

Gatepost

DECEMBER 2025



ISSUE No 12

**SERVICE OF COMFORT
AND HOPE**

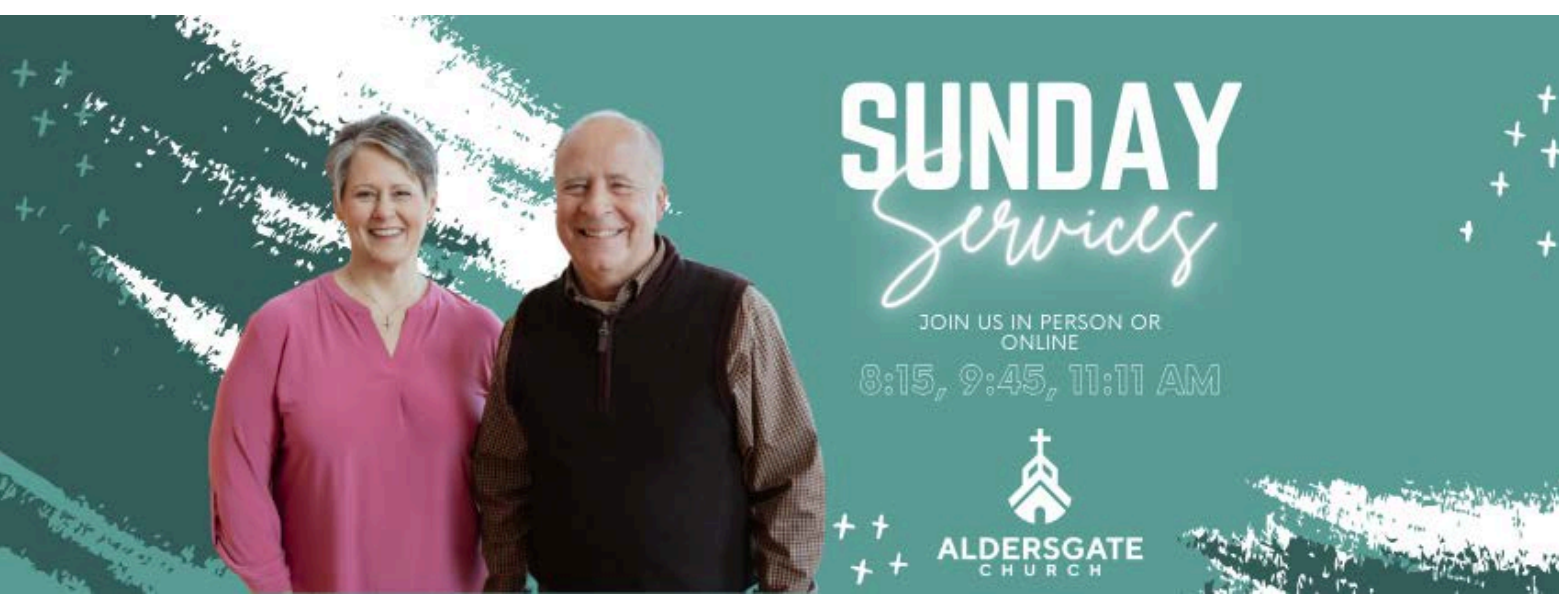
**THE GLORY OF
CHRISTMAS CANTATA**

SANTA'S TOY DRIVE

Upcoming Events for December

| | | |
|---------------|--|-----------------------------------|
| 03 | CHARITY SEWING | 1:30 PM |
| 06 | MEN'S BREAKFAST SERVICE OF COMFORT AND HOPE | 7:30 AM 4:00 PM |
| 07 | ANGEL TREE DEADLINE ANNUAL CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING HIGH SCHOOL SMALL GROUP PARTY | 2:00 PM 6:00 PM |
| 09 | PROPERTY OVERSIGHT MEETING | 6:30 PM |
| 10 | YOUTH CHRISTMAS PARTY ARK KIDS' CHRISTMAS PARTY | 6:00 PM 6:30 PM |
| 11 | STEPHEN MINISTRY CHRISTMAS | 6:30 PM |
| 13 | CHRISTMAS CANTATA REHEARSAL CHRISTMAS CANTATA | 9:00 AM 6:00 PM |
| 14 | CHRISTMAS CANTATA JOYFUL NOISE SINGERS | 8:15 & 9:45 AM 2:30 PM |
| 17 | BIRTHDAY PARTY FOR JESUS | 6:30 PM |
| 18-20 | SANTA'S TOY DRIVE | |
| 21 | CHURCH BOARD MEETING YOUNG ADULT CHRISTMAS PARTY | 12:30 PM 6:00 PM |
| 24 | OFFICE CLOSING AT NOON CHRISTMAS EVE SERVICES | 3:00, 5:00, 7:00, AND 11:00 PM |
| 25 | MERRY CHRISTMAS! OFFICE CLOSED | |
| 28 | ONE SUNDAY SERVICE NO SUNDAY SCHOOL | 10:00 AM |
| 31 | OFFICE CLOSING AT NOONS | |
| JAN. 1 | HAPPY NEW YEAR!!! OFFICE CLOSED | |





Brought To the Light!

Greetings Aldersgate,

We had a wonderful November as a family of faith, with Baptisms and new members, as well as a community faith gathering we hosted for the Nixa Ministerial Alliance! As the season of Advent begins on November 30th, we begin a sermon series, "Brought to the Light!" As Pastor Sarah and I share messages during the next 4 Sundays, we pray that the Holy Spirit fills us with the Light that came down at Christmas. Please be aware that every Sunday will bring new neighbors looking for truth in their lives and how we are prepared to see them, greet them, and continue to invite them to discover who they really are in Christ. We need to be showing up every day to bring others to the Light!

The opportunities this month are many as we prepare our home to be ready for all that will come to see Jesus on the last Sunday of November, fill the wishes of our Angel Tree, serve and support the Santa Toy Drive project, December 18-20, give to the Christmas Eve offering to "One Day to Feed the World" and invite your neighbors to the Christmas Cantata, Dec 13 & 14, Sunday worship or one of our 4 services on Christmas Eve! Let's make our hearts ready for the movement of the Holy Spirit this Advent Season!

