



## *I found Epworth exactly when I was supposed to.*

### Shani Abernathy's Story

I found Epworth exactly when I was supposed to. I believe I was led there by divine intervention and everything has happened exactly as it was supposed to...I was adopted at 6 days old and know nothing of my biological background. I was raised in a Conservative Jewish family. I went to Sunday School, was Bat Mitzvahed, went to services on the High Holy Days and celebrated the holidays with my family.

The only problem was- I was missing a spiritual connection to the religion and had only continued to practice as to not disappoint my mother. It was 2015 and Yom Kippur, the holiest day in the Jewish Calendar. It was also the day the Pope came to the U.S. and I stayed home from services to watch him. It was then that I had an epiphany! I wanted to explore the Christian faith. I was giddy with excitement for my husband to come home so that I could share with him that I knew what was missing from my life and just like that, a true clarity came over me. I started reading and researching what it meant to be a Christian. I asked endless questions of my Christian friends what it meant to them to be a Christian. My husband was very supportive in my endeavor as he was raised in the Presbyterian Church. We started “shopping” churches and one of my closest friends guided me in my pursuit. Easter of 2016, I professed my belief in Jesus Christ at a church we were testing out. It was one of the most emotional experiences of my life. Tears of joy spilled from my eyes and my heart was overwhelmed with love as I acknowledged my belief in our Lord Savior.

It was shortly after that, that we decided to try out a service at Epworth. Epworth wasn't a stranger to us as our son was in Scouts and they were our sponsor, but we had never actually attended a service there. We were warmly greeted entering both the church and the doors to the sanctuary. Walking into the sanctuary I told my husband, “This feels right.” We started attending regularly every Sunday thereafter. I had found my new spiritual home. My church family. My children and I were baptized, we became members and we have planted deep roots in our church. Our children attend Sunday School classes and S.W.A.T (Students With A Task) We volunteer for Serving 419, where we go out into the community and help others while spreading the love of Jesus Christ. I serve on the Children's Discipleship team and have come full circle as I am one of those faces that may greet you as you come into our welcoming church. I hope that you find it as inviting as I did and feel welcomed and supported by the Epworth community.

The love of Jesus is felt in every corner of our church. My faith continues to grow and flourish every day for I am blessed, truly blessed to have found my church family. They have embraced me and my family. Everyone is accepted for who they are, for God has made us this way. To know the teachings and love of Jesus have made my life complete. God gives us what we need, when we need it. I am no longer searching. Thanks Be to God!

# WEEKLY REMINDERS

Sunday, January 12, 2020

## #WEAREEPWORTH

It is often said the church is more than a building, it is the people. As we start into a new year we want to celebrate our Epworth family. Many of you are active on social media and we would like to encourage you to share your pictures here at Epworth, or those of you with your family/friends of Epworth with the social media hashtag #WeAreEpworth. Whether you are on Facebook, Instagram or Twitter, feel free to use this hashtag as you post. Also, look for new #WeAreEpworth feature on our website where testimonies of various Epworth members will be shared. Our first #WeAreEpworth story is being shared by Shani Abernathy, please see the back page of this *Reminders*. Interested in providing a testimonial? Contact Communications Committee Chairperson, Tami Norris, tanorris2001@yahoo.com for more information.

## DIRECTOR OF COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND MISSION

We are pleased to announce Jennie Vancil joins Epworth's staff in an unpaid role as the new Director of Community Outreach and Mission. Jennie retired last year from O-I as Community Relations Manager, Director of O-I Charities Foundation. She also serves on a number of non-profit boards in our community, including the Erie Shores Council of the Boy Scouts of America. Jennie has a long history of leadership as an active lay person in the life of Epworth. Jennie will be working closely with the Community Outreach and Missions Committees and the congregation as a whole, as we seek to expand God's Kingdom in our city and globally.



## E-TOWER

The Communications Committee did an in-depth cost analysis and concluded *The Tower* cost could significantly contribute to other, more impactful areas of ministry and have decided to move to a full transition to an electronic version of *The Tower*. **The first electronic Tower went out Monday, January 6 and they will continue to be sent on the first Monday of every month moving forward.** Keep in mind, printed copies will always be available in the lobby. If you would rather receive the printed version in the future, call Marla at 419.214.3766 to be removed from the e-list and added to our hard copy, mailed list.

**EVERY BRILLIANT THING**

If you were to make a list of things that make life worth living, what would be at the top? Chocolate? Friends? Holidays? Learn why the character in this solo performance started making a list of Every Brilliant Thing in the world. This surprising and immersive theatrical experience speaks openly about depression, mental illness, and suicide. With poignant humor and joy, Every Brilliant Thing takes us on a journey through grief, healing, falling in love, and (re) discovering all that life has to give. The performance will be brought to us by Issue Box Theatre, a local theatre company that focuses its work on art, social issues and activism. The production will be followed with a time of discussion and resource sharing as well as a panel of local mental health experts. Join us **today** at 5:30pm (doors open at 5pm) for this unique opportunity as we journey to meet people where they are and better understand and break the negative stigma of mental illness. Please contact Mary at [Mary@epworth.com](mailto:Mary@epworth.com) with questions.

