

THE  
GATEPOST

NOVEMBER 2023



ALDERSGATE  
CHURCH



In This Issue

Christmas Cantata  
Community Thanksgiving Service  
Advent Family Event

# November Highlights

## November 1

Charity Sewing 1:30 PM

## November 2

Leadership Development Meeting 6:30 PM

## November 4

Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM

Night of Worship 6:30 PM

## November 5

All Saints Sunday

Daylight Savings

Least of These Turkey Drive Starts

Confirmation Class 4:30 PM

## November 6

SPR Meeting (Zoom) 6:30 PM

## November 7

Surviving the Holidays 6:00 PM

## November 11

Life Group Facilitator Meeting 9:00 AM

## November 12

3rd Grade Bibles 9:45 AM

All Church Business Meeting 1:30 PM

Joyful Noise 2:30 PM

Exploring Membership Class 4:00 PM

Community Thanksgiving Choir 4:45 PM

## November 14

Property Oversight Meeting 6:30 PM

## November 16

Finance Meeting 6:30 PM

## November 18

Cantata Rehearsal 9:00 AM

## November 19

Community Thanksgiving Choir 4:45 PM

## November 21

Community Thanksgiving Service 7:00 PM

## November 23-24

Office Closed

## November 27

Aldersgate Book Club 5:30 PM

## November 29

Christmas Family Advent Event 6:30 PM

# Weekly Calendar

## Mondays

Stronger - Men's Group 5:30 AM

W.O.W Ladies Bible Study 9:30 AM

Women of Hope Bible Study (1st & 3rd) 6:00 PM

Spirit Sisters Bible Study (2nd & 4th) 6:30 PM

Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM

Stephen Ministry Training 6:30 PM

## Tuesdays

Aldersgate Time of Prayer 6:30 PM

Disciple 1 6:30 PM

## Wednesdays

Youth Praise Band Practice 5:00 PM

Dinner 5:30 PM

Ark Club 6:30 PM

5 & 6 Grade Class 6:30 PM

7 & 8 Grade Small Group 6:30 PM

High School Gathering 6:30 PM

Family Matters Class 6:30 PM

Grow Group 6:30 PM

Choir Practice 6:30 PM

Cantata Rehearsal 7:35 PM

## Thursdays

Knitwits 10:00 AM

Stephen Ministry Meeting (2nd & 4th) 6:30 PM

## Fridays

Office Closed

## Sundays

Time of Prayer 8:00 AM

Handbell Rehearsal 11:15 AM

NOVA Lunch 12:15 PM

Cantata Rehearsals 3:30 PM

Confirmation (1st Sunday) 4:30 PM

Disciple 2 6:00 PM

High School Small Group 6:00 PM

# Sunday School Classes

## Sundays

Crossroads Sunday School 8:15 AM

Club Aldersgate 9:45 AM

Seekers Sunday School 9:45 AM

Youth/Children Sunday School 9:45 AM

# Sundays at Aldersgate

## Services

Traditional Service 8:15 AM

Contemporary Service 9:45 AM

Family Service 11:11 AM

# DARING TO BE A GIVING CHURCH!!

As I take time to write this article my heart is full of an incredible amount of “appreciation” for what I have received these last several days. The encouraging cards and gifts are an incredible blessing to Lorie and me and make me incredibly energized to shout the Gospel louder (not at an extreme volume, but to a broader audience), than ever before. I have found myself more involved with students, thanks to God’s timing, and Casey and Christian, planning and organizing the youth ministry in a Director’s absence. (this would include Sarah, Shannon, Ellie, and all the adult youth volunteer leaders) I have been around more campfires in the last 2 weeks than in the last 10 years, or more.

