

Gatepost

JANUARY 2026



BURN BRIGHT

Aldersgate Church Conference

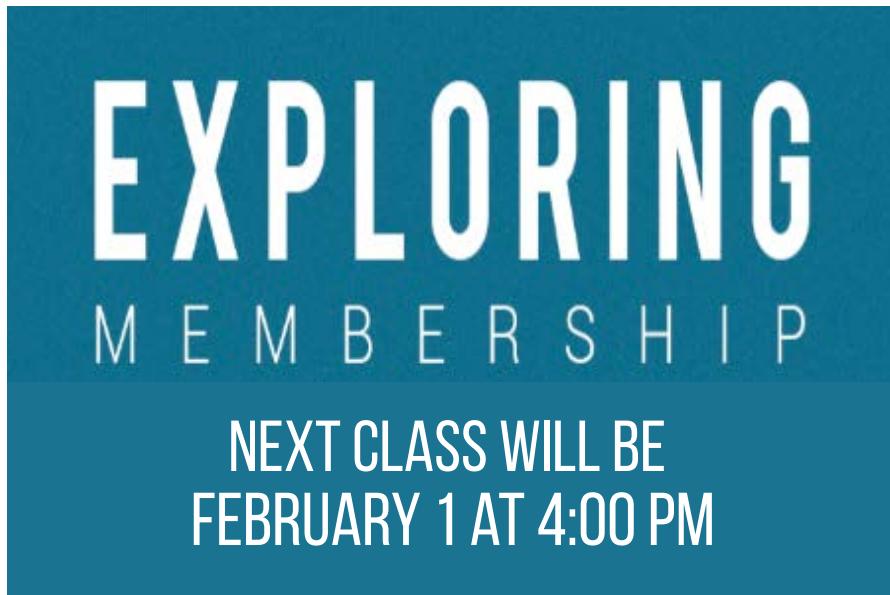
BURN BRIGHT
CONFERENCE

SUPERSTART

NEW CLASSES AND
BIBLE STUDIES

Upcoming Events for January

07	WEDNESDAY NIGHTS ARE BACK	
10	WORSHIP TEAM LUNCH	11:00 AM
11	YOUTH CAROLING JOYFUL NOISE	11:11 AM 2:30 PM
13	TRUSTEES MEETING	6:30 PM
16	BURN BRIGHT CONFERENCE	6:30 PM
17	BURN BRIGHT CONFERENCE	9:00 AM
18	GLOBAL METHODIST SPEAKER	ALL SERVICES
20	FINANCE MEETING	6:30 PM
24	ALPHA LEADERSHIP TRAINING VISITATION MINISTRY TRAINING	8:30 AM 9:30 AM
25	PCC SPECIAL OFFERING YOUTH CHILI COOKOFF	4:00 PM
26	ALDERSGATE BOOK CLUB	5:30 PM
30-31	SUPERSTART - TULSA, OK	





SUNDAY Services

JOIN US IN PERSON OR
ONLINE

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



ALDERSGATE
CHURCH

Burn Bright!

Greetings Aldersgate,

The joy of the Lord greets us as we begin the New Year of 2026, officially joining the Global Methodist Church as voted by the congregation in September! We will host our Heartland Conference Superintendent, Jordan McFall, on January 18th, who will be preaching that morning.

We will covenant together during each of the services to be faithful to our connection to the GMC. Please make a special effort to attend or watch on the 18th.

In addition, we hope to host ALL in our church for the Burn Bright Conference on Friday, January 16th, and Saturday, January 17th. Please sign up as soon as possible, as we finalize plans and order our lunch for Saturday. We will have great worship and great speakers sharing throughout the Conference. Watch the video about it and ask any questions, but all adults and 7th-12th-grade students are invited.

Our 5th and 6th graders will head to Superstart at the end of the month, and our family mission trip is scheduled for Spring Break, March 14-20th.

Happy New Year and many blessings for you as you are being who you are in Christ, so you can be Christ in the world!

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

Love In Christ,

Pastor Dennis

Thank you so much for your generosity during the Christmas Eve services this year. We collected \$14,676 for the Convoy of Hope campaign to Feed the World in One Day.



At the Crossroads: A Christian Reflection on the Rise and Fall of Great Civilizations

By Sarah E. Rogers

History is humanity's greatest teacher, but it's a teacher we often ignore. Over the centuries, empires and nations have risen to greatness only to crumble under the weight of their own success. Rome, Athens, the Ottomans, and the British Empire all reached extraordinary heights, influencing the world for generations. Yet every one of them eventually fell. Their ruins are more than relics; they are warnings written in stone.

