

THE  
GATEPOST

DECEMBER 2021



In This Issue

Phil's-osophy  
Miracle of Jesus  
Service of Comfort and Hope

# Upcoming Events

## December 4

Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM  
McAlister's Tea Fundraiser at Craft Show  
Service of Comfort and Hope 4:00 PM

## December 5

Christmas Handbell Concert 2:00 PM  
Evan and Olivia Reed Baby Shower 4:00 PM

## December 7

Cluster Charge Conference - BSA 6:00 PM

## December 8

Last Regular Wednesday Night for 2021  
Confirmation Bell Ringing 4:00 PM

## December 9

Stephen Ministry Christmas Party 6:30 PM

## December 12

Spark Christmas Party 6:00 PM

## December 14

Trustees Meeting 6:30 PM

## December 15

Miracle of Christmas Event 6:30 PM

## December 19

Church Council 12:30 PM  
Fusion Christmas Party 6:00 PM  
Ignition Christmas Party 6:00 PM

## December 21

Finance Meeting 6:30 PM

## December 22

Christmas Travelers Service 6:30 PM

## December 23

Office Closes at Noon

## December 24

Office Closed  
Christmas Eve Services  
3:00, 5:00, 7:00, 11:00 PM

## December 25

Merry Christmas!!

## December 26

One Family Service 10:00 AM

## December 29

No Wednesday Night Activities

## December 30

Office Closes at Noon

## December 31

Office Closed

# Weekly Events and Classes

## Sundays

Crossroads Sunday School 8:15 AM  
Sojourners Sunday School 8:15 AM  
Club Aldersgate 9:45 AM  
Group Grow 9:45 AM  
Seekers Sunday School 9:45 AM  
Youth/Children Sunday School 9:45 AM  
NOVA Lunch Group 12:15 PM  
Jesus in the Gospels 5:30 PM  
Fusion Core Small Groups 6:00 PM

## Mondays

Ladies' Bible Study 9:30 AM  
1st & 3rd Ladies' Bible Study 6:30 PM  
Men's Bible Study 7:00 PM

## Tuesdays

Volleyball 6:00 PM  
Aldersgate Time of Prayer 6:30 PM

## Wednesdays

Fusion Worship Training 5:00 PM  
ARK Club 6:30 PM  
Fusion Gathering 6:30 PM  
Grow Group 6:30 PM  
Confirmation 6:30 PM  
Middle School Meet Up 6:30 PM  
Pastor's Bible Study 6:30 PM  
Chancel Choir Rehearsal 6:30 PM

## Thursdays

Knitwits 10:00 AM  
2nd and 4th  
Stephen Ministry Meeting 6:30 PM  
Disciple 1 & 3 6:30 PM

## Fridays

FAB 10:00 AM

## Saturdays

Revelation Wellness 7:00 AM

# Restored!

PASTOR DENNIS - LEAD PASTOR

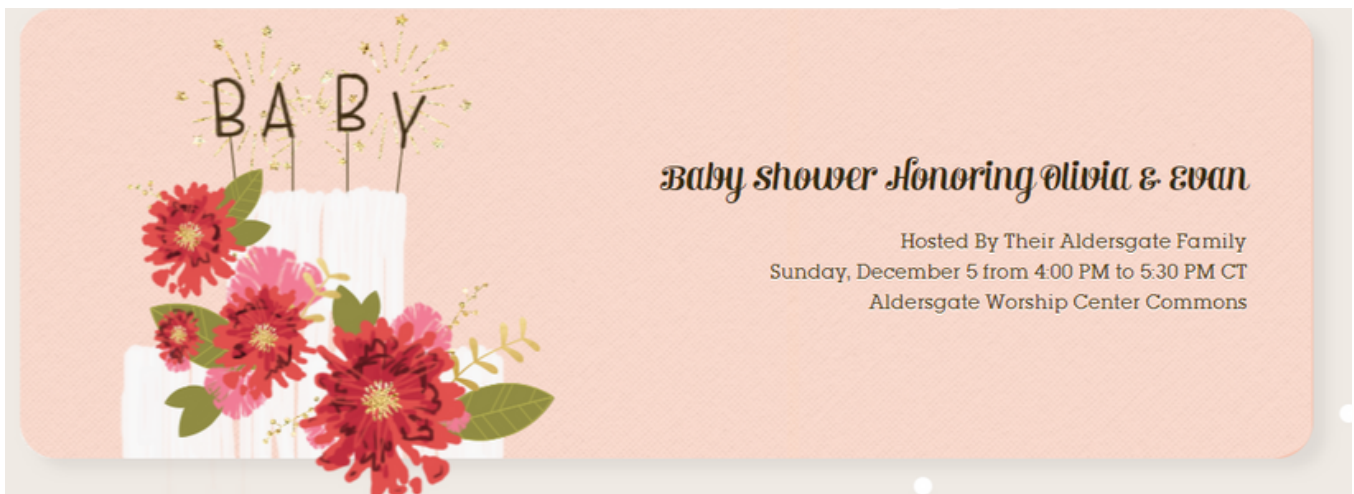
We are in the season of Advent and come with many expectations for this Christmas. My hope is for the restoration of discouraged or disheartened souls. We have celebrated Thanksgiving, but if we don't remain thankful, others won't know the hope we have in Christ. Come and be restored this Advent and let's begin this Christian year with God's power and strength touching each of our lives. We have many special services to be a part of and opportunities always to pray on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 PM.