I had planned to host a Pilgrimage in the Footsteps of Paul this coming year, but to give more time for folks to plan and prepare, I am looking to a trip in 2027. If you would be interested in joining Lorie and I, and Debbie Rice on an Educational Opportunity trip similar to the one we took in 2016, please let one of us know. We are trying to finalize a date in May or late August. The cost per person for a 12-day trip will be in the range of \$5k per person, but includes all costs, excluding add-on excursions, for the 10-day Mediterranean cruise on the Celebrity Infinity to the ancient churches Paul started and onboard biblical lectures enhancing the pilgrimage experience.

We are excited that December 31st will officially begin our affiliation with the Global Methodist Church.

See You Sunday in Worship (here or where you are!)
Love In Christ,
Pastor Dennis

P.S. Please plan to show up for our Burn Bright Conference on January 16 & 17!

Mary's Yes: The Courage of Faith in a Culture of Fear

A Reflection on the Radical Obedience of the Mother of Jesus

By Sarah E. Rogers

December is a month of anticipation. The world glows with lights and expectation. Families prepare meals, gifts are wrapped, and carols fill the air. Yet for believers, this month is more than a commercial celebration; it's Advent, a season of hope. It draws us into the stillness between promise and fulfillment, where faith must live without proof and hope must wait without sight. Amid that silence, one young woman's choice changed the course of history.

In a small village on the margins of the Roman Empire, Mary of Nazareth heard the angel's greeting: "Rejoice, highly favored one, the Lord is with you; blessed are you among women!" (Luke 1:28 KJV) What followed would upend not only her life but the moral logic of her entire culture. When told she would bear the Son of God, she responded, "Behold the maidservant of the Lord! Let it be to me according to your word." (Luke 1:38) That single sentence might be the most courageous "yes" in human history.