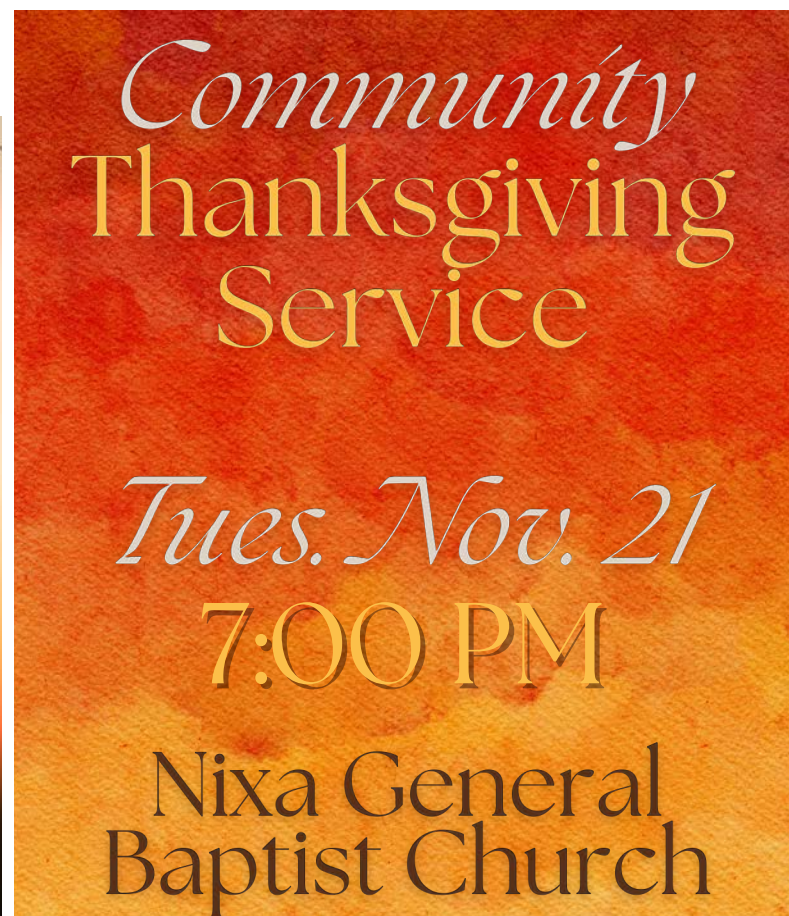
There is something about being at a school event, getting to share a devotion with dozens of students, or just getting to talk to a young person about life, that reminds me of my original call from God to youth ministry. We are in the early days of spiritual revival and I’m seeing young and old alike hungering and thirsting for righteousness, but the battle for their souls, hearts, and minds is raging to put out the fire. May we be listening to the voice of Jesus, speaking and directing our steps on this faith journey.

I was going to spend time talking about the financial picture of the church currently and in the coming year, but all I’ll say is God is good. We have had a blessed October and will make up this year’s operating deficit, continue to pay back our disaffiliation expenses, and be ready to fully debt service our loan in 2024 budget. Thank you for your faithfulness to being who you are in Christ, to be Christ in the world!! Please be sure to read the Financial Brief in this issue.



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

Love In Christ,  
Pastor Dennis





## ARK Christmas Cantata

ARK Christmas cantata: All students, 3 years old through 6th grade, will perform their very own Christmas Cantata during the 11:11 am service on Sunday, December 10th.

Invite family and friends to attend this service!! Rehearsals will be held on Sundays during Sunday school and Wednesdays during ARK Club.

We will have one Saturday dress rehearsal on December 9th from 11:00-12:00 in the Worship Center.

## This Month's Bible Verse

For the month of September, our ARK Kids will be memorizing: "Anyone who listens to my teaching and follows it is wise, like a person who builds a house on solid rock." Matthew 7:24 Our Bible Buddy is Chewy the Beaver. Be sure to join us on Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM to hear all about it.



Join us November 29th at 6:30 PM for a Christmas Family Event!! In this festive event, come kick off the season of advent with us! Come experience the true meaning of Christmas to get our hearts thoughtfully prepared for the reason for the season. We will enjoy stations and activities that point to the miracle of Jesus.

Please scan the QR code or visit the link to register:

[vbspro.events/p/6c048b](https://vbspro.events/p/6c048b)



## Volunteers needed



We are so excited to see all these children coming to Sunday school and we need to open up more classrooms. The only way to do that is to get more help on Sunday mornings. We just need one Sunday a month or a quarter, or anything really. We just need help!



**November 1st:** Stuff the Turkey!! Bring in your coins and dollar bills to stuff the turkey. The money will be used to purchase a Thanksgiving meal for a family through Least of These. All we need to raise is \$30.00 to purchase a full Thanksgiving meal for a family in need.

# Grieving?

*Know someone who is?*

When you are grieving a loved one's death, the holiday season can be especially painful.

