

Advent at Epworth—December 2024

Hangings of the Greens: December 1st, 11:00 Worship Service

Children ages 3 years through 6th grade that would like to participate in bringing in the greenery and Chrismons, please join Mrs. Letha in the foyer of the Sanctuary at 10:45. Text or email me at [205-799-8547/](tel:205-799-8547)
letha.parker@epworth-pc.org

CHERUB CHOIR PRESENTATION & HAPPY BIRTHDAY JESUS PARTY!

Sunday, December 8th, 6:00 p.m.

Join us for a great presentation of the Gospel by our young Cherub Choir participants as they dress up and share the Christmas story. Afterwards we will have refreshments in the Fellowship Hall to celebrate the birthday of our Savior, Jesus!

Please bring “finger foods” to share as we celebrate at the greatest birthday party ever!!!



Baby's First Christmas - Sunday, December 15th at 11:00 am

Come celebrate the new life God has given to the church family in 2024.

Chancel Choir Christmas Presentation - Sunday, December 15th at 11:00 am

Please join us for the Chancel Choir's Christmas musical presentation at the 11:00 A.M. worship service.... it's the gospel put to music!

MILK & COOKIES NIGHT with a SPECIAL VISITOR

Sunday, December 15th, 6:00 p.m.

Please join the Epworth Kidz Cruise as we celebrate Christmas! Afterwards we will have milk and cookies with a “Special Visitor.”

- Kids will receive a special gift bag from our special guest!
- Please bring and share your favorite cookies as we celebrate the joy of the season!



CHRISTMAS CAROLING - Wednesday, December 18th at 6:00 pm

Please feel free to join the Kidz Crew on Wednesday, December 18, at 6:00 p.m. as we go Christmas Caroling. We will take as many as possible on the church van. If you would like to drive your own vehicle, please feel free to caravan with us. Email Letha at letha.parker@epworth-pc.org or text to (205) 799-8547 to register your participation.



Christmas Eve Candlelight Service Tuesday, December 24th at 5:30 pm

Tuesday evening, December 24 (Christmas Eve) at 5:30 P.M. – Holy Communion service – You'll discover that this service is very moving and meaningful, and it continues to grow in attendance every year (invite your friends and family members—make it a family tradition).

NOTE: Christmas Eve Holy Communion will also be served Christmas Eve 12:00—1:00 pm, for those unable to attend the 5:30 pm Candlelight Communion Service.

Thank you for your continued support of the Epworth Kidz Crew Ministries! The many kidz programs and classes would not be possible without your faithfulness in volunteering and your monetary support of the Epworth Church. We are blessed to be a blessing, and I thank our God for your sharing in the advancement of the Gospel to children.

Christmas—The Season of Giving by Rev. Grant Parker

Christmas is known as a season of giving. Millions of gifts costing billions of dollars will be exchanged between now and December 25. It's so easy to lose sight of the real meaning of Christmas amid the hustle and bustle of the season's commercial frenzy.

Hopefully, though, we'll not forget the greatest gift ever given. The apostle John reminds us, "For God so loved the world, that He gave His only begotten Son, that whosoever believes in Him should not perish, but have eternal life." (John 3:16) God offered a gift to each of us when He gave His Son on that very first Christmas Day over 2,000 years ago.

Suppose we were expected to exchange gifts with God. Well, obviously none of us could match God's priceless gift of Jesus. But what would you give to God if you were to exchange Christmas gifts with Him this year? Gold? Frankincense? Myrrh? In one of my favorite Christmas hymns, "In the Bleak Midwinter," Christina Rossetti proposes an excellent answer to that question:

What can I give Him poor as I am?

If I were a shepherd, I would bring a lamb;

If I were a Wise Man, I would do my part;

Yet what I can, I give Him:
give (Him) my heart.

This Christmas season—and in the New Year—let me encourage you to give all that you know of yourselves, to all that you know of Him! What would be the result if we truly gave all

of ourselves—our actions, attitudes, assets, gifts, time, tongues, talents, effort, energy, relationships, families, friendships, souls, bodies, service—our everything—to Jesus?