A Yes That Defied Culture and Law

In first-century Judea, betrothal was legally binding. A woman pledged to a man was already considered his wife, though the marriage had not been consummated. To be found pregnant during this period was not merely scandalous, it was grounds for public disgrace and even execution under Deuteronomic law (Deuteronomy 22:23–24).

Mary understood this. Her consent was not the naïve submission of a passive girl but the deliberate obedience of a woman who knew the cost. She risked her reputation, her safety, and her future marriage. Her "yes" was an act of civil disobedience to fear itself.

In a culture where a woman's honor defined her worth, Mary surrendered the only form of security available to her: social acceptance. In doing so, she redefined holiness. Obedience, not status, became the mark of divine favor.

Faith Beyond Understanding

Mary's yes was not passive compliance but cooperation with divine grace. God does not force His plan upon her; He waits for her consent. The incarnation begins not with power, but with permission. This partnership between divine initiative and human freedom, the synergy of grace and will, is at the center of Christian theology.

When Mary asked, "How can this be, since I do not know a man," (Luke 1:34 KJV) she does not doubt God's power. She seeks to understand her role within it. Gabriel's answer, "The Holy Spirit will come upon you," (Luke 1:35 KJV) offers no blueprint, only mystery.

Mary's faith is thus neither blind nor unthinking. It is a trust that transcends comprehension. She does not receive clarity; she receives presence. This is the essence of mature faith: not certainty, but surrender. To believe, as she did, is to step into divine mystery without knowing where it leads.

Our modern faith often falters here. We want evidence before obedience, guarantees before surrender. Yet Advent reminds us that the Messiah came through a woman who said yes before she understood how God would keep His word.

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Aldersgate Righteous Kids

December Bible Buddy:

Ramsey the Ram

Bible
Buddy

Verse: "But these are written so that you may continue to believe that Jesus is the Messiah, the Son of God, and that by believing in him you will have life by the power of his name." John 20:31

Join us each Sunday morning at 9:45 AM, PK-4th grade, in the ARK Wing for Sunday school, and 5th and 6th in CLC.



CLASS SCHEDULE

No Wednesday Night Classes Dec. 24th & 31st

No Sunday School on Dec. 28th & Jan. 4th



SuperStart 2026 in Tulsa will be on January 30th & 31st. (We are all going to be praying for BEAUTIFUL weather this weekend:) This is a high-energy, gospel filled weekend for our 5th & 6th grade students. This year's theme is the Mysterious Truth. We need to get an idea of the number of students and chaperones attending to decide on lodging and transportation. Please scan the QR code if you are interested. We will have more details shared with you once they are decided, and we are looking forward to an awesome weekend!



COME SERVE ON THE ARK!!

We need your help!!! We are looking for people who have a heart for the Lord to help on either Sunday Mornings or Wednesday nights! Please reach out to Ellie Bakken or Shannon Dodson to take the next steps in getting you serving on the ARK.



THE RELIGIOUS LAWYERS

John 8:2–8 ESV

By: Ed Vigneaux

Early in the morning he came again to the temple. All the people came to him, and he sat down and taught them. The scribes and the Pharisees brought a woman who had been caught in adultery, and placing her in the midst they said to him, "Teacher, this woman has been caught in the act of adultery. Now in the Law, Moses commanded us to stone such women. So what do you say?" This they said to test him, that they might have some charge to bring against him. Jesus bent down and wrote with his finger on the ground. And as they continued to ask him, he stood up and said to them, "Let him who is without sin among you be the first to throw a stone at her." And once more he bent down and wrote on the ground.

I'm sure most of you have read or even studied this event from the Bible, but let's look at it a little closer. Like you, I too have studied this event and even heard many sermons about it. Was this story about the Law or a lawbreaker? Or does it go deeper than that?

The Pharisees caught a woman in the act of adultery. Wait a minute? Doesn't it take two people to commit adultery? Where was the other lawbreaker? The law states that no one shall commit adultery, not just one person or another. Then why just bring the woman before Jesus?

