

# DID YOU KNOW?

*Epworth UMC is making a difference by transforming lives!!*

## † OUTREACH

This very active and vital committee is a major presence in the community and the world supporting several missional causes and efforts to bring relief to those in need. Its fundraising efforts have produced over **\$50,000** in the past five years. Along with some of the topics already mentioned in this bulletin, they are also involved in the following activities:

- **“RISE AGAINST HUNGER NOW”** coordinated packing events for the congregation that has resulted in over **50,000 meals** in the past five years.
- **“HABITAT FOR HUMANITY”** sponsored and participated in the building of 3 houses in the past five years.
- **“HAITI MISSION TRIPS”**: with over 20 different members participating in the past 10 years, there have been **10 trips** to this underdeveloped country in just the past few years. Church members have provided support in health care, technology, education, construction, and many other areas.

## † BACK PACK MINISTRY

For the past 3 years now, volunteers have requested food supplies to fill back packs each week of the school year to benefit children at Hope Valley Elementary School. These packs are filled with food and drink for meals over the weekend. **Over 65%** of the school children here are receiving free or reduced meals. Demand has grown from 20 packs in the first two years to now needing 55 packs.

## † JOURNEYING TOWARD JUSTICE

In 2016, JTJ was formed seeking to educate ourselves and other about social justice issues, to create an environment at Epworth that is welcoming to all and to engage the Durham community in order to promote social justice. The group now sponsors a speaker series.

## † TUTORING

This is our 6th year for tutoring. We started with 4 students and have grown to 20 students. The students are tutored in reading and math and provided homework assistance. There are **22 regular tutors** this year and 12 substitute tutors. We have received outside support from the community, as some of our tutors are from Westminster Presbyterian Church. We have 13 tutors who have been trained to tutor reading through the Augustine Literacy Project, which was funded by the Outreach Committee. We have 21 individuals and 1 circle who provide snacks to the students.

## † FAMILIES MOVING FORWARD

For decades, we have provided overnight shelter, meals, education, and love through volunteer support for up to 5 families six times per year who otherwise would have no place to live.

## † BREAD FOR THE WORLD

Last year Epworth submitted over **100 letters** to political leaders for Bread for the World, a non-profit organization that provides nonpartisan policy analysis on hunger and how to stop it.

## † CARE GROUP

A handful of members meets every Tuesday to pray for shut-ins and the sick. This group provides spiritual support for members of our church and has been delivering 15 bud vases every week to various places of need for the past **25 years**.

## † PRAYER GROUP

Every Wednesday, ten church members meet to pray for those listed on the prayer list. This dedicated group is a core ministry that provides vital spiritual support for members of our church as well as family, friends, and anyone in need.

## ✝ MUSIC MINISTRIES

This ministry has grown exponentially over the just the past few years to include **over 50 adults and children**. Around two dozen adults and youth actively participate in the Chancel Choir. Seven faithful souls lead the Praise Team at the 9 am Contemporary service. There are 7 members of the Hand Bell Choir who play special music for peak events in the liturgical calendar. The Adult Instrumental Ensemble includes 20 musicians that fill the sanctuary every month with hymns and selected music. The newly formed Children's String Ensemble is a strong group of 5 dedicated to sharing God's praises.

## ✝ UNITED METHODIST WOMEN

65 Epworth members meet in 4 circles at least four times a year. They develop a creative supportive fellowship and expand concepts of mission through participation in the global ministries of the church. In addition to bringing in guest speakers to discuss missional topics, they're involved in the planning and delivery of:

- **"LOVING HANDS MEALS"** serves **250 people** three times a year at the Urban Ministries Center of Durham.
- **"URBAN MINISTRIES CLOTHING CLOSET"** provides clothing and other living necessities every month.
- **"HEALTH KITS and BIRTHING KITS"** prepares over 50 kits for Haiti citizens every year.
- **"DAYS FOR GIRLS"**: Nationally recognized partnership with Pfafftown to make feminine hygiene kits for Haitian teenage girls. This year the Epworth UMC Days For Girls was in the UMW program book. Due to the publication over 25 churches in 7 different states who have picked up the Days for Girls project. In the last year, these churches, including EUMC, have made over 220 kits to send to Haiti.