For most of us, what I'm proposing is a radical change in the way we function and in the way we relate to others. But these are radical times, and only those who are radically saved and radically changed by a personal—not just a "passing"—relationship with Jesus Christ, will make a positive impact in the world for His sake.

What I'm proposing means that Sunday is considered the Lord's Day once again, and all the lame excuses in the world won't change the fact that we should be in the worship service and in Sunday School (as a family) when we're not! I'm suggesting that fathers should become the spiritual heads of their households, and that their wives and children have every right to see God's light and love reflected in the actions of their husbands and fathers! I'm suggesting that wives and all women should strive more diligently to become who the whole Church is really *meant* to be—the faithful Bride of Christ! I'm proposing that we read and study the Bible daily, and practice its precepts. What I'm proposing is that we will commit ourselves to Paul's clear mandate to the Roman church (12:1-2): "I urge you therefore, brethren, by the mercies of God, to present your bodies a living and holy sacrifice, acceptable to God, which is your spiritual service of worship. And do not be conformed to this world, but be transformed by the renewing of your mind, that you may prove what the will of God is, that which is good and acceptable and perfect!" In other words, I'm proposing that if we are saved by Jesus Christ, then let's act like it! If we're Christians, then let's determine to live

according to biblical Christian principles of morality! God has called the church to affect the world in a positive way. But instead, I fear we've allowed the world to infect the church. What I'm proposing is that we seek after holiness, without which no man shall see the Lord (Hebrews 12:14). I'm proposing that we become a tithing church in A.D. 2025. The Bible says that the first 10% of our income belongs to God—not to the mortgage company, the bank, the bar, a retail store, a car dealership, the government, or to anyone else. What I'm proposing is for the families of our congregation to have family devotions daily in 2025. What I'm proposing is that each of us will commit ourselves to winning lost souls to Christ, witnessing for Jesus, and inviting people to church and Sunday School, and our weekly Epworth Bible Studies in 2025.

I know that what I'm proposing as our gift to God seems radical to many. Some may have already put my article aside. But please understand, what I have proposed to you is simply visible fruit (outer evidence) of a relationship Jesus described to Nicodemus in John 3:7, "Do not marvel that I said to you, 'You must be born again!'"

"What shall I give Him, poor as I am? What I can I give Him, give (Him) my heart." May we become gifts to God this Christmas!!

Your servant, because He gave all of Himself, for me!

Brother Grant

Birthday	Name
12/1	Billy Ray Head Robert Meacham Cindy Cameron Cindy Rodgers Daryl Griggs Marie Culpepper Wyatt Wilkerson
12/3	Jason Yohn Marina Meacham
12/4	Cody Townsend Wynn Bradley
12/5	Richelle Sanders
12/6	Luke McCart
12/7	Ricky Stone Chami Chedrick
12/8	George Gatewood Callie Gatewood James Clark
12/9	Gloria Griggs Carol Stanton Andrea Gil Jay Baker
12/10	Sloane Moss Taylor Hartley
12/11	Donna Zeigler
12/12	Rich Coreno Steve Lake James Brooks Maverick Sanford
12/13	Libby Clay
12/14	Joshua Caldwell
12/15	Carol Martin Dee Dee Ellis Susan Riepe Vicky Moss
12/17	Cathy Sharpe
12/18	Mallory McLeod Megan Redmond Marley Hamilton
12/20	Emily Wallace Maria Chedrick Taylor Riddle
12/21	Pat Roberts
12/22	Judy Burkes Rex Kennedy
12/23	Shirley Norman
12/24	J.W. Martin
12/25	Emma Wilson
12/28	Mia Bell
12/29	Madison Shields
12/30	Jeanette Kersey Wade Wilkerson
12/31	Teresa Dean



Anniversaries	
Dec 14	Seabo & Vickie Griggs
Dec 17	Gentry & Belle Lee
Dec 23	Chuck & Sandy Clay Johnny & Connie Burell
Dec 29	Lance & Carmen Brooks
Dec 30	Mark & Daina Wooten



Tuesday Morning Bible Study

New Bible study on Ephesians starts in January. Tuesday mornings at 9:30 a.m. led by Keith Badowski and Sandra Rowan. Study guides are \$10. To enroll please call Keith at 334-614-0577 or email badowski.poet@gmail.com. The deadline to enroll is December 12th.