Was this about the lawbreaker or was it about the Law? These lawyers cared nothing for this woman, she was a mere pawn in their chess game. They were going after the Lawgiver, Jesus. Whose side would he take? Would he set the law aside and grant her immunity from prosecution, or would he permit them to throw the book at her? Jesus gained nothing by taking her case.

In this classic no-win situation, Jesus searched for another way and chose to compromise. Jesus called another play. He turned the lawyers into the accused, putting them on trial, and compelled them to testify against themselves.

Was Jesus just going to let the accused go free? If so, why not let all the accused go free? Jesus does not do away with justice and judgment; rather, he crushes condemnation.

There's guilt and then there's shame. Guilt can be punished or pardoned. Shame must be crushed—yes, even crucified.

Shaming is our twisted sense of justice whereby we hide from our own guilt while projecting it onto another person and then condemn them for it.

In the garden, Adam and Eve knew they were guilty, and rather than give themselves over to the mercy of God, they covered themselves; they hid from God and wound up blaming each other and God for their sin.

See how it works? Rather than confessing their guilt, they concealed it, and in concealing it, they condemned themselves, swallowing their shame. A person who feels condemnation will unwittingly do anything to transfer it to someone else. Does this sound familiar?

But that's not the end of the story. Everyone thinks that Jesus doesn't let her off the hook. He tells her to go and sin no more. And we believe that he is saying the same thing to us.

WEEKLY EVENTS

Monday-Friday - Pickleball - 8:00 AM

Sundays - Crossroads Study - 8:15
Club Aldersgate - 9:45 AM
Seekers Study - 9:45 AM
Young Adult Study - 9:45 AM
Handbell Rehearsal - 11:15 AM
Christmas Cantata Rehearsal - 4:00 PM

Mondays - Stronger - 5:30 AM
Women of the Word - 9:30 AM
Women of Hope (2nd & 4th) - 6:00 PM
Spirit Sisters (1st & 3rd) - 6:30 PM
Men's Bible Study - 6:30 PM

Tuesdays - Aldersgate Time of Prayer - 6:30 PM

Wednesdays - Youth Praise Band - 5:00 PM

Dinner - 5:30 PM

7th -12th Youth - 6:00 PM

ARK Club - 6:30 PM

5th & 6th Grade - 6:30 PM

The Deep End - 6:30 PM

Choir Rehearsal - 6:30 PM

Pastor's Bible Study - 6:30 PM

Young Adult Bible Study - 6:30 PM

Christmas Cantata Rehearsal - 7:30 PM

Thursdays - Knitwits - 10:00 AM

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

Saturdays - Cardio Workout - 9:30 AM

Peace in the Storm - 6:30 PM

ALDERSGATE YOUTH

High School Small Group
9th-12th students

December 7 -

Christmas Party at
Cherie Gregory's House!!

Summer Mission Trip

The High School Summer Mission Trip will be headed to Minnesota from June 27 - July 3. This is open to all current 8th graders to 12th grade students. If you are interested please talk to Rob Howard to get a commitment letter.

First Sunday of every month is
SERVE SUNDAY!! No Sunday school.

Youth Christmas Party!!!!

Wednesday, December 10 at 6:00 PM

Wear your ugly sweaters and be ready to
play some games and win prizes.



SANTA'S TOY DRIVE

Santa's Toy Drive was started in 2021 by Ryan and Shelby Malin to provide gifts for Christian County children who would otherwise not have gifts for Christmas. That first year they served over 200 kids. This number has grown every year, with the goal for this year being 700 children!

Besides Christmas gifts, they find ways to help families all through the year. Look at some of the ways they have helped since 2021!

