



The Aldersgate Experience

Monthly News of Aldersgate United Methodist Church

December 2016

Dear Friend in the Messiah,

Jesus' followers are called to sound different than the din of the world.

Jesus' followers are to be revealed by the words that proceed from our hearts, the humility that envelops our conduct, and the trust in God's great faithfulness that overrides any and every one of our fears.

At Aldersgate United Methodist Church we worship alongside, we serve alongside, we study Scripture alongside, and we sit across the table from individuals who voted for different candidates in the election. Sure, our diversity here might not be as great as in other congregations in other places, but there are differences that must be bridged by the Oneness that we claim to hold in common: Jesus Christ.

Within two days of the General Election, I as Aldersgate Church's pastor had four separate conversations initiated with me concerning things being said by sisters and brothers in Christ about the election – both in person and via social media postings.

“What are we to do?”

We should do what we should have been doing all along. 1) Pray for our president, whether you voted for him or not. 2) Respect the purpose and authority of government. 3) Recognize that a faith community is not comprised of like-minded individuals, only united in our common need for God's saving grace in Jesus. 4) When you hear un-Christ-like words or comments (or see them appear on your screen from behind their screen), challenge them immediately! “How is that Christ-like?” “Where's that coming from?” “We're called to be better than that.” 5) Remember to inspect your own biases in doing #4, but don't fail to challenge out of fear that you're not perfect yet. That's too easy of an excuse. 6) And, keep on keeping on. God is faithful. Do not grow weary in doing good. 7) Pray for one another – and remember to include yourself in that prayer for grace and Wisdom.

These are the things that we should have been doing all along, but it's especially incumbent upon us now to be practicing what the Lord requires: do justice, love mercy, and walk humbly with your God.

You'll notice I'm not quoting Scriptures to support each point. Indeed, there are Scriptural supports for each one, but more importantly, there is our Christ who has destined us for living like that.

Only By God's Grace and Power in Jesus,

Pastor Troy

WORSHIP MINISTRY



December 11th at 3:00 pm: ***“The Silence and the Sound”***
(See below for more info)

Christmas Eve Schedule, Saturday, December 24th

5:30 pm: Family Service Including

Children’s Musical *“The Christmas Cupcake”*

7:30 pm: An Old Fashioned Christmas Eve

Music provided by the Aldersgate Choir and Praise Team

11:00 pm: A Traditional Christmas Eve

Christmas Communion Will Be Served

Christmas Day Worship: December 25th

One Combined Service: **10 AM**

No Sunday School

New Years Day Worship: January 1st

One Combined Service: **10 AM**

No Sunday School



The Silence and the Sound

Join us at 3 pm on December 11 for the Christmas cantata “The Silence and the Sound.” Accompanied by a live orchestra made up of members and friends of Aldersgate, this cantata is more than a concert: It is a worship experience! Incorporating original sacred songs, and well-known carols, “The Silence and the Sound” is sure to be used by the Holy Spirit to draw us into a meaningful time of worship during this Christmas and Advent season. The hymn “Let All Mortal Flesh Keep Silent” is the anchor piece that speaks to the awesomeness of God, which renders us speechless when we truly see Him with open hearts.

The choir this season is made up of 37 voices, and this cantata allows us to involve a children’s choir, with both child and adult solos. Beautiful narration is added to move us through the songs that Heather Sorensen has woven together. The cantata ends with a time of beloved carols that we will all sing together. What a great way to spend a Sunday afternoon! In her notes, Ms. Sorensen writes this: *“May you experience and communicate the awe of silence, the humility of Redemption, and the shout of joy during this Christmas season!”* We are hoping you will attend this musical offering on December 11 and that you will invite your family and friends!



Trailblazer Ministries News

Sharing the love of Christ with children Birth -5th Grade

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Children's Christmas Eve Musical 5:30pm We're Baking Up Cupcakes!

Children in Kindergarten through 5th grade will present a Christmas musical, "The Christmas Cupcake!" Our musical this year will explore the most amazing and sweetest story ever told. Through the rehearsals, the children have learned about honesty, caring and sharing, teamwork and how important it is to remember what Christmas is really all about!

