

December Highlig	<u>hts</u>	December 21 A Night of Carols	6:30 PM	
Advent Begins Christmas Decorating and Soup/Chili L		<u>December 22</u> Young Adult Christmas Party 6:00 PM		
after 9:45 and 11: Cantata Rehearsal	2:00 PM	<u>December 24</u> Christmas Eve 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, and	ł. 11:00 PM	
December 2 SPR Meeting	6:30 PM	<u>December 25-26</u> Office Closed - Merry Christmas		
<u>December 4</u> Charity Sewing Cantata Rehearsal	1:30 PM 7:30 PM	December 29 One Family Service	10:00 AM	
<u>December 5</u> Leadership Development Meeting	6:30 PM	<b>Weekly Calendar</b>		
<u>December 6</u> Crossroads/Seekers Christmas Party <u>December 7</u>	6:00 PM	Mondays Stronger - Men's Group Women of the Word Women of Hope (2nd and 4th)	5:30 AM 9:30 AM 6:00 PM	
Men's Breakfast Cantata Rehearsal Service of Comfort and Hope	7:30 AM 9:00 AM 4:00 PM	Spirit Sisters (1st and 3rd) Men's Bible Study	6:30 PM 6:30 PM	
<u>December 8</u> Deadline for gift drop-off for Angel Tree		<u>Tuesdays</u> The Great Disappearance Bible Study Aldersgate Time of Prayer	9:30 AM 6:30 PM	
Board of Directors Meeting Joyful Noise High School Small Group Christmas	12:30 PM 2:30 PM 6:00 PM	<u>Wednesdays</u> Youth Praise Band Practice Dinner	5:00 PM 5:30 PM	
<u>December 9</u> Aldersgate Book Club	5:30 PM	Ark Wed. 5 & 6 Grade Wed. 7 & 8 Grade Wed.	6:30 PM 6:30 PM 6:30 PM	
<u>December 10</u> Property Oversight Meeting	6:30 PM	High School Wed. Choir Practice Pastor's Bible Study	6:30 PM 6:30 PM 6:30 PM	
<u>December 11</u> Youth Christmas Party ARK Christmas Party	6:00 PM 6:30 PM	Young Adult Study Families Matter Bible Study	6:30 PM 6:30 PM	
5th and 6th Christmas Party Cantata Rehearsal	6:30 PM 7:30 PM	<u>Thursdays</u> Knitwits Stephen Ministry Meeting (2nd & 4th)	10:00 AM 6:30 PM	
December 12 Stephen Ministry Christmas Party Finance Meeting	6:30 PM 6:30 PM	Saturdays Cardio Strength/Dance Exercise Class Peace in the Storm - Worship Service	9:30 AM 6:00 PM	
December 14 Cantata Rehearsal Christmas Cantata Presentation	9:00 AM 6:00 PM	<u>Sundays</u> Young Adult Lunch High School Small Group	12:15 PM 6:00 PM	
<u>December 15</u> Christmas Cantata Presentation 8:15 Youth and Family Caroling	8 9:45 AM 12:30 PM	Sunday School Class		
<u>December 17</u> Finance Meeting	6:30 PM	Sundays Crossroads Sunday School Club Aldersgate	8:15 AM 9:45 AM	
<u>December 18</u> A Night in Bethlehem Family Event	6:30 PM	Seekers Sunday School Youth/Children Sunday School	9:45 AM 9:45 AM	

### THE WONDER OF IT ALL

### December 2024

Greetings Aldersgate, I am so excited about how November is ending (minus saying goodbye to our 15-year-old Maltese, Bella) and preparing us for our journey of wonder! We just experienced the blessing of being a part of worship with the community for our Night of Thanks, two Saturdays of baking cookies, the semifinal home appearance of the Nixa football team, and the expectation of Advent! We will begin Advent this Sunday and look forward to our Cantata and children sharing music as part of our celebration. Our four Christmas Eve Candlelight Communion Services will be filled with the Holy Spirit and the blessing of music from many in our church family.

We want to finish the year strong, making up our deficit (expenses exceeding revenue), but every year we are blessed to see generous year-end giving. We are stepping out in faith this year to collect a designated Christmas Eve Offering to help change the agricultural

**Sundays at Aldersgate** 

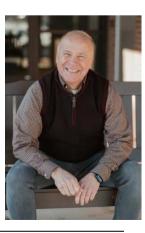
welfare of people around the world through Convoy of Hope. For chickens, goats, seeds, farm tools, and farm training we have a total goal of \$16,500. (details herein) We have been blessed in years past with the opportunity to make a difference around the world. I'm praying this year we again will listen to what God would have us do over and above our regular giving to meet our goal.

