those that do not itemize. So even if you claim the standard deduction, you can still give at least \$300 deduction for that.

Don't forfeit your opportunity to have enhance the tax benefit of your contribution.

Reach out to any of us if you have questions.

Legacy Fund Trustees,

Haynes Lee	John Irwin	Ann Hartmann
Tom Marek	Jim Scheib	Alana Malik
Nancy Rhollans	Rex Decker	Grant Wilkinson



### CHRISTMAS EVE POINSETTIAS

The shape of the poinsettia flower and leaves are sometimes thought as a symbol of the Star of Bethlehem which led the Wise Men to worship the child, Jesus. As we behold the beautiful plants which grace our Christmas Eve Worship, we celebrate God's generosity and great love, which come like a beacon through the ages to meet us right where we are. With each plant provided, we honor and memorialize loved ones. Commemorations will be listed in the December 20<sup>th</sup> bulletin. Thank you for supporting this ministry! May the generosity of the Gospel ignite our hearts with a light that shines like that Star of wonder.



**A reminder to those who have placed flower orders: Purchased plants may be picked up AFTER the 11pm Christmas Eve Service.**

### DONATE TO EPWORTH EVERY TIME YOU SHOP ON AMAZON!

Now, you can support Epworth every single time you purchase something on Amazon! When you sign up for AmazonSmile and select Epworth as your charitable organization, Amazon donates 0.5% of the purchase price to Epworth. AmazonSmile is exactly the same as regular Amazon, it has the same products, prices & services, only now you're supporting Epworth at the same time! To sign up, go to: [smile.amazon.com/ch/34-4428652](https://smile.amazon.com/ch/34-4428652) and select Epworth as your charitable organization, then start shopping! If you have any questions, or would like a direct link, contact Laura in the church office at [laura@epworth.com](mailto:laura@epworth.com).

### SUPPORT THE ALTAR FLOWER FUND

Contributing flowers for the Sunday altar is a special way to support Epworth and honor loved ones, past or present. Flowers enhance our experience of weekly worship while providing a beautiful tribute to the special people and events in our lives. We have some available dates for Altar Flower donations. If you would like to honor a loved one, or celebrate a special occasion, by donating a flowers for a Sunday worship, please contact Cindy in the office at 419.214.3777 or [cindy@epworth.com](mailto:cindy@epworth.com) to find out what dates are available. Your support is much appreciated!



### INCLEMENT WEATHER POLICY



The Church building closes if there is a Level 3 Snow Emergency in Lucas county!

#### Activities, Classes & Volunteers:

- Canceled if Sylvania Schools close – Will re-evaluate again at 3pm

regarding evening activities. The staff person in charge of that activity will make the decision and will contact those persons involved.

#### Preschool (ECEC & CDO):

- Canceled if Ottawa Hills Schools close.\*
- 1 hour delay: Preschool opens on time.
- 2 hour delay: Preschool morning classes canceled, afternoon classes will meet.

*\*The preschool reserves the right to cancel classes regardless of Ottawa Hills schedule, should extenuating circumstances arise.*



@epworthtoledo

## MERRY CHRISTMAS *and BE WELL*

Hello, everyone.

On behalf of the Wellness Team at Epworth, I want to wish you a peaceful Christmas and a healthy New Year.

Please continue to be safe. Wear your masks. Wash your hands frequently. Stay home whenever possible. We know it's hard. It's hard not seeing your friends and loved ones. It's hard putting beloved Christmas traditions on the shelf for this year. It's been hard keeping distance.

We have had to say goodbye to Epworth members who have gone home to the Lord this year, and other members have said goodbye to loved ones. Weddings have been postponed and graduation ceremonies just did not happen.

All of this has taken an emotional and spiritual toll on many. But this is not the time to give up and this does not mean things will always be this way.

Advent is the season where we wait. We await the coming of the Messiah. Emmanuel. God with Us. The Prince of Peace. We will celebrate the birth of Jesus like we always do. It may look a little different this year, but it will be celebrated all the same. Circumstances around us may not change, but I pray that you will find a renewal of hope and love in Christmas.

The Wellness Team needs your help to share the love in 2021. We will be sending postcards to our homebound members for Valentine's Day as we have done in years past. However, instead of signing them in the lobby, we will be inviting you to take hope a small stack or two of cards to write a message on and return to the church for mailing. Look for more information in the January Tower and in the bulletins on Sunday in early 2021.

If you are struggling to find joy right now, be assured you are not alone, and it is okay to not be okay. Please consider attending the Longest Night healing service on December 14th (more information available in this edition of the Tower) or watching the Livestream. If you want to talk, you can call the church office and ask to speak to any of our pastors.

Peace be with you.

Pastor Beth *and the Epworth Wellness Team*



## THE LONGEST NIGHT HEALING SERVICE

Christmas is not always a wonderful time of the year. This year, many people have experienced the loss of family members, illnesses, ongoing financial difficulties, and worry and anxiety compounded by drastic disruptions in routines.

If you find yourself experiencing any of these things or are simply not feeling the Christmas spirit, you are not alone, and there is a special night set aside for stillness, contemplation, prayer, and healing. You and your friends and loved ones are invited to our annual December healing service called the Longest Night. This year's service takes place on **December 14** at **7pm** in the sanctuary. The service will also be available on **Facebook Live** at **7pm**. Epworth member Dick Kettelman will offer a testimony about God's mercies and healing in the wake of losing his daughter and wife just 17 months apart. There will also be a special candle lighting liturgy to banish darkness and encourage the light of hope in the world. All are welcome. If you would like to know more, contact Rev. Beth Irwin at [beth@epworth.com](mailto:beth@epworth.com).



**STEPHEN  
MINISTRY**

### STEPHEN MINISTRY

#### *Cold Weather ~ Cold Feelings?*

The winter weather can be symbolic of what may sometimes happen in life. A crisis hits, and we feel like we're buried beneath a drift of snow. Relationships can become icy, or we can feel frozen by life circumstances. Little difficulties build up like slush, making us slip and slide, causing every decision to seem treacherous. Life seems dreary, and we begin to doubt that spring will ever come. We can wonder, "Is God even there?"

Stephen Ministers are trained to provide confidential Christian care, giving you the emotional and spiritual support you need to make it through a winter in your life. To learn more about how a Stephen Minister can help you or someone you know, contact one of the Stephen Leaders – Bobbi Sanders or Paul Schroeder, a pastor, or contact us at [stephenministry@epworth.com](mailto:stephenministry@epworth.com) to learn how Stephen Ministers can help in troubling times. Our Stephen Ministers are ready to care for you.

**Epworth**   
United Methodist Church  
4855 W. Central Avenue  
Toledo, Ohio 43615-2337

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***“Epworth IS my family.”***

- Beth Figley's Story

Read her story  
online at  
[wearepworth.com](http://wearepworth.com)

***#wearepworth***