Sunday School: All children K-3rd Grade have been learning the music during our Sunday School time together. They are welcome to join us on Christmas Eve as part of the chorus of bakers.

Dress Rehearsal: **Friday, December 23** from 5-7 pm. Pizza will be served. All children are invited to attend even if they haven't attended before but wish to be part of the chorus on Christmas Eve. Those in the chorus should wear: a solid red or green shirt. Boys should wear dress pants (khakis are a-ok). Girls should wear nice pants or a skirt. We are going for a super Christmas-y look.

For more information, contact Kristin Hoover kamhoover@comcast.net or Jen Benson jenbenson101@gmail.com

Children's Christmas Movie: Polar Express Friday, December 16 6:30-8:30pm

The movie "Polar Express" is making a stop in the FLC. Parents of Kindergarteners through 5th Grade are invited to drop off their children to enjoy the evening. Preschoolers and their parents are welcome to attend and enjoy the movie. Snacks will be provided and bring something comfy for the floor. To help us plan for this event, please RSVP to Jodie Dodson at childrensdirector@aldersgatechurch.net.

Christmas Eve Childcare Available

The nursery will be open for infants through preschoolers on Christmas Eve during the 5:30 pm and 7:30 pm Worship Services. If you are willing to volunteer to provide childcare during one of these services, please let me know.

Advent Books

"A Deep Blue Star" a child's activity book for Christmas is available in each of the Sunday School Classrooms as well as the Information Desk. Join Asia, Caleb, Kat and Edgar as they tell the story of Jesus' birth from the Gospel of Luke and the visit of the Wise Men from the Gospel of Matthew. Encourage children to find the star hidden on each page. Also includes a maze, a dot-to-dot picture, a "what's different?" puzzle, and an Advent calendar with stickers.

Dates at a Glance:

Every Wednesday 6:30-8 pm	WUW4Kids (Not held December 21 or 28)
December 4	Adventure Club/Summit Seekers
December 18	Adventure Club/Summit Seekers
December 24	5:30 pm Children's Christmas Eve Musical
December 25	Merry Christmas! Combined Worship at 10 am NO SUNDAY SCHOOL
January 1	Happy New Year! Combined Worship at 10 am NO SUNDAY SCHOOL



Do you want to know more about Trailblazer Ministries?

Contact Jodie Dodson at 737-7923 x107 or email childrensdirector@aldersgatechurch.net



Preschool News



The preschool is ringing with excitement during the month of December. The classrooms and hallways are filled with JOY!

We hope and pray that everyone is surrounded by family and loved ones while celebrating the beauty and peace of Christ's birth.

Here are a few important dates/events to jot down for the New Year:

The preschool will be closed for the holidays from December 21 through January 2. Merry Christmas and Happy New Year!

The preschool is hosting a 'Kindergarten Information Night' on **Tuesday, January 31 from 7-8 pm** in the sanctuary. All parents are invited to attend. Bring your questions and/or concerns about kindergarten readiness and expectations. We will have 4 kindergarten teachers from the CV school district available to answer questions.

Preschool registration for the 2017-2018 school year will take place in March. Registration forms will be posted on-line, with instructions on when to mail them in. Please contact Kathleen if you are interested in scheduling a tour of the preschool.

We invite all parents to attend a **Parenting seminar Monday, February 27 from 6-8 pm**. Lisa Murray returns as the speaker for this event. Please come join us. There is a \$5 voluntary donation for the workshop. We need a head count for this event, so please RSVP to; Kathleen Blazey:

preschooldirector@aldersgatechurch.net or 737-7923 ext. 103.

The topic for the workshop will be 'Emotional Intelligence:'

"Children who have specific social and emotional characteristics are popular with peers, well liked by teachers, do well overall in a school and have a good foundation for success as adults. Did you know that your IQ only accounts for 20% of your success? Find out what social and emotional skills account for the rest and ways to encourage these traits in your children. Join us on 2/27/16 to learn how you can lay the important emotional groundwork to help your child be successful now and in the future!"

