



ALDERSGATE HINGE

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December

Aldersgate United Methodist Church

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- A Vital Church
- Christmas Program!
- Barrier Free Facility

MICHAEL'S MINUTES

Sweeter Than Honey

Robert Summers, in his book The Wonders of the Word of God, tells about a victim of a Kansas City explosion whose face was badly disfigured. The poor man lost his eyesight and both of his hands. Being a new Christian, one of his greatest frustrations was not being able to read the Bible. That was until he heard about a woman in England who had learned to read Braille with nothing more than her lips.

However, for this man things seemed to only go from bad to worse because when he received his own copy of the Braille Bible, he discovered that the injuries to his face had left his lips too numb to read the raised letter of his special Bible. His hopes were all but crushed until one day, when he brought the book to his face to try to read, he accidentally touched the letters on the page with his tongue. To his surprise, the raised characters were easily distinguished with his sensitive tongue and hope sprang in his heart as he thought to himself, "I can read the Bible with my tongue." To the amazement of many, at the time of Summer's book, the man had not only become fluent in reading his Bi-



ble, but he had actually read through it four times...and counting. Indeed, for this man, "God's words are sweeter than honey, honey dripping from the honey comb."

God's word is one of God's greatest gifts to us. They can teach us the way of salvation, sanctification, and satisfaction. They make us holy, humble, and honorable. To me, they are the source of protection, peace, and perseverance. Without them, we would be lost and lonely. But, I'm not the first to hold the Bible in such high regards. Charles Dickens, famous author of the *A Christmas Carol*, said "The New Testament is the best book that was or ever will be known in the world." Ronald Reagan said that all the answers to life's social and political problems are found within the pages of the Bible. No doubt, Hollywood will treat us to many renditions of the Christmas story this holiday. My prayer for you is that you'll consider reading the original account.

Because We Are Called,

We're called to be witnesses, not lawyers or judges.



MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

Wow, the last *Hinge* of this calendar year. This year certainly did go fast for me. It has been a wonderful year for me. I have been well all year and have been able to travel and enjoy gardening, with Nancy. My biggest problem is that I don't seem to have enough time.

You may have the same problem as I do. But at this time of the year, we all need to stop and think about what we have. It is wonderful to live in this great country, with all our freedoms. Terrorism is worrisome and I pray for those who are adversely affected. I also pray for those in our country and others who are struggling to make ends meet. In this past month, our church has done a little to help with that in Midland but we can only pray for the many.

This is a time of wonder and joy. The church is decorated!



The crèche is out to remind us of the birth of our Lord and Savior. We will be hearing the familiar songs and reminders of this season. I thank God that I was born a Christian and am part of this wonderful world that He created.

Look through the *Hinge* for opportunities to share in this wonderful season of the year with others at Aldersgate. Much is going on and it is time to slow down and enjoy all that God has to offer here at Aldersgate.

Nancy and I wish all of you a most Merry Christmas and Happy New Year.

Jack

WORSHIP SCHEDULE

Celebrating Abundance

Everyone longs for satisfaction in life, but it is a pursuit that often leaves us feeling empty. Having more, enjoying more, and being more will never be enough. Rather our deepest satisfaction is found in a lifestyle of gratitude for all God has done. In this "Thanksgiving" series Pastor Michael will continue to explore the power of gratitude and the biblical model for celebrating abundance.

November 29 Overflowing With Thanksgiving
Colossians 2:6-12

December 6 Radical Thankfulness
1 Thessalonians 5:16-18

December 13 Christmas Program and Musical
One service at 10:00AM



A Savior Is Born

His parents called him Jesus, the prophets called him Emmanuel, the Gospel of John called him the Word made Flesh, what do you call him? This holiday season we'll explore the meaning of the child whose birth we celebrate at Christmas. Join us as we sing your favorite carols, light candles, and reflect upon the significance of the Christ-child for our lives and world today!

December 20 Don't Miss Christmas Luke 2:1-20

December 24 Christmas Eve
Services 6:00PM and 8:00 PM
Not Another Gift Exchange
Isaiah 9:6-7

December 27 Guest Preacher One service at 10:00AM

2016

January 3 Guest preacher Two services,
contemporary at 9:00 AM and
traditional at 10:30 AM

Our Christmas Program is fast approaching...

Don't miss out on the telling of *The Christmas Story: Through the Eyes of the Friendly Beasts*. Our Christmas worship service will take place on Sunday, December 13th at 10:00 am. This is a wonderful opportunity to invite a friend or neighbor to join you. See you there!



JEFF'S JOURNAL

Luke 2:10-11¹⁰ But the angel said to them, "Do not be afraid. I bring you good news that will cause great joy for all the people." ¹¹ Today in the town of David a Savior has been born to you; he is the Messiah, the Lord.