I have been excited to hear reports from some of our reading buddies and also know the wonderful giving support to Least of These, Abundant Blessings, and Generations Village was a very important part of our November. Let's keep serving and praying!!

Please watch for our students serving on December 1st, throughout the 9:45 hour!

See you Sunday in worship here or wherever you are!

**Pastor Dennis** 



Service Times Traditional Service Contemporary Service Family Service

8:15 AM 9:45 AM 11:11 AM

## Aldersgate Righteous Kids

### PK-Grade 6

### A Night in Bethlehem Workday

On Thursday, December 5th, we have a workday to prepare for our Christmas family event activities. We will have some things set up to work on from 8:30 am to 11:30 am. This will be come-and-go as people have time. •

### **December Buddy**

Meet Olivia the owl. Our memory verse for December is, "For this is how God loved the world: He gave His one and only Son." John 3:16

Join us Sunday mornings at 9:45 AM



### 5th & 6th grade and ARK Christmas Party

On Wednesday night, December 11, at 6:30 PM, we will have Christmas parties in our classes. Nothing extra is needed that night, unless you want to donate a craft or supplies.



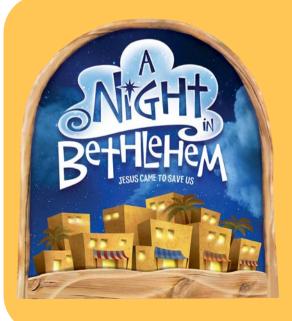
No Wednesday Nights

No Wednesday night classes Dec. 25th & Jan. 1st



### Wed. December 18 at 6:30 PM

Build the faith of moms, dads, and kids alike as you discover Jesus in Bible-times Bethlehem! During this festive event, families wander through the bustling Bethlehem marketplace and discover what life was like when Jesus was born. Unlike your typical "living Nativity," everyone will create unique keepsakes as they interact with local shopkeepers who share the Christmas story. And they'll love talking to Mary and Joseph in the stable--and hearing about the miracle of Jesus' birth.





### CHRISTMAS PARTY!

December 11 at 6:00 PM is our Youth Group Christmas Party! YAHOOZIE!!

Wear your ugliest Christmas outfit and be ready to play some games, try your hand at trivia, eat some great snacks, and win prizes.

If you have any fun ideas, let Rob know so he can add them to the list of fun for the night!!



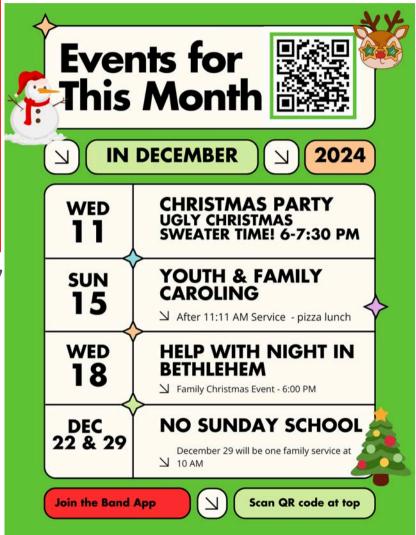
### HIGH SCHOOL GIRLS

We have an awesome group of high school girls who love to hang out with each other. So they are planning a movie night sleepover at Robyn Thomas' house on Jan. 4. The plan is to watch movies and come to church the next morning as a group.

If you have questions please talk to Tessa Kepley or Kaylin Stone.



# YOUTH GROUP



### CHRISTMAS CAROLING

All 7th-12th graders and their families are invited Sunday, December 15 at 12:30 PM to go caroling. We will meet in the Youth Building for a pizza lunch and then head out.

Once we finish, we will head back to the church for hot chocolate. We hope that you can join us.





NEW WEDNESDAY NIGHT CLASS!!

### The Art of Marriage starts Jan. 8

Picture-perfect is overrated. Maybe your marriage has been different from the original sketch in your head. It's included far darker tones than you'd hoped. Or you'd love to move it toward "masterpiece" level, but you have no idea where to start. Either way, there's a Master at work.