"Always be humble and gentle. Be patient with each other, making allowance for each other's faults because of your love." Ephesians 4:2 (NLT)



December 2016 Prayer Calendar

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
				1 Pray for UMC Just Save One Initiative, to stop mother to child HIV	2 Pray for the Youth and the First Friday Ministry	3 Pray for Aldersgate knowing this is God's church before ours
4 Pray for those entering this season mourning the death of a loved one	5 Pray for the Free Beacon Clinic Ministry in Harrisburg	6 Dear God, prepare our hearts to receive the gift of Christ	7 Pray for our Nation, "Pray and seek my face"	8 Pray for the 140 million orphaned children of the world	9 Pray for our Pastor Troy Howell	10 Pray for your neighborhood
11 Lift in prayer those in the Christmas cantata, and the newcomers in attendance	12 Pray for those suffering from Alzheimer's and their families	13 Pray for the Tuesday morning Women's Bible Study Ministry	14 Dear God in our journey to the manger, may we forgive others as you have forgiven us	15 Pray for those serving in Prison Ministry and the incarcerated	16 Pray for safe travels for college students driving home for their Christmas Vacation	17 Pray for the homeless and hungry
18 Prayers of Thanksgiving for the blessings of worshipping our Triune God.	19 Pray for the postal employees, UPS and Fed Ex drivers during this season	20 Pray for Bishop Park and District Superintendent Rev. Robison	21 Pray for New Hope Ministry	22 Pray silently using your imagination to contemplate scripture, <i>Ignatian Prayer</i>	23 Pray for those hospitalized and ill	24 Pray we do not lose sight of Whom we celebrate, and Who sent the Perfect Gift
25 Prayers of Joy for the Perfect Gift of Jesus the Christ	26 Praise for the 1784 Christmas Conference in Baltimore in which Francis Asbury was ordained	27 Pray for Christians in North Korea, it is illegal for them to celebrate Christmas	28 Pray we may shine the Light of Christ for others to see through our witness and service	29 Pray for our sister churches in the Susquehanna Conference - over 900 churches	30 Pray for the doctors, nurses and other healthcare providers	31 Pray for the leadership of Aldersgate Church





YFA (aka Aldersgate Student Ministry)

Sheryl Behr, 717.737.7923 x105, YouthDirector@aldersgatechurch.net

Cookie Walk Fundraiser: 12/11 (Cookies due 12/10)

The YFA is holding its annual cookie walk on Sunday, December 11, from 8 to 11:15 am. Church members, as well as community members, are encouraged to stop by the Family Life Center and check out the delicious array of Christmas cookies, candy, fudge and other confectionary treats. Gluten-free and sugar-free items will be added this year and cookies with nuts will be labeled for those with food allergies. All cookies and other items will be sold by the pound. You may give them as gifts or eat them on the way home! Cookie tins are available for a nominal fee to make gift giving even easier.

This has become a holiday tradition for our church family. All proceeds will benefit the youth group and their mission projects. Feel free to encourage friends and family members to stop by for an awesome display of treats and stay for the worship service! If you have any questions, or would like to donate cookies or special treats for this event, please contact Lezli Austen at 717-609-2996 or Sheryl Behr at 717-645-8569. Thank you for your continued support!

YFA Christmas Party 12/18 6-8:15 pm

A celebration of Jesus' birth! The party will include a White Elephant gift exchange (items \$5 or less), ugly Christmas sweater contest, photo booth, music, games and more. Please bring an appetizer or dessert to share.

High School Retreat @ Doubling Gap 1/6 thru 1/8

Register today! A signed covenant confirms your spot. Cost for the retreat is \$85. Payment is due by December 11. Scholarships are available. Retreats are a great time to connect with friends and God through games, camp fires, worship, small groups, and time together having a blast! Potential outdoor activities during our weekend include broom stick ice hockey, ice skating, sledding, zip line, and a challenge course. All depending on the weather!

Young & Free, Youth Fellowship @ Aldersgate

Aldersgate student ministry has started using some new messages and themes.

YFA - 'Youth Fellowship @ Aldersgate' or 'Young & Free @ Aldersgate'! We plan to use both!

Young - Based on 1 Timothy 4:12, we are challenging our students: even though you are young, you can still "...teach with your life."

