

EPWORTH ECHOES

Fall 2018

Volume 1, Issue 2



Harvest and Home

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Turning over new leaves

“For everything there is a season”
Ecclesiastes 3:1

Like all seasons, Fall is a time of change. We can see Fall’s change in the leaves changing colors and the change from long, hot days to long, cool nights.

The picture on the cover is a photograph at the front of Epworth as it was decorated for a Harvest Festival a few years ago. We think this was the first year that our younger adults took charge of this annual event. Besides changing the name from Harvest Dinner to Harvest Festival to reflect the many offerings besides a meal, one of their changes was offering something outside.

The cover photograph symbolizes the many changes that have happened at Epworth in recent years. The pumpkins and other outdoor activities were great hits at Harvest Fest and generated interest from neighbors. And the changes continue.

Harvest Festival is not the only Epworth “tradition” that is evolving for a new generation. We’ve made changes to our Pasty Sale and to Sunday worship services. And we’ve offered new ways of having Bible Study – Beer & Bible and Bagel & Bible.

Advent was different last year. And even the *Echoes* has changed. The Epworth Christmas Pageant each year strives to tell the familiar story in endless new ways. Look for this year’s pageant to undergo change from anything you’ve seen before.

“The grass withers, the flower fades,
but the word of our God will stand forever.”
Isaiah 40:8

How do you handle change? Is it happening too fast for you or not fast enough? Do you feel lost or have you found yourself? How do you change with the seasons?



Pre-Socratic Greek philosopher Heraclitus said, “The only constant is change” . It is true that we can see constant change every season in the eternal cycle of life and death. Old yields to new and in its turn, the new becomes the old that must yield.

But our faith tells us that change is not the only constant. While things change, one constant through all change is the Creator of all the changing seasons.



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Nourishing Faith

Confirmation Continues into 2019

By Pastor Steve

We are extending confirmation into February and intensifying our experiences with some “field trips” to other worship experiences. Our Confirmands will be working on their faith statements. I would invite everyone in the congregation to ask our Confirmands how things are going. I might even ask if you have been able to connect with our Confirmands?

As another addition, we plan to give Confirmation students opportunities to serve at church. You might see them serve Communion or they might be invited to read Scripture or to do a Children’s Sermon or help to prepare a Worship Service or perhaps even to attend a Church Council meeting (OK, maybe they wouldn’t even want to do that).

What other ways would you like to see them serve? How might you be able to teach, both the Confirmands and others, how you serve Jesus or how you serve Epworth? Are there questions you would like to ask



or something you’d like to teach our Confirmands?

Would you be willing to mentor one of our Confirmands over the next six months? If you are willing and able to mentor the Confirmands in writing their faith statements and in exploring their faith journey, please let me know. I am looking for one mentor for each Confirmand. Let me know if you are willing to help Nourish the Faith of these vital

future leaders and members in the church.

We will continue to hold meetings twice per month (typically) on the 2nd Sunday during the Conversation Sunday worship service and 3rd Sundays following worship for about 90 minutes. Changes to this schedule will be minimized.



Lydia Project: General Conference 2020

Epworth’s UMW President Judy Ayers is coordinating The Lydia Project at Epworth but it is not a UMW project. It is an initiative of the Minnesota Annual Conference with the purpose of providing hospitality for the next General Conference taking place in Minneapolis in May of 2020.

Find details at <https://www.minnesotaumc.org/lydiaproject> Any Epworthians interested in being involved with this project should contact Judy Ayers 612-823-0139 as soon as possible.

VBS postponed while Worship in Park proceeds



Epworth and St. James AME were not able to partner for Vacation Bible School 2018 due to deaths and illnesses of so many of our volunteers. Both churches plan to start early planning and recruitment

of volunteers so that we can have VBS for the summer of 2019.

Despite this disappointment, on August 19 we still held our combined Worship in Longfellow Park followed by a potluck picnic.

Prior to worship, there was a short tribute to honor the life of Aretha Franklin who had died days before.