Our **Surviving the Holidays** seminar helps participants prepare for the holidays and even discover hope for the future.



# SURVIVING THE HOLIDAYS



[www.griefshare.org/holidays](http://www.griefshare.org/holidays)  
Join Us on November 7th  
6:00 PM

Call today for more information  
417-725-4949  
Sponsored by Aldersgate Church  
[www.AldersgateChurch.com](http://www.AldersgateChurch.com)

## BREATHE GENESIS 2:7

By: Ed Vigneaux

I read the following article recently and thought it was significant to share with you.

“When was the last time you experienced a miracle? What if I were to tell you that it is likely you have experienced twelve to twenty miracles in the last minute? Sounds absurd, doesn't it? But it's true. Another question. What do you need most in this life to live? Money? Shelter? Food? Companionship? Safety? There is one essential element that every living being on this planet requires. We receive that element every few seconds without making an effort at all.

It comes through the miracle of breathing.

Whether we are awake or asleep, we breathe. We inhale oxygen and in a matter of seconds, the lungs send that oxygen-rich blood to the heart. Arteries then deliver the oxygen to every cell in the body. The cells take in the oxygen and excrete carbon dioxide into veins, and then the carbon dioxide is pumped out of the lungs as we breathe out. Try it. Take a deep breath in and hold it for a second. Now, slowly breathe it out. You have just experienced a miracle.

A fascinating aspect of breathing is that although most of the time we are unaware it's happening, we can control it. If we are exercising and need more oxygen, we breathe faster. If we play a musical instrument that requires air, we can control the force and rhythm of inhaling and exhaling. If we smell something we don't like, we can hold our breath. Yet, almost twenty thousand (20,000) times a day, we take a breath and don't even realize it”.

Every moment of every day, God has given us a miracle. We need to thank God for all He has given us because He Loves Us.

Let us love one another. Let us Be Love. Let us be Christ in the world. We are blessed to be a blessing.

# **The Legacy Continues**

## **Because of Those Who Came Before Us**

By: Marcy Barthelette

Go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing....and teaching them. Matthew 28:19 (Paraphrased)

Thirty-five years ago, on May 20, 1988, we were formally chartered as part of The United Methodist Church and given our permanent name of Aldersgate United Methodist Church. It was the culmination of a dream that began in the late 1970s when members of various Methodist churches in Springfield thought it was time to add a new church in the Nixa community where most of them lived. An early attempt lasted for about two years but lack of financial backing halted the dream temporarily. The need was still there as was the dedication of those who birthed the dream. In September of 1987, after conducting surveys, organizing a door-to-door campaign, and with the appointment of Reverend Rob Winger as its pastor, the United Methodist Church of Nixa opened its doors, so to speak, for an open-air service in the park. Some 40 people worshipped together and enjoyed a potluck dinner on the grounds. Sounds a lot like the kind of worship enjoyed by the early followers of Jesus, doesn't it?

"Where two or three are gathered in my name, there am I among them." Matthew 18:20

"If you remain in me and my words remain in you, ask whatever you wish and it will be given to you."  
John 15:7

The next months were spent sharing ideas and developing a plan for moving forward. One of the earliest programs offered by the new church was a Vacation Bible School, where leaders expected to serve the thirty-five children of member families but, in fact, reached sixty children as word traveled throughout the community about a re-creation of the village of Jerusalem offering kids a look into the world in which Jesus lived.

Sixty-five charter members are listed as founders of this church home we call Aldersgate, but others quickly joined bringing their number to about ninety-five in the first year, and some still serve our congregation today. Five lead pastors have served our church family, Pastor Dennis having the longest tenure and, as our congregation has grown, we have been blessed by the leadership of Pastors Phil Brucks and Sarah Fotopulos. Our facilities have expanded from a parcel of land boasting only a small berm house to the sprawling campus of today, but we all should know that a building doesn't make a church. A church is comprised of people with the common goal of worshipping God and honoring Him through serving locally as well as reaching out to our global community.

