



November 6, 2023

Dear Epworth,

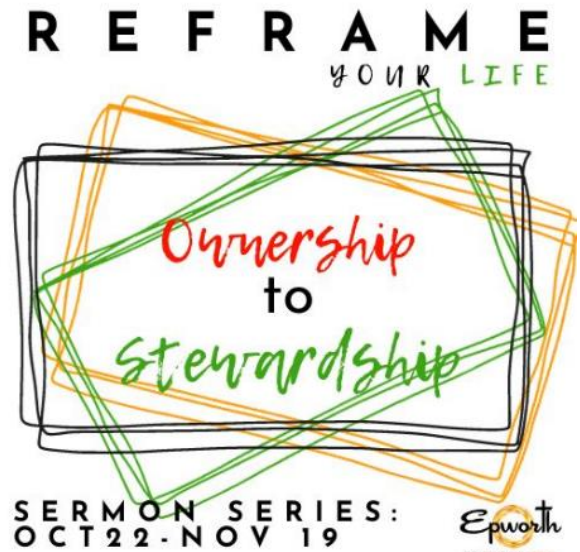
Greetings in the name of Christ. We are in the midst of our stewardship campaign. Giving statements for 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter 2023 were sent with the first stewardship letter. This letter is being sent to all members, regular attendees, and givers.

How we as Christians choose to give is a decision tied to our walk with Jesus Christ. And, it is a decision that directly impacts the work of the body of Christ. We are the members of Christ's living body.

10% of annual earning is the Biblical standard for giving. Because it is a percentage, we are each called to give sacrificially. God is not interested in the amount. God is asking for our investment and commitment to the body of Christ. God is the owner. We are the stewards of all God gives.

**Enclosed is a promise card. Our consecration Sunday is planned for November 19. In each of the three services you will be invited to bring your completed promise card to the altar as an act of worship. Cards can also be put in the offering plate any Sunday prior, if you will not be there on Nov 19. Online attendees can use the online promise card found on our website**

**<https://www.epworthunited.org/promise-cards> The purpose of this season is to reflect and ready ourselves for the next season God has for us. Below are some of the highlights year to date. This is the ministry we believe God is calling us to continue:**



### Finance

- Epworth received grants from:
  - Baltimore Washington Conference SGI grant for Greater Gaithersburg Youth Ministry (\$50,000)
  - The United States Treasury related to the Employer Retention Tax Credit (\$105,549)
- Close to \$29,000 was given to the Pastor's Discretionary Fund and the majority was used for food distribution, direct help to families in need, and Send Out ministries.

### Discipleship and Giving

- 20 new families made promise commitments for the 2023 giving year.
- 13 new families contributed to the general operating budget of the church to date in 2023.
- From July – December Epworth received contributions totaling over \$40,000 toward capital improvements. This included \$20,000 from EPK.

## **Trustees**

- Epworth has installed digital thermostats to assist with energy efficiency and to reduce heating and cooling utility costs. Thermostats are becoming operational in November.
- Trustees are working to engage community partners and EPK on workdays.

## **Building Use**

- Epworth space continues to be shared and used to invite individuals to Epworth. Space is used by:
  - Narcotics Anonymous
  - Mujer Fuerza y Coraje
  - The Lord's Table Soup Kitchen
  - Epworth's Ana A Brito Foundation
  - Overnight vigils and funerals for community members and referrals from outside partners.

## **Endowment**

- Epworth's named Endowed Funds include the Fetzer, Green, Fenner/Télliez, Owens, Bleadingheiser, Pauley, Harps, and Schnabel funds.
- Mini-grants to support specific projects aligned with endowment funds were given in 2023 in the collective amount of \$21,200.

## **Connect through Worship**

- Creative and contextual worship elements started in 2022 were continued including
  - Ribbons for All Saints Day and
  - Special Hispanic Heritage, Asia Pacific Islander, Juneteenth and Black History celebrations.
- Epworth continues to sustain livestreaming of all services on You2Tube and Zoom.
- An updated sound board has been ordered to help with the consistency of sound throughout the services.

## **Connect through Hospitality**

- 6 new members were received in 2023.
- Coffee and snacks after each service continued as a time to connect and fellowship as the body of Christ.
- A Connect presence was felt in all large invite events, distributing prayer cards, small gifts, and information about upcoming events. Connect leaders focus on relationship building.

## **Invite**

- Easter Egg Hunt, Back to School, and Pumpkin Fest 2023 continued as large, publicized events collectively drawing more than 1,500 individuals for a time of fun and community.
- The Soccer Clinic continued with 75 participants.
- Back to School was organized on a Sunday which allowed 6 families to attend worship. EUMC plans to continue models like this to reach new families in worship

## **Send Out**

- Coats will be distributed to 130 children or youth using Epworth partner networks.
- School Supplies were provided to 237 students.
- Again this Advent, there will be the opportunity to adopt a family through relationships with families from Epworth, Linkages to Learning, Brothers, Mujer Fuerza y Coraje, Cider Mill Safe Places, Epworth's Ana A. Brito Foundation.