Free - Based on John 8:32, we are making sure students know the freedom they have as followers of Christ!

The YFA 2016 Shirt - We have new shirts! Cost is \$10 each.

Ministry Communication

We started using several new tools to communicate better:

Website. Our website is now online. Check it out and provide feedback!

<http://youth.aldersgatechurch.net>

The website has both our weekly updates and our newsletter there as well.

For you RSS reader people, you can find the weekly updates here:

<http://youth.aldersgatechurch.net/?feed=weeklyfeed>

Mailchimp for emails. Hopefully you noticed improved emails. If you haven't seen the emails check your spam folder or subscribe on the home page.

Instagram. Since many students don't read emails we try to communicate through this tool also. Follow us: youth.director!

We are preparing to update our Facebook presence - stay tuned. If you have other ideas let me know!

Youth Meetings This Month & Long Term Forecast

This Month:

- 12/4: YFA Sunday!
- 12/11: YFA Sunday!
- 12/18: YFA Sunday: Christmas Party, Appetizers and Desserts
- 12/25: NO YFA SUNDAY: Christmas! Only one service in the morning and no Sunday school

Long Term Forecast (2017):

- 1/1: NO YFA SUNDAY: New Years Day! Only one service in the morning and no Sunday school
- 1/6-8: High School Retreat!
- 2/5: Superbowl Party
- 2/17-19: Confirmation Weekend

Village of Hope Uganda

Where God transforms Children of War into Children of HOPE

Through your support in 2016:

- * 96 new children moved into our Villages
- * 6 new counselors and 14 new staff: Academic and vocational teachers, pastor, nurse, and center manager for Bobi Village
- * Vocational Center for: Carpentry, motor vehicle and construction courses
- * Administration offices at Bobi
- * Girl's latrine
- * Children's home
- * Corn mill
- * Soccer field
- * Staff home
- * **Over 280 new child sponsorships!**

*"Immeasurably
MORE than ALL we
ASK or IMAGINE"*

Eph: 3:20

Only God!!!

"Tabitha" Women

70 former sex slaves
learning crafts to
sustain their families

Elementary

216 Elementary School
students at the Village and
former IDP camps

University

Barbara & Denis, first
to attend university

"Guardian Angels"

300+ Children's
guardians in former
IDP camps learning
parenting skills,
counseling and healing

Vocational Training

20 VOH students graduated

70 Vocational Training
students at the Village

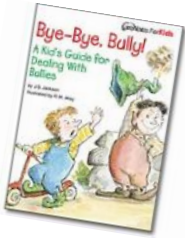
VOH High School

168 Senior High
students at the Village
and IDP camps

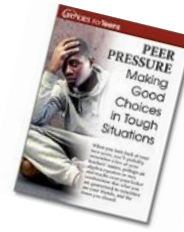
VOH Staff

110 loving, caring, and
committed staff

On behalf of all of us at Village of Hope thank you for making a life changing investment in the lives of our children!!!



Care Notes are available...



Care Notes are little booklets published by Abbey Press addressing a multitude of topics from a Christian perspective. You will locate Care Notes for Kids, Care Notes for Teens, and Care Notes for Adults throughout the church. The Care Notes for Kids and Care Notes for Teens displays are located next to the Youth Office. Care Notes for Adults displays are located on the Information Table outside of the sanctuary and in the hallway outside of the Family Life Center.

Care Notes for Kids help parents tackle specific topics with their children. Whether it be a "Guide to Dealing with Bullies" or a "Children's Booklet About Anger," you will find an assortment of topics discussed on a child's level.

Care Notes for Teens, are written exclusively for teenagers addressing concerns they may be dealing with. Many parents have found reading the Care Notes for Teens have provided them insight on the teenager's perspective of particular issues.

Regardless of your age the Care Notes are part of the ministry of the church, for your reading or to hand to someone you know is in the midst of difficult journey. Feel free to take a Care Note, to use or give to a friend. If you are interested in a subject not displayed, contact either Dennis Knoetgen at dknoetgen@gmail.com or Carol Diffenbaugh at healthministries@aldersgatechurch.net.