The Worship Service included communion served by St. James' Pastor Michael Gonzalez and Epworth's Pastor Steve Reiser (see photo on left).

**Worship in Park
continues on page 8**



Doing Good

Photo Story: Amazing Epworth Youth take first Mission Trip together



At our July 22 worship service, we commissioned and blessed six youth and three adults leaving later that day for their first Mission Trip as a group. The group included Leo Jones, Will Reiser, Essence Dye-Connelly, Andy Byrd,

Zoe Packard, Cheyenne Peterson, Marcia Alexander, Aaron Jones, and Pastor Steve Reiser.

Preparing to take off, the youth were “pretty pumped!” according to Youth Leader Aaron Jones. But he jokingly asked for prayers for adults.

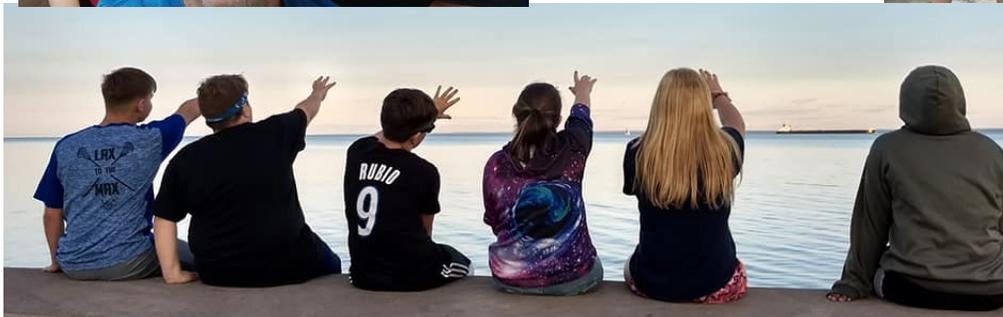


Monday: After taking a breakfast selfie (left), the group was ready for Monday. They ate lunch along Lake Superior. Some had their lunch with a side of rock climbing.



Then they skipped rocks (above) and lasered the moon with their fingers on a beautiful Superior evening (left).

Continues on page 7





Tuesday: They sorted and faced food at a food bank (above and right) and fed hungry people at Union Gospel Mission (below).



After a day knee deep in weeds and food shelf frenzy, they ended the day with Superior swimming and Wizardry at Worship!



Wednesday: The Mission group woke at 5 am on Wednesday because of a false fire alarm. They picked weeds at a pollinator garden at Denfeld Food Forest.



Afterwards they were tired but not too tired for spoons



Continues on page 8

Youth Mission Trip

Continued from page 7

On **Thursday** Epworthians removed additional weeds in Cloquet, pruned some big trees. (*below*) And they played games at Boys and Girls Club again. And they had a neighborhood



cookout complete with line dancing to end their day. (*right*)

At the end of the trip, Youth Leader Marcia Alexander said she “had the privilege to be in service with my church youth group. It has been an inspiration to watch these youth interact with young kids, elderly and many weeds! They are our future and I feel honored to work beside them this week.”

Mail, Email, Messages

Dear Epworth UMC,

My family and I want to thank you for your many expressions of sympathy following the death of Johnny Jones. Your cards, gifts in memory, presence at the memorial service, prayers and beautiful plant garden from the congregation showered us with love and compassion. Thank you for including us as members of the Epworth UMC family.

***Becky Coleman,
Gyasi & Jabari Jones***

To all my friends at Epworth,

Thank you for your loving support during these past years as Jack and I journeyed thru his cancer and end of life.

This gift is a memorial but also a thank you for the generous help in planning and hosting Jack’s celebration of life.

Sincerely, ***Julia Vanatta***

Facebook Message and photo from ***Sonja Marquez*** August 25:

Beautiful Service in honor of my mother today! Thank you to all of you that were able to attend. Those that were unable to attend; we know you were with us in spirit. Love you mom!



