

The Gatepost

JANUARY 2021



A New Year's Prayer

Lord, You make all
things new
You bring hope alive
in our hearts
And cause our
Spirits to be born
again.

Thank you for this
new year
For all the potential
it holds.

Come and kindle in
us a mighty flame
So that in our time,
many will see the
wonders of God
And live forever to
praise Your glorious
name. Amen

UPCOMING EVENTS

SUNDAY, JANUARY 3

Marcos Pizza Fundraiser

SATURDAY, JANUARY 9

Mens Breakfast 7:30 AM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 10

Online Hymn Sing
5:00 PM

TUESDAY, JANUARY 12

Trustees Meeting
6:30 PM
GriefShare via Zoom
6:30 PM

SUNDAY, JANUARY 17

Human Relations Day

TUESDAY, JANUARY 19

Finance Meeting
6:30 PM

WEEKLY EVENTS

Mondays - Women's Bible Study 9:30 AM - Men's Bible Study Via Zoom 7:00 PM

Tuesdays - Aldersgate Time of Prayer via Zoom 6:30 PM

Fridays - FAB via Zoom 10:00 AM

Saturdays - Focus Worship Via Zoom 5:00 PM

SACRED TIMES

As I write this article there is a dusting of snow on the rooftops reminding us of the cleansing purity of our Heavenly Father, and yet we are a community hurting because of the tragic loss of an 8th-grade student at the Junior High. Trying to come back from so many terrible things that have been a part of 2020 may seem so difficult, but we each need to turn to a sacred space to heal and rebuild from the loss of loved ones, loss of traditions, and all of the losses we have experienced.

We remember how blessed and faithful the Lord has been, but if we fail to reconnect or stay connected in the love of our Lord and one another we can lose hope. Please don't neglect the scriptures' encouragement to forsake coming together in worship. Many are still not able to attend in person worship and I'm not sure when all ministries will be in person, but please make a plan and set a date you will be back and work towards being in fellowship with your church family. We are stronger together and bearing one another's burdens is what we are called to do.

It is easy to stay in a rhythm or habit established during the last year, but you are missed and need to get back to serving the Lord. There are so many in need and you are the neighbor to make a difference in your neighborhood. When we stay connected in a "sacred space" we continue to be who we are in Christ, to be Christ in the world. We can come back and have a tremendous story to live in 2021.

Please join in!

See You Sunday in Worship (here or where you are!)

Love In Christ,
Pastor Dennis



STAFF UPDATES



Happy New Year!

The new year is just beginning and already we have some exciting news to announce! Christian Barnard, who initially served as our Lead Sound Tech and then our full-time Worship Intern, has stepped into the role of Creative Arts Director! Christian is a trained musician who sings and plays several instruments. He grew up in the worship ministry at First Assembly where his mom, Melissa, is still the Worship Director. He served as the lead volunteer in charge of sound and media for five

years there before coming to work at Aldersgate.

Christian has a great deal of experience in the various facets of worship. He has worked in sound and lighting for 14 years, runs sound professionally in Springfield, and serves as the Technical Director at Marshfield Community Theatre. As the Creative Arts Director, Christian will continue to oversee sound and lighting for worship and special services, coordinate the worship for our contemporary services and youth services, produce weekly announcement videos, and create graphics for worship and electronic and written church communications in collaboration with Casey Freeland.

Casey Freeland, who served as our part-time Communications Intern for a year, has accepted the role of full-time Communications Director. Casey has a degree in Communications with a Public Relations emphasis that she immediately used working in Nashville on music row after graduation. She has worked the Branson entertainment scene as a publicist for Silver Dollar City and Marketing Director for The Haygoods. She gained valuable experience in the non-profit world as the Communications and Development Coordinator at Catholic Charities of Southern Missouri before coming to work at Aldersgate. As Communications Director, she will produce our electronic and print communications, work with ministry leaders and staff to choose the most effective means of communicating information about their ministries to the congregation and community, as well as planning and producing advertising.



Be sure to congratulate Christian and Casey and welcome them to their new roles!