As a church family, we can celebrate and support Evan and Olivia Reed and the expectant arrival of their little girl. We are hosting a come-and-go shower for them on December 5th beginning at 4:00 p.m. More info is below!

We have received many new members in November, including several on the last Sunday, (who will be pictured in our next Gatepost). Please welcome them to Aldersgate and get to know them. Our church family has gone through many transitions, but we know God is restoring us to do more and more for the Kingdom! Remember your faithful year-end gift will help us to meet all of our ministry needs. We will keep you informed from the pulpit throughout the next Sundays to help us be aware of the need remaining! (See Ben Stone's article for the financial details.)

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

Love In Christ,  
Pastor Dennis



On Sunday, December 5 from 4:00 - 5:30 PM we want to invite the entire church to attend the baby shower of Evan and Olivia Reed. This shower is set up as a come and go and we would love to show them how much we love that they are now a part of our Aldersgate family.

Just scan the QR code to the right and you will be taken to an online RSVP and there will also be a link for their gift registry. We hope you all can join us for this joyous occasion.





# PHIL'S-OSOPHY

By: Phil Brucks

We are going to start a new series online and in the printed *Gatepost* featuring our wonderful Pastor Phil Brucks. He is going to take us through his time here at Aldersgate and share some wonderful stories with us all that will bring back some great memories. Enjoy Phil's-osophy!

Good morning, afternoon or evening depending on what time you are seeing this...

This article is an attempt to say Thank You to this church we call Aldersgate. Dorothy and I have been blessed to call this our church home since January of 1989. In that time, we have witnessed so many changes and growth spurts, I decided to share some of the histories we have experienced. So, stay tuned for several more “memories” of mine at this incredible place.



The band room at the Nixa High School (now the Junior High) was our place of worship for the first years of the church. We were able to leave our altar furnishings in a storage room but need to set chairs each week. This setting up of chairs would show up later in our history, but for now, let's stick to the band room. After each service, you would see the chairs being arranged for classes the next day at school and the process would start all over again the next

week. It really was a great time for all to serve one another and to develop relationships with the entire congregation.

Meanwhile, the church grew, and eventually, we found the need to build our own Worship space. Oh, the excitement of this challenge! The ground was broken for the construction of the building. We have always considered the church to be the people and the buildings to be tools used for the ministry of Jesus Christ. Within the walls of what is now the Youth Building, are the favorite Bible verses written by the congregation during construction. Prayers of joy, protection, and dedication have also been written on the studs, floor, and the huge beam holding up the roof and walls.

But this trip down memory lane needs to focus on the ministries of Aldersgate and the people going into the community in the name of Jesus.

We participated in as many opportunities to reach out as possible. Several groups were started and continue to this day, Bible studies for women and men, Sunday school classes, choir, youth group, and children's ministry all began to develop as we found a real hunger for the Word of God in the community. And then we ran out of room... Praise God!!!

Stay tuned, more to come later...







SCAN ME

**ALDERSGATE UMC NIXA INVITES FAMILIES TO EXPERIENCE THE MIRACLE OF JESUS**

Aldersgate will host *The Miracle of Jesus*, a Bible-times Christmas event for families, on Wednesday, December 15. Families that visit *The Miracle of Jesus* will be transported back in time to the town of Bethlehem to celebrate the birth of Jesus. It has been some years since that special night, and the miracle baby has gone on to do some truly incredible things—bringing a little girl back to life, feeding thousands with just a few loaves of bread and some fish, and even overcoming death. The citizens of Bethlehem can't stop talking about Jesus and his incredible life on earth. Families of all ages will be amazed at the authentic, multi-sensory experiences they'll find in this village. *The Miracle of Jesus* takes place from 6:30 pm to 7:30 pm on Wednesday, December 15. To register your family visit [vbspro.events/p/christmasaumc](http://vbspro.events/p/christmasaumc) or scan QR code to get started and signed up.