RANDOM ACTS OF **KINDNESS**

- It was a cold and snowy winter, but D was really happy because she had a new pair of winter gloves. One day she was riding the bus and sat near another woman who had no gloves. Her hands were very chapped from the cold. As D got off the bus she took off her gloves, put them into the woman's hand, and walked away putting her hands in her coat pockets.
- B. would clear his driveway at the end of the day after it snowed, one of the last on the street. When he noticed that the woman across the street had not cleared her driveway, he took his snow blower and cleared out her drive way. He repeated this for the next three snow falls of the year.
- N.'s mother was a member of a reading group at the nursing home and she loved books even though she could no longer read them. When she passed away N. passed the books of members of the reading group for other readers to enjoy.

• I hurried out of the apartment on my way to the dentist a block and a half away. It is such a beautiful day! BUT the second the door closed, I remembered I had not taken my key. Oh well, I can figure that out when I come back, Gene can buzz me in or come downstairs and let me in. When I finished at the dentist, I started my walk home. As I was approaching my last street to cross, I noticed a car approaching and signaling a turn at my corner. It stopped in front of me and the driver was Shirley Adler, my friend who attends Epworth and also lives in my apartment building. Shirley had not been feeling well for several months and had not been driving during that time, in fact this was her first time out in her car. She said, "Hop in!" I rode with her into the garage about a half block down the street. I told her she was my life saver as I had forgotten my key and was trying to figure out the best way to get in. Her offer of a ride was the best way in! She came by at the exact right time! Thank you, Shirley!

Worship in Park *continued from page 4*

The congregation sang hymns acapella and St. James' Mighty Men (*right*) sang two songs, inviting the congregation to sing along.

After worship, all gathered around park picnic tables, in lawn chairs, and on



blankets to enjoy a potluck of hot dogs, burgers, collard greens with cornbread, chicken wings, salads, and other dishes. There was also a variety of desserts.

Longfellow Park's playground was undergoing construction but the children still had fun swimming in the pool as well as playing water balloon toss, hula hoops, and other games.

Epworth: Being the Tool by Cynthia Lillquist



A growing number of Epworth members are involved with the mission work of Be the Tool. This organization, first brought to Epworth when Leeann and Rod visited five years ago, organizes mission trips to help rebuild people's houses after natural disasters. They Jon and Deborah Fors have gone to several towns in Texas. Mark Youngman and Brian Lillquist joined them this year for a mission to the Houston area.

Why did you join Be the Tool?

Brian: I love visiting in nursing homes, but I wanted to do something else for others. I wanted to work on the mission trips with the youth of the church but have not gotten the chance. Be the Tool gave me a chance to work with my hands and help people who need it.

Debbie: I joined BTT after meeting Leanne and Rod. Leanne knew Pam and so came to explain what they did. She always had a jar with her [for donations]. Then Rod came with her one year. After years of wanting to do mission work and several years of hearing Leanne and Rod's BTT stories, I jumped on board.

Mark: I learned of Be the Tool through Rod at church, and Jon and Deb, and wanted to help.

What was your best experience on the mission trips?

Brian: I enjoyed making new friends and being close to others. I always like doing things with my hands and seeing the changes we made in the houses. That made me feel good. The personal contact with the home owners was awesome.

Debbie: I was changed remarkably after my first trip. I expected to feel the work was most important and memorable and I do love to hear the stories of those we served. That is, of course, why we are truly there. There is the inner feeling of being the hands and feet of God [that] I think makes you feel good inside.

But my humbled self enjoys the one thing I liked least in the beginning and that is the devotion times. This is now my most favorite part of the trip -- hearing the stories of the other people there to serve, why they are there, and how they interpret not just the word of the Bible but the world around them and their experiences in life. This experience is teaching me to listen.



Mark: The Houston trip was really my first mission trip, ever. No experience really sticks out for me except for one which I found to be funny. It involved water spurting out of a valve that was supposed to have been shut.

What was your worst experience on the mission trips?

Brian: The disorganization that occurred when we were driving back and got separated. It frustrated me that there was no communication between vehicles and it made the trip stressful.