As Americans, we like to believe we're different, that our Constitution, freedoms, wealth, and innovation place us beyond history's reach. But the truth is simpler, and more sobering: no civilization is eternal. Every society stands or falls not by fate, but by the choices its people make when confronted with decline.

The Common Threads of Decline

When historians study fallen societies, familiar patterns emerge. The Roman Empire decayed from within as corruption spread faster than reform. Athens, the cradle of democracy, tore itself apart through pride and factionalism. The Ottoman Empire, once a powerhouse of innovation, resisted change until the world passed them by. Britain's empire extended farther than its strength could sustain, and eventually their empire became just a memory.

These stories differ in detail, but their patterns are strikingly familiar. Civilizations collapse not from one single event, but through a slow erosion of character and purpose. They grow comfortable, complacent, and divided. Wealth replaces virtue, comfort replaces courage, and people lose faith in one another and in the institutions meant to serve them. They start believing that their system will survive on autopilot, forgetting that liberty and justice require constant renewal.

Echoes in Our Time

It's hard not to see the parallels of those same patterns in our own country. The United States still stands as one of history's most powerful and prosperous nations, but the cracks are visible.

Our political discourse, once a model of spirited debate, now often feels defined by bitterness and distrust and paralyzed by partisanship. Trust in institutions, from Congress to the media, is near an all-time low. Economic opportunity has narrowed; the dream of upward mobility that once defined America feels distant for many. Social media, meant to connect us, often deepens our divides. We are saturated with information yet starved for truth.

At the same time, national debt soars, civic education declines, and shared morals erode. Many Americans feel a growing sense of disconnection and unease that something vital is slipping away.

It's tempting to look at this moment and wonder if America is following the same path that led past empires to decline. But history also reminds us that decline is not destiny. Renewal is always possible if people are willing to rediscover what made them strong in the first place.

What History Teaches Us

The good news is that history doesn't just record decline, it also records renewal. Civilizations have rebounded when they rediscovered purpose and reformed what had grown corrupt. Rome fell, but Europe eventually gave birth to new forms of governance. Britain's empire faded, but its democratic ideals lived on across the world. The United States itself has faced near-collapse before. We survived a bloody Civil War, a Great Depression, and cultural upheavals that tested the very definition of freedom. Yet each time, the nation found a way forward.

Aldersgate Righteous Kids

January Bible Buddy:

Amanda the Red Panda



Verse: "Don't worry about anything; instead, pray about everything. Tell God what you need, and thank him for all he has done." ~ Philippians 4:6

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

Wednesday Nights are back on January 7th



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 to share 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.



Junior High 101

Your 6th-grade student is invited to our Junior High 101 class. Ellie and Rob will be leading this 4-week class starting on Sunday, February 8th.

6th graders won't want to miss this faith-filled class designed for our incoming junior high students!

This class will help students navigate the exciting (and sometimes overwhelming!) transition into junior high with confidence, community, and most importantly—a Christ-centered foundation.

This will be during Sunday school from 9:45-10:45 am in the Youth Building. All 6th graders who come on the following Sundays will meet in the youth building for Sunday School.

Feb. 8th- What is our Value?

Feb. 15th- Standing Strong!

Feb. 22nd- Finding our True Identity

March 1st- Time Management/Avoiding Distractions

LOVE GOES FIRST

Matthew 16: 24-26

By: Ed Vigneaux

"Then Jesus said to his disciples. Whoever wants to be my disciple must deny themselves and take up their cross and follow me. For whoever wants to save their life will lose it, but whoever loses their life for me will find it. What good will it be for someone to gain the whole world, yet forfeit their soul? Or what can anyone give in exchange for their soul?

I've just finished reading a book titled Love Goes First by Andrew Forrest, and I believe this book should be read by every disciple of Jesus Christ. It really outlines what it means to be a Christian in today's world.

I want to share a few excerpts from this book in the author's own words, as he can say it better than I could interpret it.

"It's obvious to everyone that humanity has a problem. Christians say the problem is sin. Secular folks say the problem is systemic injustice or lack of education, or an unequal distribution of resources. The burning question is what is to be done?

Our pop-culture answers to that question often boil down to some version of the hippie response: Peace and love, man. That sounds good, but while saying all we need is love sounds good, it isn't a very useful sentiment in the real world. Life in the real world is nasty, brutish and short. In the real world, nice guys finish last, the good die young, and might makes right. It's easy to talk about peace in a song, but in the real world, it seems as if, in the end, love just gets you killed.