I recently had an opportunity to visit with one of our charter members, Clifford Sehie, and Tom Ross, an almost charter member who still serves very actively today on our Handyman and Security teams. It was a pure pleasure to listen to these two talking about old times. I always find it enlightening and encouraging to learn what others have experienced along the way throughout our church history. There are funny stories about scrounging for parts to complete a project during lean times and heartening stories about our ministries reaching out to the surrounding community. And that is the heart of our ministry, taking the story to those around us, sharing the words of God with them, and being the hands and feet of Jesus wherever needed.

I left that visit with research material that was like a glimpse into a time capsule. There were budgets composed of figures that seem almost absurdly limited when compared to the expenditures required today. Those early folks really knew how to stretch a dollar. I perused minutes of Administrative Council meetings including reports on the progress each committee was making. I even discovered personal notes scrawled on random bits of paper set aside to recall at a later time. A real treasure

**continued on page 11**



# FINANCIAL BRIEF

By: Ben Stone

Year-to-date financial summary through September 30, 2023:

Revenue	\$ 714,973
Expenses	\$ 990,035
Net deficit	\$ (275,062)
Disaffiliation costs	\$ 142,166
“Prepaid” apportionments	\$ 23,469
Annual operating deficit	\$ (109,427)

The original amount of the loan for the new Learning Center was \$4,162,200. The current balance as of September 30, 2023, is \$3,275,502.

Our year-to-date deficit of \$109,427 (excluding disaffiliation-related expenses) is roughly in line with where we were a year ago; through September 20, 2022, we were running a deficit of \$91,942, and we ended the year with a deficit of only \$4,246. So our current position is not a reason to panic, but we do need to make up this deficit over the remaining two months of 2023. Please look at your year-to-date tithing and make a plan to get caught up by the end of the year.

While that last sentence sounds like a fundraising plea, please also remember the spiritual aspect of giving. When Jesus talked about money, it wasn't about supporting a church, and it certainly wasn't about ensuring God's favor. We have recently been studying the book of Acts in sermons, Sunday school groups and various other Bible studies. In chapter 9, when Simon the Sorcerer offers money in an attempt to acquire the Holy Spirit, Peter responds with, “May your money perish with you, because you thought you could buy the gift of God with money! You have no part or share in this ministry, because your heart is not right before God. Repent of this wickedness...” Tithing is an expression of faith – a recognition that all we have is His, that we are not owned by our possessions, and that we know the true source of happiness, security and contentment. As we all continue to work on getting our hearts right, may we also give with an attitude of generosity.



*Aldersgate Righteous Kids*

## Scholarships Needed

ARK Preschool is an outreach ministry to families during the week. We provide a safe, loving, Christian-based program for early childhood development Monday through Thursday 9 am to 1 pm. We are at capacity in all three of our classrooms this year, but some of our students need your help!

We have a few families who are not able to cover their tuition costs, and we never want to turn away any child for financial reasons. There is an option to give online to the ARK Preschool Scholarship fund to help with the costs for families that need assistance. Our wish is for every little one to be able to come to grow in God's love with us, anything you are called to give will be a huge blessing whether it is a one-time donation or a monthly reoccurring gift. Your gift is also tax-deductible.

# Pastor and Staff Appreciation

October is Pastor Appreciation Month. Our Pastors, Dennis, and Sarah, are two of the best, leading us as we all grow as Disciples of Christ. Here at Aldersgate, we would like to show our gratitude for not only our Pastors but also the staff who are so important to our Church!

There are many ways to show appreciation. We encourage you to do so in a manner that you find meaningful. Here are just a few ideas:

- 1. Drop them a note or card of thanks or encouragement.
- 2. Gift them a book.
- 3. Give them a gift card (food, movies, activities) for a date night or fun evening out.
- 4. Provide them a meal or baked goodies.
- 5. Make a donation to the Pastor's discretionary fund.
- 6. Support the various ministries they are involved in with your attendance or donations.
- 7. Make a point to pray for our Pastors and staff by name in October.

In addition to your other acts and gifts of appreciation, throughout the month, SPR will be collecting **cash** funds to be distributed among our Pastors and staff members in December. Please place your cash gift in a sealed envelope, marking it "Staff Appreciation" and (1) place it in the offering, (2) give it to an SPR Committee member, or (3) drop it off in the Church office.

\* We **cannot take a check** for this gift since it would have to be deposited into the church bank account and the funds allocated to church expenses.

We hope you will find it in your hearts to help us show just how much we appreciate everything our Pastors and staff do for our Church, our families, and our growth as Christians!