## ✝ UNITED METHODIST MEN

This group of 16-20 members has met monthly for the past 4 years. It supports Urban Ministries, Reality Ministries, Durham Council for the Blind, Durham Congregations in Action (DCIA), and Epworth UMC with various fundraising activities. In August, the UMM sponsored a meal for the DCIA that was attended by our very own Durham Chief of Police, C. J. Davis.

## ✝ YOUTH

10 Youth attended the 2015 Pilgrimage where over **6,000 attendees** from around the state gathered in Fayetteville. Each year, Epworth youth consistently raise funds for their own activities and mission work through two major events, their Poinsettia sale and Soup-er Bowl luncheon. The youth annually participate in the Durham CROP Walk, have a beach retreat, help with the Harvest Festival, and lead worship for Youth-Senior Sunday.

## ✝ VACATION BIBLE SECOND SATURDAY

For the past 10 years, Epworth has hosted an annual Vacation Bible School. This year we were blessed by participation from children from Families Moving Forward who were picked up by our own bus. Over 60 children attended one of our 3 sessions over the summer.

## ✝ FAMILY MINISTRY

Occasional programs and resources for the entire family. Coming early 2018: Youth Mental Health First Aid classes.

## ✝ YOUNG ADULT SUNDAY SCHOOL

Young Adult Group has about 20 members now. They meet Sunday mornings during the Sunday school hour and discuss what it means to be a Christian in the modern/postmodern world. The group has a monthly gathering outside the church to eat, socialize, pray, and enjoy the company of one another. It is for those who are graduate students, young adults, and young professionals. Typically, the group is made up of those who are in their twenties or thirties, but they welcome anyone who is simply "young at heart."

## ✝ PRE-SCHOOL

Epworth has been home to a pre-school for several decades. It offers activities and classes for children starting at age 1 and going through Pre-Kindergarten. There are over **150 children of various religious and ethnic backgrounds** that attend a traditional school-year calendar.

† **LOVE FEAST**

Now in its 47<sup>th</sup> year! Occurring during Advent, the Love Feast starts with the wrapping of as many as **450 candles** that are placed in the Sanctuary. Service is observed in the Moravian tradition where 150 gallons of distinctive coffee and 300 Moravian buns are served in this candle lit service.

† **LINE DANCING**

Meeting once a week for the past six years, more than 30 dancers ranging in age up to 92-years-old have gathered in the Fellowship Hall.

† **VOICES TOGETHER**

Voices Together combines the power of music and strong education technique. Their mission is to empower individuals with developmental disabilities to transform their own lives.

† **YOGA**

For the past five years, 10 to 12 people, including Epworth members, preschool teachers, and other members of the community have met weekly.

† **GARDEN COMMITTEE:** The garden committee oversees Epworth's garden and grounds. There are scheduled volunteer workdays throughout the year.

**AESTHETICS COMMITTEE:** During visioning of 2016, committee was formed to spruce up Epworth. Main hallway and has been decluttered and repainted.

**COMMUNICATION/BRANDING COMMITTEE:** During visioning of 2016, committee was formed to address Epworth's signage and communication within the congregation and to the community.

† **SCOUTS**

**Boy Scouts:** Over 30 children and youth participate in Troop 461 every Tuesday in the Fellowship Hall having the goal of one becoming an Eagle Scout. Supported projects include serving meals at Urban Ministries, fundraising for CROP Walk, packaging meals for Rise Against Hunger Now, and forming clean-up groups to remove trash from environmentally sensitive areas around the community as well as our church! Also, **Girl Scouts** meet every other Sunday.

† **ALCOHOLICS ANONYMOUS**

Approximately 35 people meet in the pre-school to receive support from Alcohol addiction. Our church has recognized the need to help those who suffer with this by providing a space of fellowship for over two decades. AA has a spiritual-based Twelve Step process that expels people's addictive ways and guides them back to a happy and whole life with God.

† **HEAVEN HOUSE CHURCH MYANMAR**

We recently welcomed this group to worship in our Pre-school on Sundays. This is a strong, spiritual group of 25 who meet every week.

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The stewardship committee would like to thank all of those who contributed to this list by either providing information or being active in participating in any of these activities in 2017.

As we look toward 2018, it is with heartfelt sincerity that we thank you all for what you continue to do through god.

**FOR WITH GOD, ALL THINGS ARE POSSIBLE!**