**FRIENDS IN FAITH: BUNCO**

All women are welcome, even if you have never played before. Bunco is a simple game, but it is more about the Christian fellowship. Bring a side dish, appetizer or dessert to share. We start at 6:30pm with dinner before we play.

**Wednesday, January 15:** at Epworth UMC, Deep End. RSVP to Ronnie at [gorsuch2@bex.net](mailto:gorsuch2@bex.net).

**ALTAR FLOWERS**

A donation was made to the altar flower fund this Sunday by Kay Hitchner in loving memory of Curt Hitchner. "May the Lord watch between me and thee, when we are absent one from another." (Genesis 31:49)

**EXPLORE EPWORTH**



If you're ready to learn more about Epworth, join us on **January 26** from 5-7pm in the lobby for a one-time informal meeting called *Explore Epworth* in the church lobby. Enjoy dinner and conversation with your pastors, and explore the possibility of membership. Those who choose to join will be received as members Sunday, February 9 in worship, but you're never obligated to join. To sign up, email [Jennifer@epworth.com](mailto:Jennifer@epworth.com). Childcare can be provided if requested at least one week in advance, email us at [childcare@epworth.com](mailto:childcare@epworth.com) to make a request.

**PARENT CONNECTIONS: FAMILY MOVIE DAY**

Mark your calendars for Saturday, **January 25** at 1:30pm. Parent Connections will be hosting our annual Family Movie Day in the Deep End here at Church. Our Presentation will be the original *Toy Story* by Disney Pixar. Bring your sleeping bag or camping chair and enjoy a movie with all the comforts of home. Bring a friend and get a prize - we'll have a small gift for anyone who brings a "New to Epworth" friend to our Movie Day event. For more info or to RSVP contact Adam at 419.351.0758 or at [adam.schoesler@bex.net](mailto:adam.schoesler@bex.net).



**ADULT SINGLES**

Single, divorced and widowed adults in the Toledo community are invited to join. RSVP to Nancy Hauer at [hauer.nancy@yahoo.com](mailto:hauer.nancy@yahoo.com) or call 419.885.4595. The next opportunities to join us are:

**Sunday, January 12:** 12:30pm Lunch at Longhorn Steakhouse (4155 Talmadge Rd., Toledo).

**SUNDAY ADULT BIBLE STUDIES:**

- **9:45am | Adult Bible Study | Rm 214**  
Adam Hamilton's *The Walk* focuses on practicing five spiritual disciplines that draw us closer to God: worship and prayer, study, serving, giving and sharing. It promises to be a very interesting study. All are welcome.
- **9:45am | Coffee & Conversation | Rm 213**  
This class discusses modern day issues & current events, and examines the teachings of Jesus in light of them.
- **9:45am | Connecting Point | Rm 205**  
A group for post high school through mid-twenties that provides a place to connect with peers and discuss issues relevant to this stage of life.
- **11am | Sermon Notes | Rm 214**  
Discussion around individuals understanding of the scriptures' relevance to their journey.

**WEEKDAY ADULT BIBLE STUDIES:**

- **9:15am | Women's Bible Study | Rm 214**  
*Twelve Women of the Bible: Life Changing Stories for Women Today. Jan. 21-March.* Through this study you will get a fresh look at these women of the Bible and, hopefully, discover new insights for your faith journey. You will meet women who provide a powerful witness to God's gracious love leaving you feeling challenged, encouraged, deeply valued, and empowered to face trials in your own lives. No book.
- **6:30pm | Men's Bible Study | Rm 214**  
*Wide Angle: Framing Your World View. Jan. 29-Mar. 11.* Everything you think about life is shaped by your worldview. It determines your view on God, yourself and other people, and how you think about relationships, your time, and your money. Examine worldviews as they relate to the most important questions & issues of our day: truth, tolerance, terrorism, reconciliation, and the purpose of life. Participant book is \$10. Please RSVP to [Marla@epworth.com](mailto:Marla@epworth.com). Questions, [paul.schroeder@accesstoledo.com](mailto:paul.schroeder@accesstoledo.com) or call 419.292.1486.

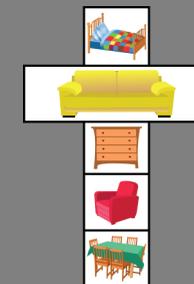
**PICKLEBALL**

Looking for a new way to work off some of those holiday goodies? Come try Pickleball. It's a great way to get some exercise while having fun! We play on Mondays from 7-9pm in the gym. Interested in learning how to play? Please contact Lisa Baker at [lisa.baker6666@gmail.com](mailto:lisa.baker6666@gmail.com).

**HEALING & WHOLENESS SERVICE**

Join us in the Sanctuary at 7pm on **Jan 21**. This service will provide an opportunity for prayer, reflection and meditation. Come and rest in the Word of God, hymns, and seek healing. Renew your focus on your connection with God, forgiveness of self and others, and strength for the journey ahead - wherever it may take you. Bring neighbors or colleagues who you feel could use reassurance and comfort. If you have questions or would like to join the team, please email Pastor Beth at [Beth@epworth.com](mailto:Beth@epworth.com).

**FURNITURE MINISTRY**



**BLESSINGS ITEMS NEEDED:**  
toasters, crock pots, white washcloths and white hand towels

STATISTICS	DECEMBER:	2019:
# Furniture:	117	1.592
# Families:	12	140
Adults:	16	170
Children:	9	169