**SPARK CHRISTMAS PARTY  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 12 AT 6:00 PM**

All 5th and 6th-grade students are invited to join us in the CLC gym for a night of fun Christmas games and food! Bring a \$5 wrapped gift for a gift exchange.

spark

**IGNITION CHRISTMAS PARTY  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 6:00 PM**

All 7th and 8th-grade students are invited to join us in the CLC gym for a night of fun Christmas games and food! Bring a \$5 wrapped gift for a gift exchange.

ignition

**FUSION CHRISTMAS PARTY  
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 19 AT 6:00 PM**

Fusion Christmas Party! Bring a \$5 wrapped gift to exchange. We'll have gingerbread houses, competitive games, fun activities, and more in the Youth Building.





A Night with New Room is back! If you have an internet connection, a candle, and want to celebrate the Christmas season differently this year, join on December 2, at 6:30 pm CST.

The evening is a free virtual event. It will be a time of worship, poetry, and prayer. Host a dinner and invite loved ones to join you, or watch virtually on your own. The focus will be on Jesus and preparing our hearts for the season.

The evening will feature J.D. Walt, Lo Alaman, Matt LeRoy, Brenna Bullock, David Thomas, and other New Room friends. By registering you will receive:

- Livestream event link
- Complimentary recordings of the evening
- Additional resources to be sent after the event

To register go to <https://newroomconference.com/advent/>



## Next GriefShare Sessions start January 11

It may be hard for you to feel optimistic about the future right now. If you've lost a spouse, child, family member, or friend, you've probably found there are not many people who understand the deep hurt you feel.

This can be a confusing time when you feel isolated and have many questions about things you've never faced before.

"Going to GriefShare feels like having warm arms wrapped around you when you're shivering."

GriefShare is a special seminar and support group that is designed to help individuals cope with and understand the grieving process. The series of videos and group discussions are non-denominational and feature 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. A workbook is provided at no cost.

Meetings are Tuesdays from 1-3 pm for 15 weeks. If you would like to sign up for the next session of GriefShare please visit [www.griefshare.org](http://www.griefshare.org) and put in the zip code to find our group.

*"The LORD is close to the brokenhearted and saves those who are crushed in spirit."*

Psalm 34:18



## NEW MEMBERS



Herb and Mary Beth Lunday



Stephen Riggs, Andrea Long  
Korben Riggs



Whitney Miller

Least of These is providing children with \$100 restricted Walmart gift cards. These will be special cards that cannot be used for alcohol, cigarettes, lottery tickets and have to be purchased by Least of These. We will have our Angel Tree set up in the commons so you can take an envelope and donate whatever amount you feel led to, you can also give through our online giving. Mark donation "Least of These". The deadline for these donations is December 15.

Dear Aldersgate Church,  
Thank you for participating in Least of These's "Bag Hunger" food drive. We greatly appreciate the support and help blessing your neighbors. You are helping feed many families seeking food assistance at Least of These with your gift.

In gratitude,  
Michelle Teter

Dear Aldersgate,  
Thank you for your thoughts and prayers during our time of Covid and recovery. The church family gave us a feeling of connection in a very isolating time.

Thank you,  
John and Dixie Bledsoe

# Thank You

Dear Aldersgate Church,  
Thank you so much for the beautiful white prayer shawl. The fabric is so soft and comforting. Thank you for your prayers as I am still recovering. We feel the prayers every day.

In Love,  
Janice Mercer





While you are shopping online for your Christmas presents this year, please remember Aldersgate United Methodist Church as your charity. There is no extra cost when you choose us as your Amazon Smile donation.

It is a very simple way to be able to give back to the church.

How Do You Use AmazonSmile? On your first visit to AmazonSmile, you will be prompted to select a charitable organization to receive donations from your future eligible AmazonSmile purchases. It will remember your selected charity whenever you shop at smile.amazon.com or with AmazonSmile activated in the Amazon Shopping app, and then every eligible purchase you make through AmazonSmile will result in a donation for your selected charity.



The holiday season will soon be upon us in full splendor. The lights, decorations, parties, and other gatherings will be beckoning for our attention and time.