LAY LEADERSHIP CHANGES

January is a time of change and new beginnings. It's also when Methodist church committees rearrange their make-up and sometimes find new leaders in their midst. The Lay Ministry Team is experiencing a change in leadership and it seems a good time to express our gratitude to Terri McBride who will be leaving the role of Lay Leader and to welcome Tom Johnson and Julie Ellis who will share the duties of

leadership going forward. Aldersgate is truly blessed to call these three people part of our family.



Many of you are acquainted with Terri and know that he can be found around Aldersgate often, fulfilling an exhausting list of volunteer duties that serve the Aldersgate family and the surrounding community. His list of involvements is so extensive that, well, suffice it to say if there is a job to be done, Terri is always ready and willing. He has served several churches over the years but had never been a Lay Leader. His on-the-job-training here has served him well. You've probably heard him speak and know that he can present a well thought out and meaningful message. He doesn't hesitate to use himself as an example, nor does he hesitate to jump into any situation with a giving heart. While Terri will be missed as Lay Leader, do not worry. He will still meet you at the front door with a big smile and serve as an usher. He has been and will continue to serve as co-facilitator for the GreifShare program which benefits countless hurting people. He says he'll also be looking for new ways to serve. Thank you, Terri, for all that you have done and all the ways you will continue to serve the family of Aldersgate and the surrounding community.

Julie is a busy wife, mom, attorney, and dedicated servant to her Lord.

She grew up in Springfield, then life took her away to complete her education and begin her career. Years later she has come full circle, with a family of her own, to establish a home in Ozark. Her experience in the fields of law and politics have undoubtedly equipped her to negotiate the intricacies of church leadership. She has served on Staff Parish Relations and Finance Committees this past year gaining insights into the mechanics of the church.

She is dedicated to putting those skills to use in further developing the programs already in place at Aldersgate and introducing new ones.

She has a keen desire to develop servant leaders and she specifically wants to ease the burden on our pastors and recognize the efforts of other staff personnel. In her own words, she sees her role as being centered on "serving and caring for those around us. Being...Christ in the World". Julie and her husband, Shane, have a thirteen-year-old son, Connor, so she has a vested interest in extending and creating youth opportunities here at Aldersgate. Their family has been an active part of this church for three years and are all making contributions of their time and talents to Aldersgate and the surrounding community. Julie brings many skills to this ministry, one of the greatest being her willing heart.



Tom Johnson has lived and worked in the Nixa area for 20 years. He is currently employed with Hermann Lumber Company in Brookline. He and his wife, Pam, have four children, three boys, and one girl. Their daughter attended the PDO program here at Aldersgate and that was their first exposure to the church. They became members about three years ago. Tom expresses his desire to be a constant presence for Christ within the congregation and the community, to provide answers to anyone who may be looking for a ministry and

guidance toward the best direction in which they can serve those around them. Earlier this year, Tom also accepted the role of Stephen Ministry leader and he sees the two ministries complementing one another in many ways. When asked if he's up for the preaching aspect of Lay Ministry, he feels sure he'll be ready when the time comes. Tom's complete trust in God is apparent when conversing with him. He is ready and willing to lead the family of Aldersgate toward greater service to one another and throughout the community. The greatest gift one can receive is a servant's heart and Tom truly has that. We are blessed he has answered this call to ministry.



These two people come to their new positions with tremendous excitement and dedication. Their love for God and community is truly humbling. Their presence will be felt in countless ways as we continue to navigate the uncertain waters of our times, but you can be certain, they will be working for the one true leader. We welcome Julie and Tom as leaders of the Aldersgate Lay Ministry.

“
*Leadership is
an action, not
a position.*

Donald McGannon

Are You Being Christ in the World?

My wife and I usually read the devotion book “The Upper Room” every morning during our breakfast and a story found for December 16th really made an impression on me. The Bible verse is from Proverbs 11:25 and states “A generous person will be enriched, and one who gives water will get water”.