## Food Distribution

- Food Distribution was sustained, continuing to serve 144 families on a bi-weekly basis.
- Epworth has continued to partner with the Lord's Table to receive grants from Manna and the Capital Area Food Bank.
- Food Distribution received the following grants:
  - Weis Markets \$517
  - Wawa Foundation \$2,500
  - Manna Foods supports with a quarterly grant to the Lords Table and Epworth. Quarterly funds average about \$10,000
  - Epworth is working with the Lord's Table, we have received free or close to free food from Capital Area Food Bank through their TEFAP program.

## Epworth's Ana A. Brito Foundation

- Fall Semester ESOL continued the hybrid English classes model with 174 registrants and active learners in 6 levels and 9 unique classes.
- Learners represent over 27 countries and 10 languages, with the majority still being from Latin America.
- Computer classes continue with bilingual teachers (English/Spanish).
- The EAABF board is moving to a foundation director and program coordinator/director model in order to return EAABF to its original multi-project focus. EAABF will be the Send Out arm of Epworth
- EAABF received grant funding from the following 2 sources:
  - MCAEL (Montgomery County Adult Education and Literacy) \$48,400.
  - Pro Literacy Fund \$5,000

## Adult Discipleship

- Over 30 leaders attended the Fall Leadership Retreat that was expanded to ministry leaders.
- Life Groups continued studies based on sermon series as a way of deepening faith in community
  - *Joy/Gozo* by Vanessa Gracia Cruz
  - *God Gets You: From Outsider to Beloved* and adaptation of Adam Hamilton's resource focused on the Gospel of Luke
  - *I Am / Yo Soy* - A study in the Gospel of John
  - *Faith Walkers: A Journey through the Book of Joshua*
- Adult invitational series *Thriving Not just Surviving* was hosted in May with guest speaker Dr. Tammy Smith.
- Bi-Lingual podcasts were completed weekly to connect and support the current sermon series

## Young Adult Discipleship

- One young adult life group continues as a space for post college students including dinner, bible study and fellowship.

## Youth Discipleship

- Youth Sunday School continues to grow averaging 12-20+ youth per class.
- GGYM Friday night hang out (We Worship on Fridays) continues to trend positively with over 20 youth generally in attendance.
- 6 Confirmands confirmed in May 2023. The 2024 Confirmation Class includes 14 Youth (10 Epworth, 2 Mill Creek, 2 Goshen).
- The Youth Jazz Brunch grossed \$11,000 for Epworth Missions and Scholarships.
- GGYM Mission Trip went to Camp Hope and included 13 first time youth attendees

### **Epworth Preschool & Kindergarten (EPK)**

- Epworth Preschool & Kindergarten has 101 enrolled children out of a total of 121 slots.
- EPK is now fully staffed, including a new Director, after having 9 vacancies this summer. Pastor Jen served as Interim Director until a Director was hired.
- Strong steps are being made to reach the goal of connecting EPK/EUMC
- EPK Partnered with the Judy Center Mujer Fuerza y Coraje, former students and congregational referrals for enrollees and families in need of scholarships.
- EPK raised \$32,351 in scholarships including \$8,290 in private donor specific scholarships
- EPK Families were a huge turnout at Pumpkin Fest and two families were active in the Trustees Fall Work Day.
- 4 Families attended service on EPK Sunday.

### **Infant/Toddler through 5th Grade**

- Children are attending Sunday School at all three services. Epworth is consistently seeing 10 students weekly deepening their faith using the Bible backpack model.
- 2023 Children's retreat had 15 children and 10 parents who participated Friday and Saturday night and included two guest families
- Children's Sunday school teachers were actively present for Pumpkin Fest and Bible Retreat.



The work of the church always happens through the body. The Body of Christ is made up of the members. Please know that your decisions about how to spend your time and resources directly impact the work that God does through the body called Epworth.

**Please complete the included promise card and bring it to worship on Sunday November 19.**

**There is also a google form on the website which can be used for our online attendees.**

The high-level finance team will use these promises to build a budget for the 2024 year. Your promises matter to God, to kingdom work, and to the next steps at Epworth. Only Epworth's financial secretary Nancy Laing, Epworth's Lead Pastor Rev. Jen Fenner, and Epworth's finance lead Amy Brown see the specific financial promises made. The rest of the team works with total numbers.

By the grace of God, we are alive and called. The community called Epworth has purpose and reach. Together we ask - What has God walked us through? What do we have to offer to God? What is God inviting from us and from Epworth in this next season?

We are grateful to walk with you and God.

Thank you for being a part of this with us!

*Rev. Jen Fenner & Rev. Tammi Brantley*

*Christina Castillo, Amy Brown, Amy Robinson & Derek Harps*

Epworth's High Level Finance Team