With Love in Christ,

Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Kathrine Clem

Mike Freyer

David Hayes

Gary Jacobs

Jenaleigh Lathrop

Mark McClanahan

Rhonda Wilson

Jeff McCurry – SPR Chair

Julie Ellis – Lay Leader



Join the  
SNOW REMOVAL  
team

Every year we ask for individuals to be part of the snow removal team. If you are willing to help, please email [BClark@aldersgatechurch.com](mailto:BClark@aldersgatechurch.com)

You can also call the church office if you have any questions about it.



# MEET JEFF HUBER

Jeff Huber is our new Choir Director and Traditional Worship Leader for the 8:15 service. He and his wife Kay moved to Ozark from the Phoenix, AZ metro area in August of 2022 after retiring.

They have one daughter, Erin, who lives with her husband in Bellevue WA. Jeff is originally from Rochester, Minnesota, and attended college in Roseville, a suburb of St. Paul.

After graduation, he worked at the college, then attended Southwestern Baptist Theological Seminary in Fort Worth, graduating with a master's in music.

He has worked in a variety of secular and church positions, most recently as an elementary music teacher.

We are so excited to have Jeff as part of our Aldersgate Staff. He has been such a blessing to us and we can't wait for everyone to get to know him a little better.



Do you love to sing?  
Do you love Christmas music?  
Is the holiday season just a little too short?



## Christmas Cantata

Join the Chancel Choir and others for rehearsals beginning Sunday, October 29, and continue on Sunday afternoons and Wednesday evenings. Performance dates/times are Saturday, December 9th at 6:00 pm and Sunday, December 10th at 8:15 and 9:45. The cantata choir will be directed by Jeff Huber, our Traditional Worship Leader. Contact Jeff by phone at 417-725-4949, or by email to [jhuber@aldersgatechurch.com](mailto:jhuber@aldersgatechurch.com).

# Aldersgate Book Club

The next Book Club will meet on November 27 at 5:30 PM, in LC 204. We will be discussing The Christmas Spirit by Debbie Macomber.

This New York Best Seller is about two lifelong friends who decide to trade places the week before Christmas and end up finding love along the way in this delightful novel from the queen of holiday stories, Debbie Macomber.

Anyone is welcome to attend. We do bring our own dinner and discuss the book while we eat. If you have any questions or would like more information, please talk to Jan Badgett.

# “Big Words Coming”

By: Dorothy Brucks

Your Mission, if you choose to accept it, is to continue reading this article. If you can't right now, set it in a place to remind you to come back to it. Could this really be that important? At this point, let's say yes, it is and you decide at the end. So here I go.

We, the people of Aldersgate, are in the land of Nixa heading towards the promised land, just as Moses and his people did. The Affiliation taskforce has eight members who are on a journey of exploration with HOPE, trusting our call and listening for God's voice. We have HOPE like the Israelites started with on their journey; Hope in the Spirit of God to lead and guide us every step of the way.

We meet most Sundays during the 11:11 service and have been focusing on gaining a better understanding of things like doctrine, theology, Wesleyan theology, the Bible as inherent and/or infallible, etc. We have talked about what it means for a congregation to be non-denominational, network-associated, inter-denominational, or independent. We are just beginning to look at what is essential in any denomination we research and what might be something that would tell us no, this isn't the right place for Aldersgate. An example would be whether they believe in the virgin birth or that Christ died for our sins rather than salvation by our own works or in predestination. There certainly is much more for us to learn.

Wesleyan Theology, just what is it? Bear with me folks, please keep reading, you'll see why soon. Recently I read an article by Kevin Watson, Acting Director of the Wesley House, at Baylor University's Truett Theological Seminary, in Waco, TX. and he wrote "Methodist history teaches us the theology and doctrine of the founding father, John Wesley (1700s). Central to his teachings are these three things: 1. We are saved from sin and perfected in love; 2. God has promised this in holy scripture and 3. the divine evidence God is able and willing to sanctify us now and that he does it now. (1 Thes 4: 1-3 and 5:23-24)." He goes on to say "I am Wesleyan because I am captivated by the hopeful and optimistic theology which believes that the power of the resurrection of Jesus Christ is greater than sin and even death itself. I still believe God wants his people to unplug the old wells of those early Methodists, for there is living water there."