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Being the Tool

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Debbie: This is very sad for me but somehow on their first trip, I made someone else very angry at me when I said or did something wrong. This person hates me, and it bothers me to this day.

At the end of the day I have also come to understand that what we hear about the tragic storms and floods and deaths is way worse than we are led to believe. Though the suffering and the stories we are told are beyond imaginable, the downplaying of these events causes distress for the people experiencing them. There is a need for all hands and feet to be called to duty when they can.

Sometimes people get on each other's nerves on the trips but with all going on the squabbles are small in comparison to the positive that comes from serving.



Do you think there is a way that Epworth as a church could support Be the Tool?

Debbie: Epworth can absolutely be an important to BTT and it already has been. Back from the start when Leanne came by with her jar for financial donation and there have been monthly campaigns and fundraising events. There has been a chili cook off for several years and Leanne's church has a pancake breakfast to help her raise money.

Epworth and BTT could be a powerful team, even linking and sharing Missions on Facebook and our web page

Mark: Spreading the word of Be the Tool can help.

What do you think individuals can do to support Be the Tool?

Brian: Being able to attend any of the mission trips would help. You wouldn't have to attend them all.

Debbie: Individuals' contributions come in many forms. Once again make monetary donations or join a mission. Hear your call. Do what feels right. Attend events when you can. BTT has many missions throughout the year. Some are local and in November there's one to Puerto Rico. These are all posted on the Be the Tool Facebook page.

Mark: Obviously monetary support is welcome. Perhaps,



any new or lightly used quality hand tools of all types would probably be welcome.

Next Mission: Puerto Rico?



Be the Tool is partnering with In Our Hands and heading to Puerto Rico November 4 to November 10 to serve victims of Hurricanes Irma and Maria.

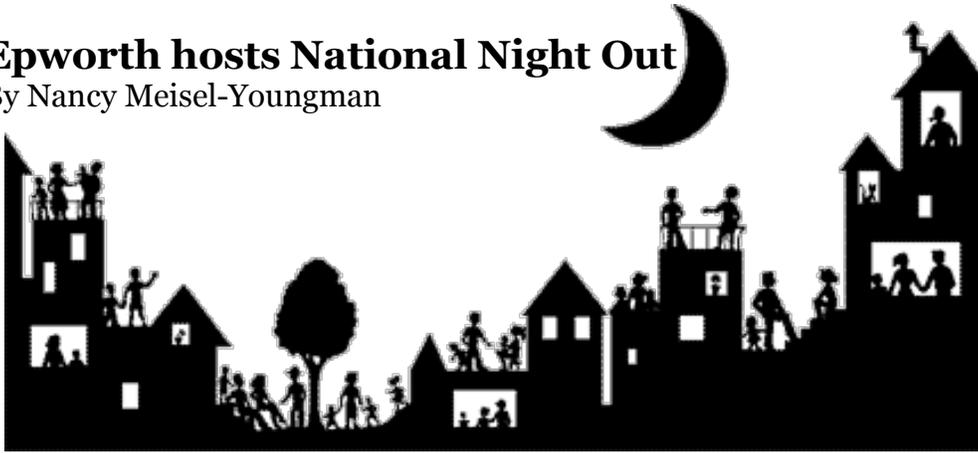
Brian Lillquist, Mark Youngman, and Tim Rice plan to join this mission trip if BTT can find one more volunteer.

Cost will be \$1100. If you're interested, send Rod a message: rod@bethetool.org. He'll tell you how to sign up and answer questions.

Welcoming All

Epworth hosts National Night Out

By Nancy Meisel-Youngman



Epworth took our mission of welcoming all, being church, and doing good to the neighborhood at our yearly summer block party Tuesday, August 7 on the 35th Annual National Night Out.

Neighbors got word of the event from neighbors working together with Epworth to distribute fliers and invitations door-to-door. Our communications Coordinator Laura Fagen prepared information about Epworth's fall programs and events. Michelle Fors advertised the event on our lawn sign.