- \$400 donated in medical supplies that were not covered by insurance was donated to children with disabilities
- 4 families received assistance from a total loss due to fire
- 1,838 children received toys for Christmas morning
- 30 families at the women/children shelter received donations on Christmas morning
- Over \$2,000 of toys were donated to Project Birthday Bag to help supply gifts for children's birthdays that would otherwise go without

While they do provide assistance throughout the year, their main focus is the Santa's Toy Drive event. **For the first time, Aldersgate will be the location for this event. Thursday, December 18, will be set up. Friday, December 19, will be more prep work, and for the first time, they will offer an evening shopping time for parents who are coming without their children. Saturday, December 20, is the big event!** Parents will drop off their children to watch a movie, do a craft, play games, have breakfast, and even see Santa! While the kids are being entertained, parents will shop for their kids and have the gifts wrapped and loaded in their cars. During this event and in all of the things this ministry does, people are shown the love of Christ. They are prayed over before they even set foot on campus.

No ministry this big can function without a lot of volunteers. Aldersgate, this is your chance to make a big impact in our community. People are needed to put together and drop off toy collection boxes, they need shoppers to purchase gifts with monetary donations, they need many volunteers to set up and run the event. Sign up below to volunteer: If you are short on time, you can purchase gifts and put them in the collection box once we get it. They ask that gifts be in the \$25 - \$50 range, so all kids get similarly priced items.



MISSIONS TRIP

REGISTER NOW



Spring Break Mission Trip for Adults and Families - March 15-20

We will be going to Tulsa, OK, and leaving on March 15th and returning on the 20th. We will be working with the Praying Pelican Ministry on this trip. The out-of-pocket cost will be \$400 a person, but the group will be fundraising to help with costs. \$50 deposit is required to hold your space. Melissa Trebilcock will be the main contact for this trip. Scan the QR code to register.

Mary's Yes: The Courage of Faith in a Culture of Fear

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The Cost of Obedience

Mary's obedience did not grant her ease. It led her through exile in Egypt, misunderstanding in Nazareth, and the agony of the cross. Simeon's prophecy that "yes, a sword will pierce through your own soul also," (Luke 2:35 KJV) proved true. Her yes endured not only conception but crucifixion.

Yet through every moment of fear, God's promise held. The same Spirit who overshadowed her at the annunciation sustained her at Calvary. Her life demonstrates that obedience is not a one-time event but a lifelong vocation.

The Model for Our Faith

In Mary's story, we confront both the cost and the necessity of surrender. We may never face her cultural peril, but we, too, are called to say yes. To forgive when it seems impossible, to trust when God's plan confounds us, to act in faith when the world demands proof. Her example dismantles the modern illusion that faith should be easy. It was not easy for her, and it is not easy for us. But it is holy.

Mary's yes was the triumph of courage over fear, humility over control, and faith over understanding. In her, heaven found not perfection but willingness. Her response is a mirror for our own: when God's call disrupts our comfort, do we negotiate, or do we, like Mary, bow before the mystery and say, let it be?

In the end, her story assures us that God's greatest miracles often begin with the smallest acts of surrender. As we wait this Advent, let us remember that God still seeks human consent to His divine work.

Closing Prayer

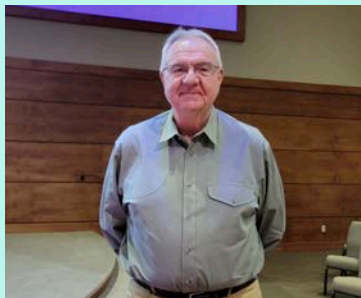
Eternal God, give us Mary's courage to say yes when You call. Free us from the need for certainty, the fear of risk, and the illusion of control. As You once entered the world through her obedience, enter our lives anew through our surrender. Let our yes become Your dwelling place.

Amen.

NEW MEMBERS



Anthony & Samantha
Thompson



Lyle Bumgarner

Tim & Teresa Huddleston



Top Left:
Adam & Michiala Spicer

Top Right:
Kurt & Kim Keltner



THE RELIGIOUS LAWYERS

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Perhaps. But He was only talking to her. There was no one else around. But we tend to take this message and pass it on to the masses. Thus, becoming the religious lawyer.

We alone must stand before Jesus, pardon in hand, and hear these merciful words spoken directly to us and no one else. I'm the lawbreaker, the murderer, the adulterer, the thief, the idolater, and the liar.