I would like to thank my Epworth family for all the prayers and checking on me when my father had his car accident. God is good and he heard your prayers. My dad is doing so much better and also wanted you to know how much he appreciated you thoughts and prayers. There is no doubt we all felt your prayers and it got us through a lot of tough days

Love, Maria LaMee

PARSONAGE FAMILY CHRISTMAS GIFT

Dear Fellow Epworth Member,

I hope the reason for the season fills your heart with joy this Christmas and that you are surrounded by the love, comfort and peace that only our precious Savior can bring you! We have so much to be thankful for in our families, our community, our country and in our church family. We are blessed to have two of His most faithful servants, Brother Grant and Letha Parker, ministering year-round to the many and diverse needs of our church family...which is often done at the expense of their own family's needs. Literally from cradle to grave, Brother Grant is right beside us for all the "times of our lives." I want to thank you in advance for the generous response to the **Parsonage Family Christmas Gift** this year. Just be sure and mark your check or envelope for the "**Parsonage Family Christmas Gift**" and place it in the offering plate!

I want to share this beautiful Christmas Prayer with all of you!

Christmas Prayer

**Heavenly Father,
in this Christmas season,
help us rightly to remember
the birth of Jesus,
that we may share in the song
of the angels,
the gladness of the shepherds,
and the worship of the wise men.
Close the doors of hate
and open the doors of love
all over the world.
Let kindness come with every gift
and good desires with every greeting.
Deliver us from evil,
by the blessing that Christ brings,
and teach us to be merry
with clean hearts.
May the Christmas morning
make us happy to be your children,
And the Christmas evening bring us to our
bed with grateful thoughts,
forgiving and forgiven, for Jesus' sake.
Amen.**

God bless you and thank you so much for your generosity!

Susan S. Wiggins

A message from our Youth Minister Daniel Cook

Scripture:

"The angel said to them, 'Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people. Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; He is the Messiah, the Lord.'"

– **Luke 2:10-11** (NIV)

At Christmas, joy takes center stage. It's woven into every carol, greeting, and tradition. But what does true joy at Christmas really mean? For many, it's the warmth of family gatherings, the joy of giving and receiving gifts, and the twinkling lights that decorate our homes. But beneath all these outward celebrations lies a deeper, more profound joy—a joy that is rooted in the birth of Jesus Christ.

The angel's message to the shepherds, announcing the birth of Jesus, brings us to the heart of Christmas joy. The angel's words weren't just about a momentary feeling of happiness; they spoke of **great joy for all people**. This joy isn't dependent on circumstances—whether we have the perfect Christmas or things aren't quite going as planned—it's the joy of knowing that God entered the world in the most humble of ways to save us. This is the joy of salvation, the joy of a promise fulfilled.

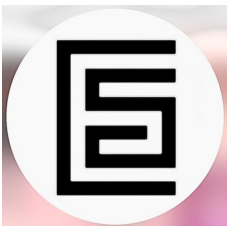
The joy we celebrate at Christmas is not just about the baby in the manger. It's about **who He is** and **what He came to do**. Jesus' birth marked the beginning of God's great plan to redeem the world. From the very moment of His birth, the promise of salvation was set into motion. And this promise isn't just for the people who lived in Bethlehem over 2,000 years ago—this joy is for all people, throughout all time.

At Christmas, we remember that God's love for us is not distant or abstract. It is personal and tangible. **God is with us**—not as a distant ruler, but as a humble child, a Savior who understands our struggles, our pain, and our longing for peace. In Jesus, joy and peace are not just ideals but realities that we can experience in our lives.

Merry Christmas,

Daniel Cook





Epworth Students December Events:

Wednesday Nights

December Series: Starstruck is 5-weeks sorting out the stories of the Nativity to help students better understand the miracle of Christ's birth and God's plan and promise to save all of humanity.