Throughout this book, we have been using the phrase go first in a particular sense. To go first means to move in love toward others, palms up, arms open, defenseless. To go first means choosing to act and not waiting to react. Naturally, we are all inclined to wait and watch. If the other person persuades us that they are friendly, then we respond with friendliness. If the other person is a foe, then it's fight or flight. When you make the first move, you overturn the status quo and open up new possibilities. It's the only way things ever really change. But going first requires sacrifice, and it isn't easy and comes at a great cost.

Going first can cost you everything. The early Christians got the lion. When we go first toward the other, the very act of moving toward them makes us vulnerable. That vulnerability may break through the other's hard heart.

In a divided and polarized world, how do we reach the people on the other side, the people who don't like us, the people who hate us? As the church, how do we fulfill our mission to reach the world? How do we win over our post-Christian culture? How do we evangelize the negative world? If we want to change the world, we have to go first, because love goes first.

There is a reason the natural human tendency is to hang back, to wait and see. When you move toward another in love, you make yourself vulnerable. Love always comes with a cost.

Jesus warned us In Matthew 16 that what it takes to follow him will at times feel like a crucifixion. Taking up one's cross is the faithful act of obediently doing the very thing that feels like death. Will discipleship

WEEKLY EVENTS

Tuesday-Friday - Pickleball - 8:00 AM

Sundays - Crossroads Study - 8:15
Club Aldersgate - 9:45 AM
Seekers Study - 9:45 AM
How to Share Your Faith - 9:45 AM
Young Adult Study - 9:45 AM
Handbell Rehearsal - 11:15 AM
Disciple 1 - 5:00 PM
High School Small Group - 6:00 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 - The Promise of Heaven Study - 9:30 AM
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
A Lasting Promise Marriage Class - 6:30 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

January 11 - Devin and Emalie Lindsey's

January 18 - Damon and Robyn Thomas'

The high school small group meets at parents' houses to share a meal and then dive deeper into study as separate gender groups.

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



CHILI

cook-off

Who Can Make the Best Chili?

7th-12th Grade are invited!

Sunday, January 25 from 4:00-6:00 PM

We will also be playing games and having an epic snowball fight. Bring a friend!



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.



always require martyrdom? No. But it will always come with a cost. Every act of sacrificial love involves a degree of dying to self, no matter what.

If you decide to go first, you will get hurt. You'll be misunderstood. People will try to use you. Going first will hurt your pride and waste your time. You will be rejected and blamed. Reconciliation could result in painful failure. Love is all well and good in the abstract, but it actually burns.. Perhaps that is why so many people prefer the world's definition of love, because it really doesn't cost that much. But if you choose to love the way Jesus did, you will pay a heavy price. Jesus warned his disciples that they would be hated for following him.

However, Jesus was not a victim; He chose to give his life to reconcile the world to God. We now live in a time when victimhood is valued.

This is because our culture has adopted Christian values but rejected Christ. We have taken the gospel's idea of sacrifice and turned it into victim worship. In modern America, if you want to gain cultural power, you claim to be a victim. Christians are sadly not exempt from this temptation. Because if the church adopts the mantle of victim, we will find ourselves stuck, unable to go forward.

And yet there is no other way. If you want to change the world, we simply have to go first. The only way forward is the way of the cross. Sacrifice is necessary for the gospel to spread. If we want to love people, that love comes with a cost. If we want to love people, we have to be willing to die for them. Not just our friends, but our enemies as well.

But the Holy Spirit is at work, and he is working all things for good for those who love God. God's love has been poured out on the world, and that love is unstoppable. If Jesus had stayed in the tomb, there would be no reason to believe that love wins or that we should go first. But since the tomb is empty, it proves that love is stronger than evil and that actions done in love will be vindicated by God. The reason we go first is because God so loved the world that he sent his only son and then raised him from the dead. Be confident, then, that any actions done in love will be vindicated, regardless of how things look from your present viewpoint.

If you want to change the world, you have to go first, because love goes first. And love never fails."

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.

Know you should read the Bible, but don't know where to start? Wonder what the Bible means or how it could possibly apply to your life? Join Ed Vigneaux for an exploration of the Bible with the Disciple 1 Fast Track Bible Study! It was developed for busy people like you to learn about the Bible and develop the habit of reading and understanding the Bible!

We will start with discovering how to apply what you already know about reading to reading Scripture. We will spend 12 weeks discovering the New Testament this Spring.

Class will meet on Sundays starting January 11 from 5:00-7:00 PM upstairs in the Learning Center, room 217. Cost is \$18 for the study manual. Can't wait to see you there!