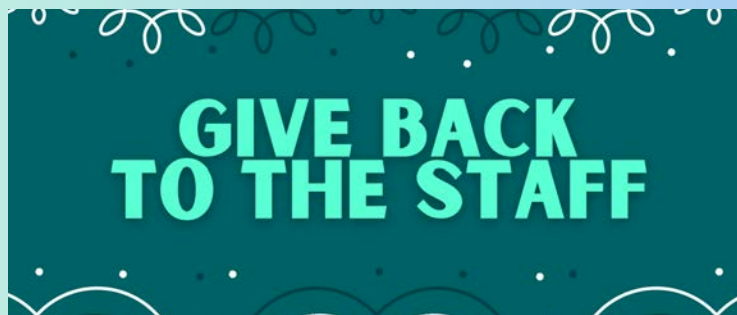
Jesus sets us free from the penalty of sin. Even better, he sets us free from the power of sin. Sometimes, that power shows up as shame. We are forgiven for doing bad, but let's face it, we are forever bad, forever defective, and damaged goods. It's what makes Jesus's words to her so powerful. She doesn't leave wearing the scarlet letter. She leaves loved as only Jesus can love. So much forgiveness that it's forgotten. Even she can forget it. Her sin is as dead as those rocks lying all over the ground.

We, too, can experience this love. We just need to confess our sins to Him, knowing that He will not condemn us, but forgive our sins and forget them as well.

Praise God from whom all blessings flow. Especially love.

Let us love others as He has loved us.

We are truly blessed (loved) to be a blessing (love) to others.



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

From now until Wednesday, December 17, 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, Mike Freyer, Bob Allen, Vera Hunziker, Mark Western, Debbie Rice, Rhonda Wilson, Tanya Turner, Mark McClanahan – SPR Chair, and Ed Vigneaux – Lay Leader

Financial Brief

By: Ben Stone

Year-to-date financial summary through October 31, 2025:

Revenue \$ 1,073,051
Budgeted Expenses \$ 1,197,926
Actual Expenses \$ 1,039,050
Net \$ 34,001

The original amount of the loan for the new Learning Center was \$4,162,200. The current balance as of October 31, 2025, is \$2,902,053.

If you give your offering, or pay for Wednesday dinners or other fees, electronically through the church app or website, you may soon notice a change in the procedure. Currently, when making a payment through Kindrid, our payment processing platform, you are generally given the option to add a small amount to cover the processing fees. The total amount collected through these add-on donations has not been nearly enough to cover the processing fees incurred by the church, so starting next year, a handling fee will be added to every transaction; the fee will be 1.00% for ACH payments and 2.75% for all other electronic payment options. Cash and checks will still be accepted for no extra charge!

Christmas for Our Veterans

Join us for a special holiday event honoring our veterans!

Wednesday, December 10th, 2025

11:00 AM - 1:00 PM

Library Station - Frisco Community Room
2535 N Kansas Expressway
Springfield, MO 65803

**Enjoy refreshments, fellowship,
and access to valuable community resources.**

Event Highlights:

- ★ Veteran resources & support services
- ★ Employment & benefits assistance
- ★ Giveaways & gift bags
- ★ Refreshments & holiday treats
- ★ Holiday fun & community connection

Shaniqua Owens, Veterans Employment (DVOP) 573-418-7426

For additional information about Missouri Office of Workforce Development services, contact a Missouri Job Center near you. Locations and additional information are available at jobs.mo.gov or 1-888-728-JOBS (5627).
The Missouri Department of Higher Education and Workforce Development is an equal opportunity employer/program. Auxiliary aids and services are available upon request to individuals with disabilities. Missouri Relay Services at 711.