Starstruck straightens out all the twists, turns, and tales of the first Christmas through the different perspectives of the people who make their way to a tiny stable in Bethlehem, and will challenge students to unwrap God's promise, His acceptance, His hope, His plan, and His purpose for us all.

Join us on Wednesday night from 6:00 - 6:30 we hang out in the gym, game room, and snack bar. From 6:30 - 7:30 we have our youth service and then hang out for a few minutes after.

Fall Brawl Conclusion

Our winner has been announced and the senior high team the Outlaws won the Fall Brawl. We had a great time getting to know other students and having friendly competitions throughout the past three months. Over this time we had 24 visitors join us and took up \$335 in offering that we will use to buy Christmas gifts for local children in need. The students also packed 100 shoe boxes for Operation Christmas Child!

Sunday Mornings Worship

We invite all families and teenagers to attend a Sunday morning worship service. As you know there are three to choose from, with most teenagers attending the 9:45 service. We would love to see your family worship with us!

Small Group

Sunday Mornings at 11:00

Following the 9:45 service there is a class offered for all teenagers. Some may call it Sunday School and others call it a Small Group, no matter what you call it, it is important. This is a place for teenagers to talk through the Bible and life with other teenagers to grow together as they navigate what it means to follow Christ.

Winter Trip

On December 27th we will take 30 leaders and students into the mountains of West Virginia for our ski trip. Thank you to those who donated to help relieve the financial burden that a trip like this brings. Epworth Student Ministry is grateful for a giving and supportive church!

We are still taking donations for the trip to help offset the cost of travel, food, and expenses that will be incurred over this weekend. You can give a check in the offering or give online, please note that it is for the ski trip.

Christmas Party

Epworth Students will have our Christmas Party on December 18th at 6:30 pm. All students are invited as we celebrate the birth of Christ together as a ministry. This will also be our last Wednesday night meeting of 2024.



Angel Tree

Angel Tree is a program of Prison Fellowship that serves incarcerated parents by providing a pathway for strengthening and restoring their relationships with their children and families. Angel Tree is a unique program that gives Epworth an opportunity to share Christ's love with families of prisoners. The program connects parents in prison with their children through the delivery of Christmas gifts given on the parent's behalf.

When a mother or father is in prison, the pain of separation from their child can be acute, but an Angel Tree gift, delivered in the parent's name, can help restore and strengthen the relationship and act as a symbol of God's love. Epworth has been participating in the Angel Tree Program for over twenty years. Many children, their families and prisoner parent have been blessed by this program.

Epworth will be participating with the Angel Tree program again this year. We will not be asking you to sponsor a specific child, buy and wrap presents and deliver to the church. Several options were given from Prison Fellowship Ministries and it has been decided that we will provide gift cards to each child. We are asking for donations so that we can provide a \$40.00 gift card to each child on behalf of their incarcerated parent. We feel this is the safest way to be able to carry on this worthwhile program.

You have always been a very generous and loving church and I look forward to us being a part of Angel Tree again this year and praying for those we serve.

Pam Shores, Your Angel Tree Coordinator

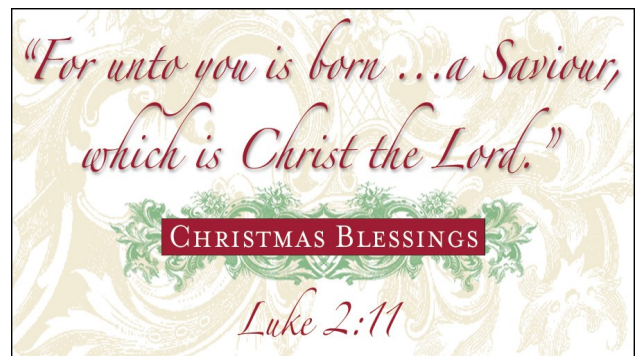
To the Epworth Church Family:

Thank you so very much from your pastoral family, Brother Grant and Letha. We cannot express the depth of our appreciation for the gracious monetary gift you shared with us for Pastor's Appreciation Month. You show your love and appreciation to us every day with your support of the ministry of Epworth Church and the many ways you encourage and support us individually and as fellow servants of Christ. You have been such a wonderful blessing to us for these past 16 years, and we thank you for walking with us through "life."