But for many, the holiday season may not be a time of joy and excitement. The past year life's events or storms that they faced are still fresh on their mind. The loss of a job, the diagnosis of an illness, the return of cancer, a move to a new community, the restrictions because of COVID, or the loss of a loved one can make the holiday season one of loneliness, sadness, fear, anxiety, or painful memories.

The Comfort & Hope Service, hosted by the Aldersgate Stephen Ministry, is designed to begin the holiday season with the comfort that God is always with us, especially during difficult times. The service will be held on Saturday, December 4 at 4:00 pm in the Worship Center. All are welcome.

The service will include music, scripture readings, a message from Pastor Sarah, the lighting of the Advent candles, prayer, and communion. You may light a candle for a loved one, receive prayer and anointing from a Stephen Minister or sit in silence and meditate on the message of God's unchanging love.

For more Information call Genie Taylor (214) 213-4005 or the office (417) 725-4949.

## SNOW REMOVAL TEAM



Do you want to build a snowman or throw snowballs at Pastor Dennis? You can do all that and remove snow from the entrance and sidewalks too!! We need any and all who would be willing to help out this winter.

Please email Brenda at [bclarke@aldersgatechurch.com](mailto:bclarke@aldersgatechurch.com) to get added to the phone list.



# Financial Update

By: Ben Stone, Finance Committee Chairman

As the group charged with nurturing the financial vitality of the congregation, Aldersgate's Finance Committee is thankful for the faithful giving to the church that has continued over the last many unusual months. Your tithes and offerings are important in supporting the church's ministries as we serve our mission of "making disciples of Jesus Christ for the transformation of the world!"

Year-to-date financial summary through October 31, 2021:

Revenue	\$ 759,725
Budgeted Expenses	\$1,024,367
Actual Expenses	\$ 786,223
Net	\$< 26,498>

The original amount of the loan for the new Learning Center was \$4,162,200. The current balance as of October 31, 2021, is \$3,541,679. As reported last month, we will not be starting a new capital campaign to pay down this balance. Instead, we will focus on improving the funding of our operating budget.

The year-to-date deficit did not increase during the month of October; a surplus of almost \$1,000 was realized for the month, reducing the year-to-date shortfall to about \$26,500. To put this in terms of what each of us can do to help with this deficit, we have had an average of 225 "giving units" (individuals or families making contributions) over the last few months. This means if each giving unit can contribute an extra \$118 over their normal tithing by the end of the year, the deficit will be overcome!

As if a sign to encourage our faithful stewardship, Psalm 118 starts and finishes with, "Give thanks to the Lord, for he is good; his love endures forever." Here's to a wonderful season of thanks and celebration!

## CHRISTMAS CONCERT

Sunday, December 5th @ 2:00 pm

What a wonderful way to get in the holiday spirit! Join the Aldersgate Ringers for beautiful Christmas music. Nathan Billings and Peggy Preston will lead a short carol sing during the concert. The event will be held in person and on livestream. We hope you'll join us!

## Kindrid Holiday Match

Have you not been giving online? Then we have a great opportunity for you!

Kindrid is our online giving platform and they are doing something special for the holiday season. For every **new** person who signs up for recurring giving, that begins before the end of the year, Kindrid will match the first gift, up to \$50. In the season of giving and this would be a free and easy way to double your giving to the church. Call the church office if you have questions.



# THE GIFT OF STEPHEN MINISTRY

Since 1975, when Stephen Ministries was established in St. Louis, Missouri, millions of hurting people have received the gift of God's love through the care of a Stephen Minister.

Stephen Ministry was founded by Dr. Kenneth Haugk to train lay people to provide a high level of emotional and spiritual care to people experiencing a wide range of life difficulties. They care by listening, praying, encouraging, and walking alongside the person through their difficulties. Stephen Ministry care has been a gift to people in our congregation and community since 2001.

It has been a blessing to the Stephen Ministers who have been trained and serve- being able to use their God-given gifts and talents to touch others' lives. Whether it's someone going through a divorce, health issues, a spiritual crisis, loss of a loved one, a job layoff, or any of countless other life challenges, Stephen Ministers provide one-on-one, confidential care. Most caring relationships last from 6-12 months. Each Stephen Minister is assigned one Care Receiver. Men are matched with men and women with women.

The gift of Stephen Ministry has impacted thousands of congregations around the world who have been able to show Christ's love by ministering to people who are hurting.