The story begins with a group of people on a mission trip to Mexico. One day, while they were working an elderly woman came to a nearby well and filled two buckets with water. She then placed the buckets full of water on a yoke across her shoulders. After a few steps, she stumbled and fell, spilling the water. One of the members of the mission team ran to her, helped her up, refilled her buckets, and then carried them to her home.

During a church service later that evening, the members were asked to share where they had seen Jesus that week. One told about painting with Jesus, another about doing carpentry with Jesus, and then the elderly woman shared how Jesus had carried her water.

As Christians and followers of Jesus Christ, isn't that what we are called to do? Are we not called to help those who are in need? Jesus tells his followers in Matthew 25 that we are to help the least of these. We are blessed by God to be a blessing to others. Let us followers of Jesus Christ make that our New Year's goal in 2021. Let us look for opportunities to help those who are in need.

Your brother in Christ,
Ed Vigneaux

ONE SOLITARY RESOLUTION

By Marcy Barthlette

A few weeks ago, my family began a journey, one that was new to us. As parents, we received a call no parent ever wants to answer. Our youngest child had been diagnosed with cancer. A routine mammogram had uncovered two lumps, one benign and one malignant. A visit to oncology, a surgery scheduled, and we were headed down a road to an unknown destination. Her surgery occurred on December 9, an ordinary Wednesday morning that was anything but ordinary for us. Her husband was only allowed to check her in and pick her up. COVID restrictions would not allow him to stay and keep her company on her long wait for her turn at that surgical space where miracles can happen.

Meanwhile, her dad decided this was the day to amputate a large limb from the towering pin oak tree that graces our front yard. My mother's heart had so many other, more important matters to consider but in his mind, the tree limb needed to leave that very day. He had studied his approach to the surgery throughout the long summer while waiting for cold weather to withdraw the sap back into the tree's roots. And he chose this day to attack a misplaced limb that sat very low on the tree and hung far out into the street, making visibility less than ideal. Though I didn't understand his determination, I watched as he started at the ends of the branch, taking off lesser limbs until he reached the large obstacle still attached to the trunk. With his small chainsaw, it was a difficult cut, but he finally made it through, a clean-cut that should heal well and not leave the tree with a permanent injury.

At the same time that tree limb fell, an invader was being cut from our daughter's seemingly healthy body and it finally occurred to me that dad had needed a big distraction from what was happening miles away and over which he had no control. It would still be a number of days before the pathology results would be available. Once again, COVID was the culprit, thousands of tests taking massive amounts of lab time.

So together, we worked at cleaning up the mess in our front yard. Hard work felt good! It also occurred to me that if we're to be honest, we all have unsightly things that need to be cut away and messes that need cleaning up, behaviors that are a disappointment to God. We had a tough year in 2020. Maybe it's time for us to take a good look at the many ways in which we can move forward with an improved attitude toward our fellow man. We don't necessarily need to make resolutions to hit the gym every day or go on a crash diet to lose those extra pounds accumulated during the long holiday season. There's nothing wrong with maintaining a good diet and exercise program. In fact, God tells us to care for our bodies. But I believe that if we make one very simple resolution, excellent rewards will come our way. If we resolve to love and serve God in the ways that He asks, all the rest will follow.

If we can put aside our fight for personal rights and consider the needs of everyone, if we can let go of grudges against individuals and governments and work toward improvement of communication channels, if we can remember to smile at someone who lives outside our comfort zone, maybe we can improve communication with the one who really matters most of all.

So that's it....one solitary resolution for 2021; do the best you can to love and serve God!
PS: As of this writing we still have no results from pathology, but we are moving forward with a positive attitude and with the certain knowledge that whatever comes, God will walk with us every step of the way.

Happy New Year Everyone!

What Our Stephen Ministry Team Does

Stephen Ministry congregations equip and empower lay caregivers—called Stephen Ministers—to provide high-quality, confidential, Christ-centered care to people who are hurting.

Since Stephen Ministries was founded in 1975:

- More than 13,000 congregations have enrolled in the Stephen Series.
- More than 75,000 pastors and lay leaders from those congregations have been equipped at Leader's Training Courses.
- More than 600,000 laypeople have received Stephen Minister training.
- More than one-and-a-half-million people have received care from a Stephen Minister.