Here is where you and the task force members come in.

**Assignment 1:** Have HOPE and start your own journey towards a better understanding of God's Sanctifying Grace - the work that God does in you by the power of the Holy Spirit. This is done by growing your personal relationship with God because of your faith, believing it is HE that is in you. Yes, you!

**Assignment 2:** Trust your savior and speak about Him. If that is hard for you, when you are by yourself anywhere, try saying His name out loud, perhaps softly then a little louder until you are more comfortable. Eventually try adding words like gracious, creator, father, friend, companion, savior, and say a sentence prayer. All along realizing HE guides your journey to the promised land.

Lastly, why did I write this article? I believe in the work of our task force and that God is directing our steps. I believe each and every person that is part of Aldersgate will grow in their own faith and God

will continue his work of Grace in us and those yet to come! That's my testimony of why I am Wesleyan and part of Aldersgate Church in Nixa, MO. Who knows when someone will ask you why are you part of Aldersgate.

We have two more meetings this fall then we'll pause until January. After the first of the year, I'll begin to write more about the beliefs and teachings of Wesleyan Theology and what that means for Aldersgate. If you have questions, please be in touch with any of us on the task force. Dorothy Brucks, chairperson, Joe Bryson, Ed Vigneaux, Ralph Ernst, Gayle Stewart, Tara Conley, Greg Shank, and Brad Risby. We promise to listen with an open mind. Oh, and thanks for reading!



Do you love to bring joy to people and enjoy singing? This is just for you!!

The next time Joyful Noise Singers is on Sunday, Nov. 12 at 2:30 PM at Bradford Court.

Interested singers are encouraged to meet at Bradford Court (902 S Main, Nixa) by 2:15 PM. We begin singing hymns with the residents at 2:30. It is always a great time together!

tucked within the folder of information was the very first bulletin from that 1987 worship service in the park. Touching it sparked a feeling of connection to the past.

If you're able to chat a while with a founding or early member, please take the time to do so. Hearing the stories from their perspective reminds us of the challenges we face in keeping the dream alive. More than thirty-five years ago, they began the legacy and nurtured it. Now it's our time to continue the work they began. Two celebratory services have marked this special year thus far and as Thanksgiving approaches, let us remember to be thankful for all those who have come before us, building a faith-filled Christian home that welcomes everyone, a church based on time-honored Wesleyan traditions. It has been a year of celebration and also a year of change. To all who follow on the new path we are navigating as **\*\*Aldersgate Church of Nixa**, we pray for the faith and courage to continue those traditions. We are alive and well because of the firm foundation that was laid by our founders in covenant with God, Our Loving Father. Let us build upon that legacy.

Do all the good you can, by all the means you can, in all the ways you can, in all the places you can, at all the times you can, to all the people you can, as long as ever you can....John Wesley, Father of Methodism.

**\*\*The name Aldersgate refers to a street in London that was part of the original gates built to secure the city from invaders. It was on this street that John Wesley described his heart as being “strangely warmed.” Many believe that is the moment when Wesley came to know that he was an accepted child of God.**

Material Sources: Historical document written by Betty Sehie, charter member and first church secretary. Various documents relating to general operations and historical material obtained from John Coleman, charter member, through Tom Ross. AUMC and AMC archives. UMC.org



# OCTOBER HIGHLIGHTS

**Youth Corn  
Maze**



**ARK Sock Hop**



**SPARK Bonfire**



**Fall Festival**



**NOVA  
Halloween Party**



## New Members



**Chuck and Emmilea Riggs**



**Paige Woodrum**



**Gary, Kristin,  
Brooke, and Bailey  
Wiggins**



**Dolph and Billie Nuebauer**



**Phyllis Schenone**

### Pastors

Dennis Miller - Lead Pastor

Sarah Fotopulos - Executive Pastor

### Staff

Ellie Bakken - Children's Director

Brenda Clark - Business Administrator

Candice Eddington - Childcare Coordinator

Casey Freeland - Communications & Youth Director

Christian Barnard - Contemporary Worship Director

Jeff Huber - Traditional Worship Director

Jared Middleton - Worship Technical Lead

Jennifer Kelley - Church Secretary

Shannon Dodson - ARK Preschool Director