

THE
GATEPOST

FEBRUARY 2024



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SuperStart
Taskforce Report
See a Need, Fill a Need Campaign

January Highlights

February 1

Leadership Dev. Team Meeting 6:30 PM

February 3

Men's Breakfast 7:30 AM

February 4

Red Envelope Fundraiser Starts
Souper/Shoeper Bowl Starts
Youth Mission Trip Meeting 2:00 PM
Confirmation 4:30 PM

February 5

SPR Meeting 6:30 PM

February 6

Overcomer Bible Study Starts 9:00 AM

February 7

Charity Sewing 1:30 PM
NOVA Young Adult Study starts 6:30 PM

February 11

Scout Sunday 11:11 AM
Joyful Noise Singers 2:30 PM

February 13

Property Oversight Meeting 6:30 PM

February 14

Ash Wednesday Service 6:30 PM
No Wednesday Night Classes

February 18

Exploring Membership Class 4:00 PM

February 20

Finance Meeting 6:30 PM

February 24

Confirmation Retreat 11:00 AM

Weekly Calendar

Mondays

Stronger - Men's Group 5:30 AM
W.O.W Ladies Bible Study 9:30 AM
Women of Hope Bible Study(2nd & 4th) 6:30 PM
Spirit Sisters Bible Study (1st & 3rd) 6:00 PM
Men's Bible Study 6:30 PM

Tuesdays

Overcomer Bible Study 9:00 AM
GriefShare Class 1:00 PM
Disciple 1 - New Testament 6:30 PM
Aldersgate Time of Prayer 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
NOVA Young Adult Study 6:30 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
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



LENT BEGINS ALTAR'D TOGETHER

Hard to believe Ash Wednesday is 2 weeks away and Easter 40 days of fasting and praying later. We are finalizing year-end reports, but I can say we had tremendous and faithful giving in December to finish our 2023, financially strong. We need to get on top of our giving this year because we are now paying the mortgage payment completely out of our budget. (See Ben Stone's article)

We are extremely excited to welcome Rob Howard to our staff beginning this month as he takes over our youth ministry as its director. Hopefully, you get to meet Rob and his wife Dora, and their boys Cass and Kipp. Rob is extremely experienced in church ministry and will be an incredible blessing to our team.

Our confirmands will be leading our Ash Wednesday service on February 14. Yes it is Valentine's Day, but Jesus was all about love long before that holiday was made up. It will be a blessed night and my hope is many of you will begin fasting and praying as God prepares your heart, mind and soul.

This year is moving and we remember we have complete joy from our complete Christmas to carry us through, being who we are in Christ, to be Christ to the world.

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

Love In Christ,
Pastor Dennis



I would like to thank my church family for their love and prayers during my surgery and recovery. My cast is off and I'm in a splint that will come off in March. I'm so thankful that the Lord has hastened the healing, and the pain is minimal. Our God is great! - Jan Furr

A S H W E D N E S D A Y
F E B R U A R Y 1 4

Join us Wednesday, February 14 for the Ash Wednesday service. Our confirmation class will lead this worship service to begin the season of lent. Communion and imposition of ashes are part of this annual tradition. Dinner will be at 5:30 PM but all other classes will be canceled.

A.R.K. and Aldersgate Youth

Volunteers
needed

The New Year is a great chance to form or continue habits and routines. We hope being a part of the ARK is, or will become, one of those loved routines. Our children at Aldersgate are so eager to learn about Jesus and form connections through relationship. Christ's love poured out to these children is changing lives for eternity. What a priceless gift!

Please take a look at our February sign-up and see when you would be available to serve on the ARK! Scan the QR code to the left!



This Month's Bible Verse

For the month of February, our ARK Kids will be memorizing: :
"May your unfailing love be with us, Lord, even as we put our hope in you." ~ Psalm 33:22

Our Bible Buddy is Miley the Roadrunner. Be sure to join us on Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM to hear all about it.



SUPERSTART!!

Parents, we are taking our 5th and 6th-grade students to the CIY event SuperStart in Tulsa, on March 8th, and 9th. This will be a wonderful weekend full of fun and learning about God. Please scan the QR code to fill out our form so we can have an idea of the number of students and chaperones.