Whether you're a newlywed or have been married for decades, The Art of Marriage is your path to a stronger, more beautiful masterpiece of God's handiwork. In this seven-week class, experienced hosts Huck and Camilla Hyde will help you explore new levels of intimacy, communication, and connection with your spouse.

Course materials will help you identify your strengths and areas for growth and enjoy devotional time together as you strengthen your bond of love.

This class will meet on Wednesday nights at 6:30 PM Jan 8-Feb 19 in room 206 of the Learning Center. The cost is \$30/per couple for materials. (If you need financial assistance, please speak with a pastor.) This class is limited to the first five couples who register, so sign up now!

Learn what over 700,000 have discovered about marriage – happier, healthier marriages start with God's flawless design.



Here at Aldersgate, we like to show our gratitude for not only our pastors but also the staff who are so important to our church.

From now until Wednesday, December 11, SPR will be collecting cash\* funds to be distributed among our pastors and staff for a Christmas gift. Please place your cash gift in a sealed envelope, marking it "Staff Appreciation" and either (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 would have to be 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 family and to help us be Christ in the world!

With Love in Christ,

Staff-Parish Relations Committee

Kathrine Clem, Stacy Evans, Mike Freyer, David Hayes, Vera Hunziker, Gary Jacobs, Mark McClanahan, Debbie Rice, Rhonda Wilson, Jeff McCurry – SPR Chair, and Ed Vigneaux – Lay Leader

John 17: 21

### UNITY

#### BY: ED VIGNEUAX

In a recent Sunday School meeting, our leader and teacher, David Swenson, presented a lesson on unity and I thought it was worth sharing with you.

We are called into a relationship with God and with all His children. We are commanded to love God first, and then all His children.

As believers in His Son, Jesus Christ, we are called to share the good news of Jesus Christ; he died and was buried; on the third day, he arose; and he is coming back someday.

As Christians, we best reflect the love of God by being unified in our beliefs and actions. Our witness to the world is that we love others more than ourselves.

In Acts 2: 42-47, the early church best depicted this unity by sharing everything they had, not just possessions, but love and compassion for all those in need. Because of their actions, their numbers grew daily.

Disunity in the church weakens it and can be a stumbling block to other believers, and also to non-believers searching for answers to lead them out of their life of despair and destruction

In I Corinthians 1:10, Paul urges the church to be perfectly united in mind and thought. That means there is no division of thought and we are all united in our beliefs.

Paul also writes in Colossians 3:13-14; "Bear with each other and forgive one another, and over all these virtues put on love, which binds us all together in perfect unity." As Jesus came to serve and not be served, we as disciples of Christ have been called to serve. There are still many opportunities to serve this community of faith called Aldersgate. This church is a laity run organization, and it needs all its members and attendees to pull together to make sure we succeed in our mission to be Christ in the world. Please pray and be on the look for something to do. See a need, fill a need.

In Isaiah 6:8, the Lord called Isaiah to service, and he answered, "Here I am, send me". However, in Luke 9: 59-62, Jesus calls a couple of believers to follow him, but they both answered they had something else to do. Jesus said to them, "Anyone, having put their hand to the plow, and looking back, is not fit for the kingdom of God". Serving God is advancing His Kingdom. As believers in Jesus Christ, we are called to serve others. Remember, God doesn't call the equipped; He equips the called.

My favorite scripture verse is found in Philippians 2: 4 "Let each of you look not only to your own interests, but also the interests of others.

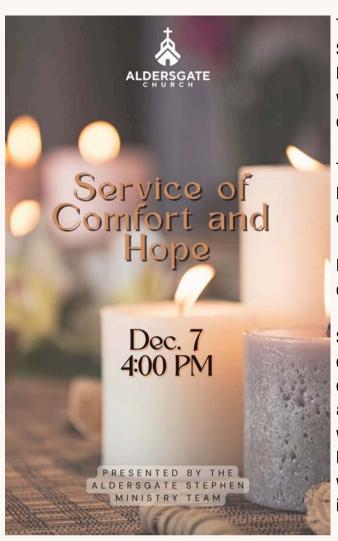
Let us love one another. Let us Be Love. Let us be Christ in the world.

We are blessed to be a blessing.



### Monday Night Men's Bible Study

Beginning Monday, December 2nd the Men's Group will begin a new study of the book of Matthew. Marvin Rayborn and Pastor Phil will be leading an in-depth study and discussion of Matthew. This Bible study is open to men of all ages and will meet at 6:30 PM in room LC 207. If you haven't been to the Men's Bible study, this would be a great opportunity to give it a try!