THANK YOU

I would like to extend my appreciation to the SonDay Sisters for all their efforts in making the Ladies Christmas Brunch a wonderful outreach to the community. The dozen or so ladies transformed our Family Life Center into a Christmas Cafe, serving a delicious homemade brunch for 120 ladies. The SonDay Sisters worked many hours as they shared their gifts of hospitality for their Sisters in Christ. I also would like to extend our gratitude to the men who served as bus boys, dishwashers, sound techs and general Guy Fridays the day of the event, Pastor Floyd Sollenberger, Craig Hatmaker and Brad Diffenbaugh.



Carol Diffenbaugh

The SonDay Sister's will serve as hostess for the Jan. 21st Veteran's Café being held at Aldersgate Church. The ladies will be decorating the Family Life Center in patriotic colors and providing a hot breakfast for this outreach event. Mark your calendars now as the SonDay Sisters have already circled March 25th for the 2017 Ladies Spring Brunch.

If you like fellowship, enjoy meeting new people and have a heart for hospitality, consider joining the SonDay Sisters. This group of women meet infrequently, but always have fun when gathered and planning events. To join us for the next meeting, please contact Carol Diffenbaugh at healthministries@aldersgatechurch.net or call 717-737-7923 ext. 104

Articles for the January 2017 Newsletter should be sent to the church office at secretary@aldersgatechurch.net by **December 15th**. Thank you.



Special Christmas Service For Those Grieving or Experiencing Hardship

Blue Christmas Service

If you or someone you know needs a solemn approach to Christmas this year because of grief, illness or hardship, please join us for a "Blue Christmas Worship Service" at

**Young's United Methodist Church
7075 Wertzville Rd., Mechanicsburg, PA 17050
Sunday, December 4th at 3:00 pm**

We understand Christmas may be a difficult time for you this year and invite you to join us for this special heartfelt Christmas service. This combined service of Aldersgate and Young's United Methodist Church is open to all people, regardless of church affiliation. Directions to Young's UMC can be found at

<http://www.gb-gm-umc.org/youngsumc/directions.html>



What's Up Wednesday Schedule

Many of you are enjoying the delicious hot buffets served every Wednesday evening in the Family Life Center from 5:30 pm to 6:15pm. Several of the short term studies being offered on Wednesday evenings have already ended. Operation Timothy for Men is still open, as is Single Parenting. The two long term studies (Disciple I and Disciple IV) are continuing.

The good news is, starting January 11th we will have a selection of very interesting short term studies for your consideration. Keep an eye out for the listing and registration form in the Sunday bulletin and on the church website, www.aldersgatechurch.net. Sign up early so your book/study guide can be ordered.

The December WUW Dinner Schedule is as follows:

The last WUW in 2016 will be offered on December 14. We will NOT be offering WUW meals on December 21 or 28 or on January 4. WUW meals and studies will resume on January 11, 2017.



ALDERSGATE OFFICE HOURS

Monday through Thursday, 8:30 am - 3:30 pm

Friday 8:30 am - 12:30 pm

The office will be closed on the following days:

December 23, 26 and 30, 2016 and January 2, 2017



The VETERAN'S CAFÉ at Aldersgate

The Army Heritage Center Foundation in Carlisle wants to make sure Veterans and their stories are never forgotten. From 8:30 a.m. to 10:30 a.m. Saturday, on Saturday January 21st Aldersgate will host the Army Heritage Center Foundation's "Veterans' Café." This Café is open to all veterans and their friends and families. The Veteran's Café is coordinated by Jeffrey Hawk, the Education Director of the Army Heritage Center Foundation.

Come join us and hear the interesting stories of two featured veterans, followed by an open mic session in which people can speak as the spirit moves them. At least one of the featured veterans will be from Aldersgate Church!!! These stories will be collected and submitted for preservation for future generations at both the Army Heritage Center Foundation in Carlisle and the Veterans History Project at the Library of Congress in Washington D.C. \$10 is collected the morning of the event to cover the cost of the breakfast. If you prefer to skip the breakfast and just attend to listen to the speakers and be part of the discussion, there is no entrance fee.