At the Crossroads: A Christian Reflection on the Rise and Fall of Great Civilizations

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That resilience came not from government or policy alone, but from citizens willing to do the demanding work of renewal, people who believed that democracy is not a spectator sport. The power of self-government lies not in institutions, but in the moral and civic health of the people themselves.

The Christian Response: Salt and Light in an Unsteady Age

For followers of Christ, the state of the world is never an excuse for despair. Scripture calls believers to be salt and light in every generation (Matthew 5:13–16 NLT).

Salt preserves what would otherwise decay. Christians, by living out truth and grace, help preserve moral clarity in times of confusion. Every act of integrity, compassion, and forgiveness slows the moral unraveling of a society and points toward the character of Christ.

Light reveals what darkness hides. When truth is blurred by politics, pride, or fear, the light of Christ exposes both sin and hope. Paul wrote that believers should "Live clean, innocent lives as children of God, shinning like bright lights in a world full of crooked and perverse people" (Philippians 2:15 NLT). The call isn't to curse the darkness, it's to illuminate it with the gospel lived out in real life.

The early church thrived not through political influence, but through consistency. While the Roman Empire crumbled, Christians fed the hungry, cared for the sick, rescued abandoned infants, and forgave their persecutors. Their quiet faithfulness changed hearts, and eventually history itself. The same call stands before us today.

Are These Signs of the End?

Many believers see parallels between today's world and the prophetic warnings of Scripture. Jesus said, "Nation will go to war with nation, and kingdom against kingdom. There will be famines and earthquakes in many parts of the world, Sin will be rampant everywhere, and the love of many will grow cold" (Matthew 24:7 & 12 NLT). Paul described a time when people would be "lovers of themselves, lovers of money, boastful, proud, unloving, unforgiving, slanderous of others, have no self-control, be cruel, betray their friends, be puffed with pride, and love pleasure rather than God" (2 Timothy 3:1–4 NLT).

It's easy to see those words reflected in modern life; wars and rumors of war, cultural confusion, and selfishness elevated as virtue. Could this mean the end is near? Possibly. But Jesus also said, "However, no one know the day or hour when these things will happen, not even the angels in heaven or the Son himself. Only the Father knows" (Matthew 24:36 NLT). The point is not prediction, it's preparation.

Whether or not we live to see the Second Coming, we are called to live ready to keep our lamps burning, our hearts watchful, and our faith active. The moral decline of the world may be part of the prophetic story, but it is also our opportunity to shine brighter than ever before.

Be Faithful Until the End

For Christians, the return of Christ is not a reason for fear, but for joy. Revelation 21:4 promises that when He comes, "He will wipe every tear from their eyes, and there will be no more death or sorrow or crying or pain. All these things are gone forever." The Second Coming is the fulfillment of every promise, the restoration of everything broken.

At the Crossroads: A Christian Reflection on the Rise and Fall of Great Civilizations

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So yes, if the end is near, we should rejoice. But our joy should move us to action, not apathy. Jesus said, "Do business till I come" (Luke 19:13 NKJV). That means we are to stay faithful in our callings; raising families, serving others, standing for truth, and spreading the gospel until the moment He returns.

Anchored in an Unsteady Age

The moral unraveling of society may be real, but it is not new. God's people have always been called to stand as witnesses amid decline. Our mission is not to mourn the end, but to prepare hearts for renewal, whether that renewal comes through revival or through Christ's return.

If the end is near, our time is short, but our impact can still be eternal. If it isn't, our mission is still unchanged: to be salt and light, and to live in such a way that others see the hope within us.

So, whether the story of our nation is nearing its twilight or merely another turning point, the response of believers is clear: *Be faithful. Be hopeful. Be ready.*



What is ALPHA?

Find more information at alphausa.org

What is Alpha and How Does It Work?

Alpha is a non-denominational evangelistic tool to help people begin or strengthen their Christian faith. It's an opportunity to explore the Christian faith in a relaxed, non-threatening way. Anyone can benefit from the Alpha course - no matter his or her background, whether they're investigating Christianity for the first time, revisiting their faith, or just want to have an honest conversation about some of life's biggest questions. Aldersgate will be starting Alpha on February 1, 2026.

What happens at Alpha?

Arrive & Connect

Connecting with others is what we were made for. All sessions start with a time to connect and build friendships, eliminating awkwardness and creating space for important conversations.

Watch a Video

You'll watch a short Alpha video exploring a big question about life and faith, like Who is Jesus? or Why do we pray? The videos are engaging and designed to spark discussion.

Conversation

You'll gather with a small group of people to discuss the video. Those who attend Alpha share that their discussions are the best part of the experience. No questions are off limits, and there's nothing you can't ask. Best of all, Alpha is free to attend.