This is an overnight trip, and we will stay one night at a local church using their facilities for sleeping, eating breakfast, and getting ready. The cost is \$25.



SCAN
ME!

Mission Trip Announcement!!

All current 8th-12th graders are invited to attend the summer Mission Trip to Houston, TX. The dates will be June 29-July 4 and the cost will be around \$100 per student.

For anyone interested, there will be a meeting on Sunday, Feb. 4 at 2:00 PM in the sanctuary to go over details of the trip.

We are very excited about this opportunity to serve and hope that we can have a good group of students attend.

If you have any questions, please email
cfreeland@aldersgatechurch.com

Summer
Mission Trip

The original amount of the loan for the new Learning Center was \$4,162,200. The current balance as of December 31, 2023, is \$3,255,484.

We ended the year by covering our normal annual operating expenses! Giving for the month of December was \$208,958! This is compared to our monthly average of about \$83,000 over the first eleven months of the year. We weren't able to cover the one-time disaffiliation costs we incurred during 2023, but considering the operating deficit we were facing a couple of months ago, getting back to covering our normal annual costs is a huge blessing.

We are now finished paying disaffiliation costs, and no longer have to pay apportionments to a larger governing body, so we can focus fully on funding our ministries and paying off our debt. As has been discussed, the principal payments on the loan are included in the operating budget for 2024. If you have been directing any of your offerings to the Legacy fund to help with loan principal payments, that is no longer necessary, although you may still make gifts to the Legacy fund if you would like those gifts to be used for additional principal payments to pay down the debt, on top of the required monthly loan payments.

Also, while there are no future disaffiliation costs to be paid, we need to "pay ourselves back" for the costs paid in 2023. We ended the year with about \$129,000 of disaffiliation-related expenses that weren't covered by 2023 giving. We need to strive for a budget surplus in 2024 to replenish the deficit that was incurred in 2023.

Year-to-date financial summary through December 31, 2023:

| | |
|--------------------------|-------------|
| Revenue | \$1,124,711 |
| Expenses | \$1,253,969 |
| Total net deficit | \$(129,258) |
| Disaffiliation costs | \$142,349 |
| Annual operating surplus | \$ 13,091 |

The bottom line is, Aldersgate Church has been, and continues to be, extremely blessed. Attendance has been up recently, giving units are increasing, and total giving in 2023 was up about 4% over 2022. We ended the year covering our normal annual operating expenses, and we are moving forward into a bright future. May 2024 be a year of growth for each of us!



The Red Envelope fundraiser is for student missions and activities. All offerings received will go toward helping the students of Aldersgate serve God's people locally and nationally. Each envelope has a dollar amount listed. With envelopes ranging in price from \$1-\$150, there is sure to be an envelope to fit any budget. Supporting our students through this campaign requires as little as picking up an envelope that best meets your planned gift and returning your gift one of three ways:

- 1) By a one-time offering through the Aldersgate Church App (designation Red Envelope)
- 2) Dropping your red envelope with the enclosed gift in the Sunday morning Worship offering
- 3) Dropping it off at the church office

If you are unable to find an envelope that matches your desired gift amount there will be blank envelopes, because all offerings are welcome and valued.

Please take the time to pray about your gift to the youth of Aldersgate and fill an envelope during the month of February. This campaign can pave the way to spiritual growth and ministry beyond our campus.

A New Year Brings New Leaders!


We are excited to welcome The Class of 2026 to our five main leadership teams! Each team is organized into "classes" with each class serving a three-year term. This means only about one-third of each team changes each year to support leadership consistency, unless someone decides to serve another term. We also welcome Ed Vigneaux as our new Lay Leader, and new Church Board members Stephanie Scott (Stephen Min Leader) and Linda Merkling (LDT Vice-Chair) who have filled the seats added by the Board at their January meeting.

What does each team do? Glad you asked!