With bounties from neighborhood gardens, heaps of seafood salad, homemade blueberry cake, black bean salad, veggie dogs, and burgers, Epworth welcomed 48 participants (plus two dogs!) of all ages from the neighborhood.

As hamburgers cooked, dogs scarfed down vegan hot dogs and children ran up and down the street chasing bubbles, tossing frisbees, and swinging hula hoops.

New friendships were formed and old friendships were rediscovered. At least one impromptu high school reunion was held when Mark Youngman realized that he and Greg, a neighbor a block away, were classmates almost fifty years ago.

National Night Out is a yearly event in which 16,000 communities across the country come together to celebrate and bolster neighborhood camaraderie.

For Epworth's 15th annual participation in the event hosts included Nancy Meisel Youngman, Mark Youngman, Pastor Steve Reiser, Don Erickson, Pat Cosette, and Dave Drennen.

Greeters give warm welcome

By Mary Ellen Reetz-Pegues

How do you like to be greeted? Warmly, for sure.

"Glad you are here."
"Thanks for joining us today."
"Hope to see you again."

All are well-worn phrases but ones we still like to hear.

Brian Lillquist, Diane Allshouse, Flora Jane Gustafson, Cleo Fors, Berri Reiser, Mary Ann Davis, Tim Rice, Nan Rice, Jean Long, and Mary Ellen Reetz-Pegues gathered for a Greeter Garden Party on July 22 to review greeter guidelines.

Familiar faces have been greeting you for a long time at Epworth, and now a group of "official" greeters, wearing name tags, will greet you as you enter for worship and fellowship.

I rejoiced with those who said to me, "Let us go to the house of the LORD."

Psalm 122:1

Ten greeters is a good number but more are needed from all ages to make sure that all who enter the doors of Epworth have a positive experience.. Please talk to Mary Ellen for a brief informational session and become one of Epworth's Good Greeters!

"Come!" And let the one who hears say,
"Come!" Let the one who is thirsty come; and
let the one who wishes take the free gift
of the water of life.

Revelation 22:17



Epworth United Methodist Women

By Judy Ayers, Epworth UMW President

Legacy Fund

United Methodist Women is celebrating its 150th anniversary on March 23, 2019 by strengthening and passing on its mission inheritance with the Legacy Fund.

This forward-looking permanent endowment will provide a firm foundation for generations of United Methodist Women to come as they engage in mission with the women, children, and youth of their day.

Epworth UMW has already contributed \$93.45 (\$18.69 x 5). Some of our members have also individually donated to the Legacy Fund. We encourage others to join us! You can donate online at unitedmethodistwomen.org/legacyfund or see the box on the right.



Anyone interested in contributing to the Legacy Fund can do so

- **By Phone:** 800-278-7771 (Monday–Friday, 8 a.m.–6 p.m. [EST])
- **By Text:** LEGACY150 to 41444
- **By Mail:** Make checks payable to United Methodist Women, write “Legacy Fund” in memo section, and mail to:
United Methodist Women
475 Riverside Drive
Treasurer’s Office
New York, NY 10115

612-823-0139. We especially need help with take down. Last spring, we did not have many helpers with take down and after helping all day, some of us were really tired by 3! And we need people to purchase items. Let you friends and neighbors know about the sale.

It is our Rummage Sales that provide the money for the UMW to contribute to the many mission programs Epworth UMW supports.



The Epworth UMW will have its Fall Rummage Sale Friday, September 21 and Saturday, September 22 from 9am-3pm.

We will be setting up Tuesday, September 18 from 6:30-8pm and Thursday, September 19 from 1-8pm. We need

donations of items. Items can be left in the Fellowship Hall by the clock. Please make sure you indicate that it is for the Rummage Sale. Items need to be at Epworth by 3pm on September 19.