Please scan the QR Code to sign up. Interested people can also let Jeff or the office know if they're coming. Thank you!!



MISSIONS TRIP

REGISTER NOW



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

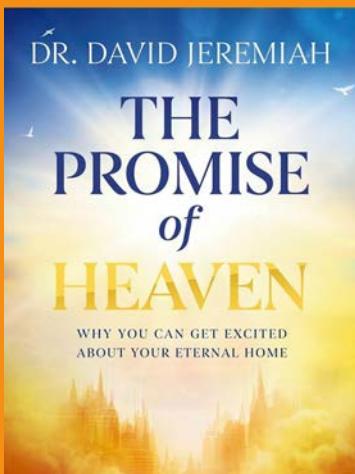
We will be going to Tulsa, OK, and leaving on March 15th and returning on the 20th. We will be working with the Praying Pelican Ministry on this trip. The out-of-pocket cost will be \$400 a person, but the group will be fundraising to help with costs. \$50 deposit is required to hold your space. Melissa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

**YOU WORK
TOO HARD
TO FEEL
THIS BROKE**

[JOIN MY FPU CLASS](#)

Financial Peace University starts Sunday, Feb. 1 at 5:00 PM

Our culture makes it so easy to feel stuck financially. Credit cards, car loans, money stress... that's not what God wants for us! That's why our church is hosting a Financial Peace University class starting on Sunday, Feb. 1, at 5:00 PM. Together over nine weeks, we'll walk through God's ways of handling money so we can experience freedom with our finances! Sign up in the app or scan the QR code.



The Promise of Heaven Study

This Bible study will start meeting Tuesday mornings at 9:30 AM on January 13. In The Promise of Heaven Study Guide, Dr. David Jeremiah will take you deeper into a biblical exploration of what heaven might actually be like and inspire you to anticipate the eternal life that awaits you.

Many of us feel an unfulfilled longing—a space within that cannot be satisfied with material possessions, experiences, or relationships. Only heaven will fulfill that longing, and the only way we can get there is through Jesus Christ.

Books are \$10.

New Sunday Morning Bible Study at 9:45 AM, January 11

In the brief time we have together, we will explore the essential aspects of the Gospel and develop some strategies for sharing more effectively our faith in the relationships God has given us. We will discuss our many understandings of the basic tenets of faith in comparison to what CS Lewis terms "Mere Christianity". This will include sharing various bible study tools and pre-conceptions about the Gospel.

The vehicle we will use to move our discussion time will be Greg Koukl's video series, "Street Smarts". Greg is the founder of the website: Stand to Reason (str.org).

As those who have seen the face of God in Christ and by His Spirit, we will seek to put that on display in our words and actions to His pleasure.

How to Share Your FAITH

SUNDAY MORNINGS
STARTING JAN. 11
9:45 AM
LC 217

[SIGN UP TODAY](#)

LED BY:
MARVIN RAYBORN



Women of Hope Monday Night Study

This Ladies' Bible study meets at 6 pm on the 2nd and 4th Mondays of the month. Beginning January 12, the study will be "Colossians Rooted in Him". It is an in-depth 6-week study that goes verse by verse through the book of Colossians.

This study is all about Jesus. It points us to who He is, teaches us to follow in His ways, and helps us to see that joy, peace, and contentment are found in Him alone. This study is about being rooted in Jesus and building a life that is all about His glory. Whether you have been studying the Bible your entire life, or this is the first time you have ever studied God's Word, we think this study will encourage your heart and point you to Jesus, who satisfies our souls. Cost for books is \$10.



Breakout Sessions

Session 1

Cultivating a Strong Marriage

Developing a Prayer Life

Bridge the Gap Between Generations at Church

Overcoming Struggles

Faith Over Fear

Caring for Your Soul

Session 2

Spiritual Parenting

How to Read Your Bible

Developing a Prayer Life

Faith in the Workplace

Worship, What is it?

Where Do I Fit In?

Session 3

Spiritual Parenting

Take Control of Your Finances

Rest and Reset - Take Care of You

Dealing with Anxiety

Spiritual Check-Up

Faith Outside the Walls of the Church

Schedule

Friday

6:30pm – Doors Open / Check-in

7pm – Main Session

9pm – End of Night One

Saturday

8:30am – Doors Open

9am – Main Session

9:30am – Breakout Session #1

10:30am – Breakout Session #2

11:30am – Women: Lunch

Men: Panel Discussion

12:10pm – Women: Panel Discussion

Men: Lunch

12:45pm – Breakout Session #3

1:45pm – Main Session

3pm – End of Conference