Stephen Ministers are laypeople—Christian men and women—trained to provide one-to-one care to people experiencing a difficult time in life, such as grief, divorce, job loss, chronic or terminal illness, relocation, or separation due to military deployment.

Stephen Ministers come from all walks of life. Their commonality? A passion for bringing Christ's love and care to people during a time of need. Once receiving training and being commissioned, the Stephen Minister begins a caring relationship when he or she is matched with a person experiencing a life crisis. The Stephen Minister then meets with that person on a weekly basis to listen, care, encourage, and provide emotional and spiritual support. The caring relationship lasts as long as the person is in need of care.

During their training, Stephen Ministers learn skills in Christian caregiving, the art of listening, the importance of boundaries, assertiveness, how to use reflective questions, confidentiality, understanding grief, depression, and loss, a deeper understanding of feelings, providing spiritual care and how supervision works.

Ever Thought About Becoming a Stephen Minister?

If you have gifts for caring, encouragement, and listening, please begin to prayerfully consider whether you might want to be part of this exciting ministry. If you think you might be interested, talk with one of our Stephen Leaders or call the church office at 725-4949.

NEW LADIES BIBLE STUDY

We read in Scripture that we're made in God's image, but what exactly does that mean? How does it affect our relationship with God, our interactions with others, and our purpose and mission in the world today? Join the Monday Morning Ladies' Bible Study to gain a deeper understanding of what it means to bear God's image, or Imago Dei. We'd love to have you with us, in person or on Zoom!

Imago Dei Bible Study, Zoom and in-person (Room 207)
Beginning Monday, January 11, 9:30 a.m.

Led by Karen Shirer, 830-928-3741, kshirer@hctc.net

Book: Imago Dei, by Mike Cosper (The Gospel Coalition, LifeWay Publishers)

You may order your own book from Amazon or LifeWay, or Karen will place a group order on Wednesday, January 6th (cost approximately \$13). Please have your requests into Karen by the 5th. Because shipping times are extended now, the expected wait time for books is about 3 weeks. Until they arrive, we will meet to study and discuss selected topics from week to week.

Please register with the Church office or with Karen.

Hope you can join us as we dig into God's word, and enjoy fellowship with one another.

Starting January 12th the **Aldersgate GriefShare** program will start a new group that will meet using the Zoom meeting platform. This group will meet once a week on Tuesday evenings from 6:30 PM to 7:45 PM for 13 weeks.

The group is open to any adult, 18 years and older, that is suffering from the loss of a loved one. Aldersgate will provide the workbook for this program at no cost to the participant and it can be picked up at the church office. Advanced registration is required to provide online access to the program videos and to receive the login information to the Zoom meetings.

GriefShare is a special seminar and support group that is designed to help individuals cope with and understand the grieving process due to the loss of a spouse, child, family member, or friend. The series of videos and group discussions are non-denominational and features biblical teachings on grief and recovery topics. There is also a workbook that the participants can use during the time between the meetings to help them understand what was learned during the session and how it applies to their situation.

If you are interested in this program, have questions about the meetings, how to view the videos, or how to use Zoom, please feel free to contact Terri McBride at 417-494-4776.

GRIEF SHARE®



seedbed
SOWING FOR A GREAT AWAKENING

As we will shortly begin a new year with a new sermon series focusing on creating and protecting sacred space, we have a great opportunity to incorporate scripture and a short devotion time each day in the form of a daily text delivered straight to your phone each morning from Seedbed! Seedbed is a twenty-first-century Wesleyan movement and media platform whose mission is to gather, connect and resource the people of God to sow for a great awakening.

The Seedbed Daily Text Series: First Word. Last Word. God's Word. begins January 1. It's all about the primacy of the Word of God in daily life—perfect for a new start of a new calendar year. Sign up for the Seedbed Daily Text at **seedbed.com** by selecting “Daily Text” from the menu bar at the top of the page. You can unsubscribe at any time, but I’ll bet you won’t want to!

*Being Christ
in the World*