We need people to help sort clothes, donate bars, help in the kitchen on Saturday and help with take down on Saturday at 3. If you can help -even for an hour or two – contact Judy Ayers,



Mini Boutique

In conjunction with Harvest Festival on Saturday, October 13, there will be a mini-boutique in the

Sonshine Room. There will be a central check out and items will include the price and I.D. number of the person who made the items on each item for sale. We will be setting up on Friday, October 12 beginning at 1 pm

Holiday Shopping Boutique



It is not too early to save Friday, November 16 and Saturday, November 17 on your calendar for our annual Holiday Shopping Boutique. We will open at noon on Friday with soup and sandwiches available for lunch. Friday, we will close at 5. Saturday morning will find fresh cinnamon rolls available when we open at 9. Soup and sandwiches will again be available for lunch. We will close at 3 on Saturday.

Come and shop for homemade items, Christmas decorations, jewelry, baked goods, peanut brittle and more. Don't forget Grandma's Attic where you can find some real treasures.

If you have items that you would like sold at either Boutique, contact Judy Ayers, 612-823-0139. She will explain how we keep track of sales, explain the percentage that goes to the church, and give you an I.D. number.

Being Church

Epworth Welcomes Community into Our Mission

The week of August 5 was a busy one for Epworth, as we had staff and volunteers at a table at two events in our neighborhood, plus hosted National Night Out at the church (see page ??? for details).

First, Epworth participated in the Longfellow Corn Feed at Longfellow Park on August 8. This yearly tradition gave us a chance to talk with our neighbors and invite them to our events and services, as well as welcome a few new faces to

the neighborhood. Plus, we enjoyed some delicious corn. It was fun for everyone who participated with activities for children and other community organizations promoting their missions.

On Saturday, August 11, Epworth was a sponsor at Midtown Farmer's Market on Lake Street. This was a great opportunity to introduce many new people to Epworth. We incorporated Epworth Gardens by providing pots and seeds for children to decorate and plant a flower or herb while we spoke with their families about the many opportunities and events at Epworth.

Both events gave us the chance to collect new names and contact information of people interested in winning two free pasties during the Fall Pasty Sale. We randomly chose



two people from each event to win.

The Cornfeed winners Olson and Justina Lopez, as well as the Farmer's Market winners Ken Stone and Thomas Gerard, will be notified to pick up their pasties on Fall Pasty Sale day, November 3.

Though busy, this week was important to immerse our church in the community and invite our neighbors to know us better. It was certainly a wonderful time to welcome our community into our mission!



Razing the Roof by Judy Ayers

There will be no more rain leaking into Epworth! A major project has just been completed – new roofs on all of the buildings; the 1914 building, the 1965 building and all the flat roofs (except one that was done 3 years ago).

With a combination of a loan through Metro East Builders and legacy money from the Barb Weiby estate, we were able to complete this project. The next time you come to Epworth, be sure to look up!

"The rain came down, the streams rose, and the winds blew and beat against that house; yet it did not fall, because it had its foundation on the rock" Matthew 7: 25





Darlene Erickson, longtime member of Epworth, died on August 21 at Walker Health Care Center at the age of 92. Darlene was a cheerful volunteer at Epworth, helping with UMW events, making pasties, and more. As her mobility and health declined, Darlene spent her last few years at Walker

Health Care Center. Despite her failing health, she was a woman of strong will and opinions.

Darlene is survived by her children, Judy (Michael) Ayers, Dwain (Marlys), Donald; grandchildren, Katherine (Zac) Kotschwar, Megan (Paul) Ayers Assad, Kristy (Kelly) McConville, and Cassandra (Dominic) Iannazzo; 9 great-grandkids, and other loving family and friends.

A Celebration of Life was held September 8 at Epworth. Her son Donny said, "I know she's dancing in heaven."



Fritz Weston was part of the Epworth family although we have not seen him in church in recent years. He passed away on August 26 at his home a few blocks for Epworth.

Epworth mourns his loss along with Enid, Fritz's wife of 48 years, their son Carl and daughter Amy Vandelac (Jim), and Carl's sons Anthony and Jonathan as well as Amy's son Jackson Vandelac. He is also survived by brothers Bill and John; brother-in-law, Bob Strong; sisters-in-law, Sue Dearborn and Nanci Holler (Craig); nieces, nephews, and friends.