- Finance guides the financial business of the church and prepares an annual budget to be submitted to the Church Board for approval.
- Leadership Development helps match each person's spiritual gifts to ministry opportunities in the church.
- Property Oversight maintains our property and facilities.
- Staff-Parish Relations functions as the Human Resources department of the church.
- The Church Board is the governing body of Aldersgate.
- The Task Force was authorized by the Church Board to research other Wesleyan denominations we might want to affiliate with and provide that information to the church. This is a BIG task and we look forward to hearing more from them later this year.

This past year has brought so many changes to Aldersgate. We give special thanks to those leaders who helped us navigate the changes in 2023 and have completed their terms of service: Jenaleigh Lathrop (SPR), Ryan Thomassen (Chair), Shawn Lucas and Jan Mann (Property Oversight); and Karen McClanahan, Marce Saylor and Cathy Carter (LDT), and Julie Ellis for serving as our Lay Leader.

Please keep this list of leaders handy and pray for them and their families as they serve.



**"WE ARE SERVANTS OF GOD
FIRST AND LEADERS SECOND.
WE MUST LEARN TO IMITATE
CHRIST NOT ONLY IN OUR
MINISTRY, BUT ALSO IN OUR
LIVES IN ALL ASPECTS."**

| 2024 Aldersgate Church Leaders | | | |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------|---------------------|--------------------|
| FINANCE TEAM | | | |
| Committee Chair | Ben Stone | Lead Pastor | Rev. Dennis Miller |
| Church Board Chair | Greg Shank | Lay Leader | Ed Vigneaux |
| SPR Chair | Jeff McCurry | Financial Secretary | Jennifer Kelley |
| Property Oversight Chair | Robert Turner | Member At-Large | Lee Clark |
| Bookkeeper | Vickie Giesen | Member At-Large | Dick Williams |
| LEADERSHIP DEVELOPMENT TEAM (LDT) | | | |
| Committee Chair | Rev. Sarah Fotopulos | Lay Leader | Ed Vigneaux |
| Vice-Chair | Linda Merkling | | |
| Class of 2024 | Class of 2025 | Class of 2026 | |
| Cindy Hicks | Stephanie Scott | Tracy O'Hara | |
| Pam Johnson | Jeff Brockman | Tom Hornback | |
| Joe Bryson | Jordan Wright | Linda Merkling | |
| PROPERTY OVERSIGHT TEAM | | | |
| Committee Chair | Robert Turner | | |
| Class of 2024 | Class of 2025 | Class of 2026 | |
| Joe Greene | Jeff Merkling | Karen Volgas | |
| Brent Beckley | Jeff Carter | Don Hunziker | |
| Carolyn Jacobs | Tom Ross | Robert Turner | |
| STAFF-PARISH RELATIONS TEAM (SPR) | | | |
| Committee Chair | Jeff McCurry | Lay Leader | Ed Vigneaux |
| Class of 2024 | Class of 2025 | Class of 2026 | |
| David Hayes | Mark McClanahan | Debbie Rice | |
| Gary Jacobs | Rhonda Wilson | Katherine Clem | |
| Jeff McCurry | Mike Freyer | Stacy Evans | |
| | | Vera Hunziker | |
| CHURCH BOARD | | | |
| Chair | Greg Shank | Secretary | Julie Ellis |
| SPR Chair | Jeff McCurry | Treasurer | Ben Stone |
| Property Oversight Chair | Robert Turner | Lay Leader | Ed Vigneaux |
| Stephen Min Leader | Stephanie Scott | LDT Vice-Chair | Linda Merkling |
| TASK FORCE | | | |
| Chair | Dorothy Brucks | Lay Leader | Ed Vigneaux |
| Board Chair | Greg Shank | Joe Bryson | Tara Conley |
| Julie Ellis | Ralph Ernst | Brad Rigbsby | Gayle Stewart |

DEPENDENT VS INDEPENDENT

Mark 10: 17-31

By: Ed Vigneaux

In a recent Men's Bible study, we looked at the above scripture about the rich young ruler. This young man asked Jesus a question that I'm sure has crossed each of our minds from time to time, how do I inherit eternal life?

Jesus asked him if he knew the commandments. The young man replied that yes, he knew them and followed them. Then Jesus told him that he lacked one thing. He must sell all that he had, give it to the poor, and then come and follow Jesus. The young man could not do this and went away very sorrowful.