Do you have a friend, neighbor, co-worker, or relative who has been having a difficult time this Holiday Season? Often people struggle alone, feeling they need to deal with their hurts and pain on their own. But our Stephen Ministers can provide the focused care and support they may need to make it through the crisis. You can tell them about Stephen Ministry or share a brochure from the INFO wall located in The Commons. Ask permission for one of the Stephen Leaders to contact them to see if Stephen Ministry care could meet their needs. Contact Stephen Leader Genie Taylor (214-213-4005) or contact the church office (417-725-4949) to be put in touch with one of our Stephen Leaders.

Aldersgate has just commissioned a new group of Stephen Ministers and a new Stephen Leader.



Jeff Carter, Gayle Stewart, Karen McClanahan, Marce Saylor



Stephanie Scott



# BE A BLESSING

By: Ed Vigneaux

Are you blessed? Do you feel blessed? What does it mean to be blessed?

Webster describes blessed as happy or wonderful, praiseworthy, bringing pleasure or divine favor. To bless someone means to offer approval or encouragement.

The Bible uses the word blessed 302 times, bless 127 times and the word blessing 67 times, which tells me that this is something important.

Our country and our world are in moral decay and decline. Unfortunately, we Christians often believe that our weapons to fight against what is happening is to be frustrated or indignant or just argue about it. Very little is going to be accomplished this way. It will only widen the divide between those that know and follow Christ and those who really need him, but don't know how to find him.

It seems the only way left is to just reflect the love of Christ and let the Holy Spirit take care of the rest. Just live for and like Jesus every day, be led by the Holy Spirit, and practice what we preach if we want to make a difference.

God brought the Israelites out of Egypt to be a different people in a morally decadent world. He called to them to be different. We as Christians are called to be a different people in a morally decadent and declining world. Proverbs 8: 34-35 says, "Blessed is the man who listens to me, watching daily at my door, waiting at my doorway. For whoever finds me finds life and receives favor from the Lord."

Proverbs 29: 18; "Where there is no revelation, the people cast off restraint, but blessed is he who keeps the law."

James 2:14 says, "What good is it, my brothers and sisters, if someone says he has faith, but does not have works? Can faith save them?"

Also, in James 1:27; "Religion that is pure and undefiled before God, the Father, is this: to visit orphans and widows in their affliction, and to keep oneself unstained from the world."

I like to end most of my writings with the quote "We are blessed to be a blessing".

I heard this a few years ago and it has just stuck with me. I have been truly blessed in my life with a wife, mother and father and grandparents and extended family that taught me that it is better to give than to receive. I have a loving Heavenly Father that gave all that he had to save me from my sinful life so that I could live eternally with him. As Christians, we are called to love God and love each other. Period. With no conditions. Yes, it's hard, but God has promised to be here with us and help us to achieve this command to love. Without his Holy Spirit living within us and leading us, we cannot do it.

During this season of Thanksgiving, let us all be mindful of the needs of others, and have a heart of gratitude and love for each other.

We are truly blessed to be a blessing.



# COMMUNITY IMPACT



## BLANKETS

We have collected over 35 blankets for Least of These. Thank you so much for your generous donations. Pictured is our 8th grade Wednesday night girls group. They made blankets to donate.

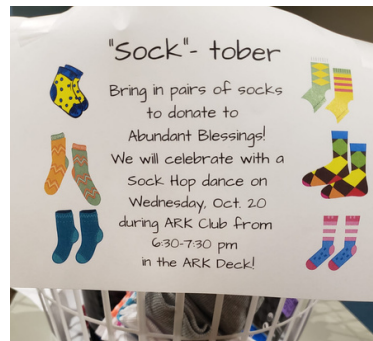
## STUFF THE TURKEY

Our Wednesday night ARK Club Kids wanted to collect \$25 so that they could provide a Thanksgiving meal to Least of These. They ended up collecting \$75.68!!



## CONCERT 4A CAUSE

This year we had over 22 performances from our church members and raised \$914.00 for Least of These!



## SOCKTOBER

Our final count for our sock collection for Abundant Blessings was 655 pairs of socks!!

## UPCOMING COMMUNITY IMPACT PROJECTS

November 28 - Start collecting envelopes off the Angel Tree in the Commons to help Least of These provide Christmas gifts for our neighbors.

December 4 - Middle School McAlister's Tea Fundraiser at the Craft Fair.

December 8 - Confirmation Class bell ringing for the Salvation Army at Nixa Walmart 4:00 - 7:00 PM.  
Confirmation Class project for Abundant Blessings



## COATS FOR KIDS DRIVE

We collected 62 coats this year for the Christian County Optimists Club for their Coats for Kids this year. We are so grateful for the many donations we received.