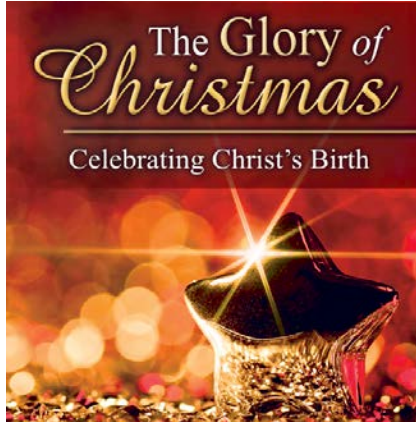


Desserts for CCSO Christmas Banquet Dec 16

We're honored to serve the men and women who serve and protect us at the Christian County Sheriff's Office by providing homemade desserts for their annual Christmas banquet on December 16!

Scan the QR code to sign up. Be sure to tell us what kind of dessert you are bringing and how many. Bring your dessert to the church office by 3 PM on Tuesday, December 16. Thank you!





Christmas Cantata Saturday, December 13 at 6:00 PM Sunday, December 14 at 8:15 & 9:45 AM

You are invited to join us to watch the Christmas Choir, Handbells, and Children's Choir present The Glory of Christmas. The Glory of Christmas comes to life in this inspiring musical by Lloyd Larson. Through a blend of familiar carols and original songs, you will experience the beauty of the incarnation story as if you're experiencing it for the first time. Invite a friend to join you for a wonderful Cantata.

PRESENTED BY THE
ALDRSGATE STEPHEN
MINISTRY TEAM

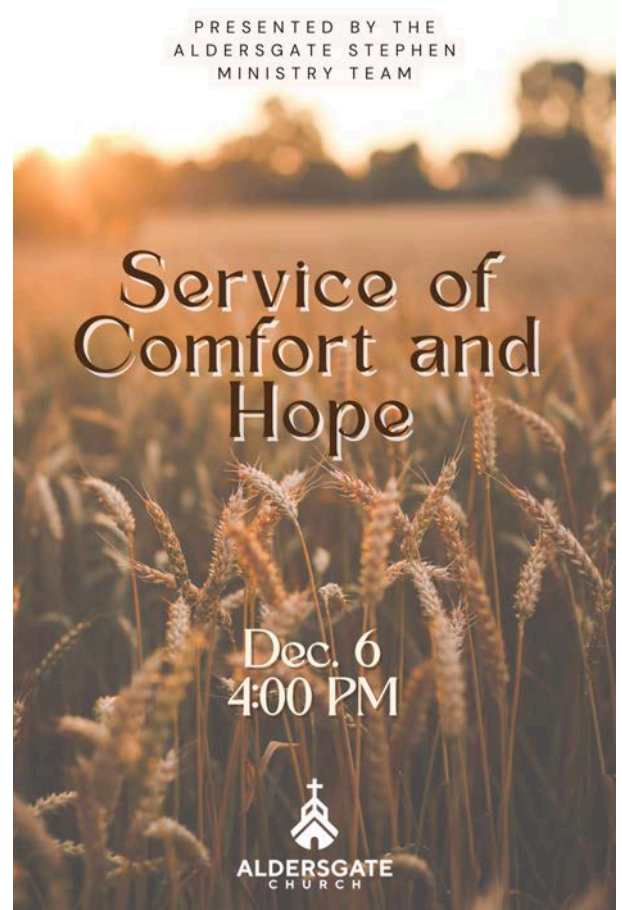
Service of Comfort and Hope

The holidays are not always a joyous time for everyone. The Service of Comfort and Hope, hosted by the Stephen Ministry Team, on December 6 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 Kay Huber, 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 people 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.



CHURCH BUSINESS MEETING



Sunday, December 7 at 2:00 PM

Our annual business meeting will include updates from our Board on church finances, staffing, and property, and an opportunity to vote on pastoral compensation packages, people nominated for leadership positions, and persons no longer in attendance to be removed from membership roles. If you want to know what's happening in Aldersgate, this is the place to be!

Angel TREE



We now have tags hanging on our Angel Tree for the Milano House kids. Please take a tag and return the tag attached to the present that was purchased by Sunday, Dec. 7

CHRISTMAS EVE

CANDLELIGHT SERVICES

DEC. 24 3 PM, 5 PM, 7 PM, 11 PM