You see, Jesus knew his heart. He knew that this young man worshiped his wealth and not God. He kept all the commandments except the first one, which is we must worship only God with our whole heart, mind, soul, and strength. Unfortunately, the young man worshiped his wealth more than God.

We may not be as wealthy as the young man, but we too must be careful that we don't wind up worshiping other things in our life more than we revere God. It's not good enough just to be good and follow all the other commandments. We must put God first in all things. After all, everything we have comes from Him.

I received a message recently from the Holy Spirit in the form of a question; Do you know my Jesus? I wasn't sure of the meaning behind that question and as I continued to dwell on it, another thought came to mind. Many years ago, there was a very popular acronym being quoted, WWJD, or What Would Jesus Do? And then the answer came to me. How would I know what Jesus would do if I didn't know who Jesus was? We all know people well enough that we know just how they are going to react to a certain situation. That is how well we should know Jesus, our Lord and Savior. And then we will know just how to respond to any situation.

There are many ways to know Jesus better. And most of those ways are found here at Aldersgate in the form of Sunday worship, bible studies, life groups, and other small groups where we study the stories of Jesus. Prayer is always a good way to know him better.

My hope for 2024 is that I get to know Jesus well enough that I will do what he would do and say what he would say in any situation.

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



See a Need, Fill a Need

We are launching a new campaign called, "See a Need, Fill a Need". There are many ways to serve at our church and many jobs that are not seen by a lot of people. This campaign will encourage you to step in when you see a need in the church.

It could be as simple as cleaning up the aisle between services, weeding the islands in the parking lot, or stepping up to help in the sound booth on Sunday mornings.

Be on the lookout for ways you can fill a need.

Connectional or Independent - what's the difference?

By: Dorothy Brucks

The Affiliation Task Force has certainly been learning a lot about Wesleyan theology and doctrine and have been sharing that with you in past articles. We have said from the beginning that we are not decision-makers, just merely the ones doing the deep dive. Our task is to share with the Board and the congregation our findings and recommendations. In the meantime, it is important to us to not only share our process but to share information. If you become curious as you read these articles, please ask us questions. We want to know what you are thinking or have concerns about. I promise we will listen.

It's important to approach decision-making prayerfully, seeking wisdom from God, and align decisions with biblical principles. Proverb 16:3 (NIV) "Commit to the Lord whatever you do, and He will establish your plans."

The primary question is: does Aldersgate connect (affiliate) with a denomination or not? Read on to learn some of the differences.

A connectional church joins a denomination and becomes integrated with other churches. This concept has several important aspects:

- shared doctrine, beliefs, and practice,
- interconnected leadership, governance, accountability, and
- promotes unity in sharing a common purpose and mission,
- shared resources for mission work, outreach and education,
- a sense of tradition connecting to historical roots of their faith

An independent church operates on its own, without formal ties or affiliation to other churches or a larger denominational structure. Here are key features of independent churches:

- form their own doctrinal beliefs and theological perspectives such as on the sacraments, salvation, creation, the role of the Holy Spirit,
- have the freedom to interpret the Bible within that framework,
- flexibility in worship practices, rituals and liturgy,
- entirely self-sufficient,
- all governance and decision-making are done by the church members and leadership, and
- design and implement their own mission and programming.

Do me a favor, think about why you came to Aldersgate and why you stayed, and jot them down. Next, look at the two different lists above and see how your responses align with them. You just might find it interesting. If you would be willing, please share your list with any of us on the taskforce; Dorothy Brucks, Ed Vigneaux, Joe Bryson, Ralph Ernst, Tara Conley, Brad Bisby, or Greg Shank.



Gary and Maria Lewis



Gary and Patty Myers

Pastors

Dennis Miller - Lead Pastor

Sarah Fotopulos - Executive Pastor

Staff

Brenda Clark - Business Administrator

Casey Freeland - Communications Director

Christian Barnard - Contemporary Worship Director

Ellie Bakken - Children's Director

Jeff Huber - Traditional Worship Director

Jared Middleton - Worship Technical Lead

Jennifer Kelley - Church Secretary

Rob Howard - Youth Director

Shannon Dodson - Early Childhood Director