Date: Saturday, January 21st

Time: Hot Breakfast at 8:30 a.m.

Program Ends at 10:30 a.m.

To register to attend the January 21st Veterans Café call Jeffrey Hawks at 258-1102.

Deadline for registration is Jan. 13th



Carl's Corner

1. During the past few months we have been experiencing numerous issues with our Fire/Security system. Upon further investigation it was determined that we had a faulty fire communication panel as well as a faulty smoke detector located in the side room of the sanctuary. A proposal to make repairs was received and approved. Work was completed and passed inspection on 11-7-16 and our Fire/Security system is now fully operational with no further issues.

2. Preparations are underway for the upcoming winter months ahead. Snow stakes have been installed in the parking lot area. Checking the building envelope for air leakage and making repairs or insulating areas of concern is ongoing. We are communicating with our snow removal contractor the importance of snow and ice removal to accommodate preschool activities and other Church activities.

3. Work was performed by in house personnel on trimming of many trees located around the facility. This was labor intensive and there are a few more trees that need to be trimmed to complete the project. Special thanks to Mike Lebo who was part of making this happen.

4. In the past several weeks, we made a number repairs on the church van. If you use the van, please communicate any need you see for further repairs by entering the information on the Trip Log sheet. Thank you for doing what you can to keep it in good condition!



New WIFI Upgrade Is Here

A new WIFI system has been installed at Aldersgate. It includes a guest sign on capability so you can use WIFI while you are at the church. To use the church WIFI, select the AUMC-Guest network ID and enter the password AUMC-Guest (same as the network ID).





ANGELS ARE IN OUR MIDST

It's time to start thinking of sharing our love with those in need during the Christmas season. The season is not about gifts, but our small tokens of love will put a smile on a child or adult in need during the Christmas season ... and hopefully all year!

The "Angel Tree" will appear in the church lobby on November 12, loaded with "wish ornaments." If you are able, please take 1 or 2, fill out the back tag and place it in the decorated box. Then take the wish tag with you when you are out shopping and return it with the gift by December 11. Please place them in a gift bag - do not wrap the gift.

We will be giving to the following agencies:

- Silence of Mary's Home
- New Hope Ministries
- Shalom House
- Bridge of Hope
- Allison Hill after school program
- Daystar
- Village of Hope-Uganda



Our church family is always so generous and I feel blessed to be part of it. If you have any questions, please contact me, pam.caserta@yahoo.com. Any help with sorting the gifts when they come in is greatly welcome.

Thank you!

Pam Caserta

On behalf of the Election Day team we would like to thank the Aldersgate family for all of the generous donations of delicious baked goods. Many of you supported our efforts through volunteering your time as well. We truly appreciate all of you!

We want to thank you for having the blanket from the church prayed over for Bill. It was and is so appreciated. Bill has it on the chair in the family room and every evening as he watches TV he is covered with the blanket. We think of everyone at Aldersgate every day. Would you make sure the women that make these blankets know how much Bill appreciates their work and the prayers.

I have one (blanket) that was given to me when I retired and I treasure it, too.
Much love, Joyce and Bill Lackey

THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!
THANK YOU!

Dear Congregation,

Following the recent untimely death of my cousin, Eldon. Your prayer shawl/blanket ministry provided a blanket for Eldon's parents, Ruby and Ralph German.

I wish to express my deepest gratitude for thinking of my family during this difficult time.

May He continue to bless you and your prayer shawl/blanket ministry.

Yours in Christ,
Marie Fishel

Thank you so much for all your loving help with my brother's passing. I am so blessed to have you as my church family.

Rhonda & Larry Merwine

Dear Aldersgate Church Family,

Thank you all so much for your care, encouragement and support these last few weeks. Thanks for all the offers to do things. You have been wonderful! I don't know how I would have gotten this far without such a supportive church family. You are the best and I am blessed because of you.

Love, Joyce Walker



Aldersgate Church
A United Methodist Congregation
1480 Jerusalem Road
Mechanicsburg, PA 17050

*"Reaching with the Heart of God
for the Lives of Our Community"*

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DECEMBER 2016 Edition

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