With our love in Christ which binds us forever,

Brother Grant and Letha

"I thank my God every time I remember you. In all my prayers for all of you, I always pray with joy because of your partnership in the gospel from the first day until now, being confident of this, that He who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus." Phil. 1:3-6



Time to Pray In Chapel For Morning Worship Services

December 1, 2024

8:30 am Miranda Griggs
9:45 am Becky Coreno
11:00 am Marcia Myles

December 8, 2024

8:30 am Michelle Word
9:45 am Gloria Griggs
11:00 am Sherry Martin

December 15, 2024

8:30 am Rendi Hall
9:45 am Kason Prins
11:00 am Pam Shores

December 22, 2024

8:30 am Vicky Moss
9:45 am Shirley Goode
11:00 am Sylvia Curtiss

December 29, 2024

8:30 am Gary Dillard
9:45 am Maria LaMee
11:00 am Becky Ivey

December 2024

SUN	MON	TUES	WED	THURS	FRI	SAT
1 11:00 Service Hanging of the Greens	2 12:00 pm— Advent Luncheon with Rev. Karl Stegall 6:00 pm—Paint Parting Hosted by Amber McCart	3 9:00 am - Mom's Day Out & Preschool 9:30 am—Bible study "Ezekiel" 6:00 pm— Epworth Women's Christmas Dinner at W.C. Bradley	4 9:00 am MDO & Preschool 6:00 pm Youth 6:30 pm Classes, Pastor's Bible Study & Kidz Konnections	5 9:00 am Mom's Day Out & Preschool 6:30 pm— Epworth Staff Christmas Party	6 6:30 pm Prayer Ministry Christmas Party	7
8 9:45 & 11:00 Service— Cherub Choir with sing 6:00 pm Cherub Choir Christmas Pageant and Happy Birthday Jesus Party	9 Newsletter Deadline 12:00 pm— Advent Luncheon with Rev. Derrick Shields	10 9:00 am Mom's Day Out & Preschool 9:30 am Bible Study	11 9:00 am—Mom's Day Out & Preschool 6:30 pm Classes, Pastor's Bible Study & Kidz Konnections	12 9:00 am Mom's Day Out & Preschool 6:30 pm Tuesday Morning Bible Study Christmas Dinner	13	14 Wreaths Across America Ft. Mitchell
15 11:00 Service Baby's First Christmas 11:00 Christmas Cantata 6:00 pm Kidz Milk & Cookies with Special Guest	16	17 9:00 am Mom's Day Out & Preschool 9:30 am Bible Study 1:15 pm— Teacher / Staff Christmas Luncheon	18 9:00 am—MDO & Preschool 6:00 pm Kids Christmas Caroling 6:30 pm Youth Christmas Party 6:30 pm—NO Bible Study / Classes	19 9:00 am—NO Mom's Day Out & Preschool	20	21
22 No Evening Activities	23	24 Office Closed 12:00-1:00 Christmas Eve Holy Communion "Come and Go" 5:30 pm Christmas Eve Candlelight service	25 	26 Office Closed	27 Office Closed	28
29	30	31 Office Closed 				



Epworth conducted its annual Veterans Dinner on Tuesday, 12 November 2024, and it was a great success. Approximately 80 Veterans, family members and staunch Veteran supporters attended this free evening. The dinner provided an excellent opportunity for Epworth active duty and Veterans and their families to fellowship with other Veterans, enjoy a great meal from Cindy Hart's Three Peas in a Pod catering company, hear dynamic, from-the-heart comments concerning Veterans Day and Patriotism from Retired Army LTC Norm Blankenbeckler, hear and participate in great patriotic music from Scott Yeilding and Epworth's Praise Team, and win some fabulous door prizes. Thank you for all who attended or helped. Please look for information announcing next year's Epworth Veterans Dinner, and if you are a Veteran, sign-up to attend.