A Celebration of Life service was observed at Epworth on September 7. Fritz breathes easier now in the arms of God.

Calendar for Fall/Early Winter

Please check our online calendar for changes and additions: epworthmpls.org

- Sept. 9** Coming Home Sunday
- 9 Bruch Bunch
- 10 UMW Meeting
- 12 Beer & Bible
- 21/22 Rummage Sale
- 22 Wesley Meal
- 23 Bagel & Bible
- 24-28 Meals on Wheels

- Oct. 10** Beer & Bible
- 14 Brunch Bunch
- 13 Harvest Festival
- 23 Bagel & Bible

- Nov. 3** Pasty Sale
- 11 Brunch Bunch
- 14 Beer & Bible
- 16/17 Holiday Boutique
- 19-23 Meals on Wheels
- 24 Wesley Meal
- 25 Bagel & Bible

- Dec. 2** Advent Workshop
- 9 Brunch Bunch
- 12 Beer & Bible
- 16 Christmas Pageant
- 16 Christmas Caroling
- 23 Bagel & Bible

Pastor's Column: Home & Harvest



Fellow Epworthians-

The end of summer has always signaled shifts in the daily schedule of the Reiser family. Since the school-year is beginning, our daily routine alters significantly. We go to bed earlier and wake up earlier. Our weekdays are filled with school and homework. I have always LOVED this time of year, because it begins something fresh and something new.

At Epworth, we will begin a new program year and the final “trimester” of 2018. Our worship and study topic will be “Home.”

What makes a home? When do you feel at home? Can church be home? How hard is it to come home after being gone for a long time?

. Welcome Home. Homeless. Homecoming. Homebound. In a home. Homing. Homely. Home run. Home, sweet, home. What do all of these phrases really mean? How might our reaction to each of these words (or to their underlying meaning) say something about our faith?

Is home a place where you are nourished and/or welcomed? Does everyone deserve a home? What does Jesus say about homes?

We are going to explore these ideas over the last four months of the year. This fall, we'll have a couple of special guests come and talk to and with us about how they understand homes and homelessness.

Fall also signals harvest. We can look forward to the Harvest Festival. Additionally, our summer gardens have done wonderfully this summer. We continue to harvest vegetables and the sunflowers are growing larger. We have connected with a number of folks through the garden and we've learned about the effort that it takes to tend a garden.

Have you been Nourished by the garden? Have others been Nourished by the garden? Has Faith been Nourished by the garden? Have we been able to Welcome All through the garden? Has the garden given us opportunities to Do Good and BE Church? How do YOU answer these questions?

There are plenty of opportunities this fall for Nourishing Faith, Doing Good, Welcoming All, and Being Church. Which ones will you try or continue?

Are you wondering what is happening? Ask other members and participants, check the Epworth website (www.epworthmpls.org), check out the announcements and inserts before worship, follow us on Facebook, read the Weekly Epworth Update email, call or email Epworth. There are many ways to stay connected.

Do you have questions or concerns? Want to talk about your faith or possible opportunities to serve? Connect with me pastorsteveepworth@gmail.com or in person.

Blessings, *Pastor Steve*



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“My sorrows are like seeds, pressed deep into the dark earth of my soul. I do not deny them. I do not forget them. But neither do I let them remain unchanged. Over time I let their pain turn to wisdom, their grief to mercy, their anger to forgiveness. Hidden within me, I let the hurt they once carried become the compassion I now carry, compassion for all who have known what I have known, felt what I have felt, wept as I have wept. The ground of love transforms the seeds of sorrow to new life, new hope, new beginnings, through the mystery of soul deep healing. I do not leave my faith fallow, but use my brokenness like a garden, until it turns loss to gain, and tears to songs of joy.”

~ Steven Charleston is a Native American elder, author, and retired Episcopal bishop of Alaska. Adjunct Professor of Native American Ministries, Saint Paul School of Theology at OCU, Citizen of the Choctaw Nation.