The holidays are not always a joyous time for everyone. The Service of Comfort and Hope, hosted by the Stephen Ministry, on December 7 at 4:00 PM is designed to begin the holiday season with the comfort that God is always with us, especially during difficult times.

The service will include music, scripture readings, a message from Pastor Sarah, the lighting of Advent candles, prayer, and communion.

Invite someone who might be having a rough holiday season and come sit with them as they navigate through a new chapter in life.

Stephen Ministry is a program that equips lay persons to provide distinctively Christian care to individuals who are going through a difficult time or life crisis. Stephen Ministry is confidential and available for anyone in the community. Women are cared for by women, men by men. Working together with our pastors, Stephen Ministry enables our congregation at Aldersgate to grow as a warm and loving place where people are cherished and cared for in Christ.



Join us Saturday, December 21 at 6:30 PM as the praise team brings you a night of Christmas songs. We will have the traditional Christmas carols that we all know and love and some contemporary Christmas songs too. Come ready to sing with us as we wrap up the Advent season.



It's Christmas Time! Join us on Saturday, Dec. 14 at 6:00 PM or Sunday, Dec. 15 at 8:15 or 9:45 AM for the presentation of the Christmas Cantata called "The Star Still Shines".

Proclaim the true reason for our seasonal celebration-that Jesus is the one true light of the world!



## CHRISTMAS AT ALDERSGATE

### The Wonder of it All

What are we "Wondering" about this Advent season?

We have five weeks in December and each week we will have a different "wonder."

Week One: The Wonder in the Journey -

Matthew 1: 18-25

Week Two: The Wonder in Anticipation -

Luke 1:26-38

Week Three: The Wonder in the Light - Cantata

Presentation

Week Four: The Wonder of the Arrival -

Luke 2:8-20

Week Five: The Wonder of the Revelation -

Matthew 2:1-12

We hope that you will join us each week during this Advent season to rediscover the wonder of it all.

### **CHRISTMAS SCHEDULE**

This year we will not have a Travelers Service but will have a Night of Carols on **Dec. 21** at 6:30 PM

**Dec. 22** we will have all three services but there will not be Sunday school for our kids or students. You are encouraged to attend as a family. We will still have the nursery open.

**Dec. 24** we will have our services at 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, and 11:00 PM. The choir will be singing at the 7:00 PM service.

**Dec. 29** we will have one service at 10:00 AM. This will be a blended service for all to attend. Once again, we will not have Sunday school for kids or students. We will have the nursery available for families that need it.

The office will be closed on Dec. 25-27 and Jan. 1, and will close at noon on Dec. 24 and 31.

# FINANCIAL BRIEF

Year-to-date financial summary through October 31 of this year and last year:

	Ĭ	2024	2023	(excluding Disaffiliation Costs)
Revenue	\$	848,088.00	\$ 841,901.00	
<b>Budgeted Expenses</b>	\$	1,097,221.00	\$ 1,036,772.00	
Actual Expenses	\$	969,997.00	\$ 917,509.00	
Net	\$	(121,909.00)	\$ (75,608.00)	

The original amount of the loan for the new Learning Center was \$4,162,200. The current balance as of October 31, 2024, is \$3,067,762.

At the end of the year, we have a significant deficit to make up. Please prayerfully consider what you might be able to give to help the church meet our obligation to fund our ministries. As we celebrate the birth of a baby this month, there's no shower gift to purchase from an Amazon registry; instead, just head over to the church app and make a gift through Kindrid! Of course, cash and checks are also welcome. And keep in mind Aldersgate can accept donations of stock. The church can also accept QCDs ("qualified charitable distributions"), which are tax-free distributions from an IRA. Stock donations or QCDs can both be effective ways to reduce tax liability while maximizing giving to the church. Please contact the church office if you are interested in more information.

Also, we will soon begin a new year, which is a time of hope and fresh starts! If you have been giving less than the traditional tithe of 10% of your income, maybe 2025 is the year to start. Tithing is a great act of worship and can give you the freedom that comes with knowing God will provide everything you need. Rejoice!



"Each of you should give what you have decided in your heart to give, not reluctantly or under compulsion, for God loves a cheerful giver."



NEW STEPHEN MINISTERS







ABUNDANT BLESSINGS SERVE NIGHT



NIGHT OF THANKS



YOUNG ADULT PROGRESSIVE DINNER