As December is upon us we can't help but think of the birth of Jesus and what that means to each one of us. From my family and the entire Remedy youth group we wish you a very Merry CHRISTmas and a Happy New Year. May the new year bring you great Faith, Hope, Love and Health.

December for remedy is going to be busy, as always. We are planning to have our annual Spaghetti Luncheon on the 6th. The 13th of Dec. bring the annual Church Christmas Program at 10am; which a lot of the youth are participating in. Also this month we will be wrapping up the "Prepared" series and having our Red Hat (Christmas) party. And last, but not least on the 31st (New Year's Eve) we will be having a lock-in.

2016 Mission Trip Fundraising

Since The Remedy Youth Group is about to start the 2016 fundraising campaign; with our Spaghetti Luncheon on Dec. 6th immediately following 2nd service, in an effort to offset the cost of their upcoming Mission Trip, I thought I would tell you a little about it. This year we will be staying close to home and going to Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake; from June 26th through July 1st. So let me tell you a little about Camp Westminster and what we will be doing while we are there. Established in 1925, Camp Westminster on Higgins Lake is a ministry of Westminster Church of Detroit, accredited by the American Camp Association and licensed by the State of Michigan. They are a member of the Presbyterian Church Camp and Conference Association, and they offer day and overnight summer programs for children and youth, and host a variety of mission groups and guest year-round. There are many service opportunities at Camp Westminster. Groups commonly help with maintenance initiatives such as painting, staining, grounds keeping and raking. These tasks help keep Camp Westminster operational and beautiful for campers each

year. They will also partner with [Kids Against Hunger](#) and [Presbyterian Disaster Assistance](#) to provide additional service opportunities for campers and mission groups. These initiatives give individuals and families affected by hunger or disaster tangible evidence that they matter and that we are working to help them. During a Kids Against Hunger packaging event, our group will package meals for hungry families in the U.S. and abroad. Through Presbyterian Disaster Assistance and [Church World Service](#), our group will help supply disaster kits made from basic household items. Disaster kits allow them to go to the store for someone who can't and to make sure someone in the midst of disaster has the supplies they need. We will also be going out into the community to partner with local Churches and nonprofits to help those in need.

Some other things the Youth will get to enjoy are;

Swim in crystal clear Higgins Lake before dinner each day

Enjoy scrumptious meals in the Dining Hall, with the entire camp community

Toast marshmallows and make s'mores around our own campfire

Tackle the [High Ropes Course](#) or the [Lighthouse Climb](#)

Hike the forested trails, kayak and canoe, or learn the skill of archer

Worship in the outdoor chapel overlooking Higgins Lake or walk the [labyrinth](#) or [Prayer Trail](#) during evening devotions

Thank you in advance for your spiritual and financial support!

Until Next Time,

Jeff Tefft

Prov. 3: 5-6

Christmas is not as much about opening our presents as opening our hearts.

—Janice Maeditere

ADDIE'S LINE

That night there were shepherds staying in the fields nearby, guarding their flocks of sheep. Suddenly, an angel of the Lord appeared among them, and the radiance of the Lord's glory surrounded them. They were terrified, but the angel reassured them. "Don't be afraid!" he said. "I bring you good news that will bring great joy to all people. The savior – yes, the Messiah, the Lord – has been born today in Bethlehem, the city of David!"

Luke 2:8-11

In the busyness of life...I pray that you live your life expectantly...as we approach the Season of Advent and await the celebration of Christ's birth. Do you personally claim the "Good News" that Jesus Christ was born and provided the only way for you to have eternal life? How will you share the Good News during the coming days and everyday? And what person in your sphere of influence is God calling you to be more "like Christ"?

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the many who have a heart to serve and have been faithful in so many areas within Christian Education. As true followers of Jesus Christ we have the responsibility and privilege to be in ministry. Without those who have stepped forward and said "Here I am" we could not provide the various offerings that we do...and with an increasing passion that others would grow in their maturity as Christ Followers.



FROM THE
DIRECTOR OF
CHRISTIAN
EDUCATION

Looking Ahead:

Sunday, December 13th – Our D.I.G classes excluding the Nursery Care & Toddler – Kindergarten D.I.G class will not meet as we celebrate the Christmas Program during our 10:00 am worship service.

Thursday, December 24th – Nursery- Kindergarten Care will be available at each Christmas Eve Worship Service (6:00 pm and 8:00 pm.)

We are seeking two approved Leaders for each worship service. A volunteer sign-up sheet is located on the "What's Up at Aldersgate" board or you can contact Miss Addie at 708-1758 or akdmax67@gmail.com.

As always the Christian Education Area welcomes your input, questions and suggestions. Remember, that each of us has the daily choice to make Christ the center of our lives. May those you meet experience the love of Christ because they have met you. Prayers that you will experience a Christ filled CHRISTmas and a blessed new year.

In His love & mine,

Addie

"This is love: not that we loved God, but that he loved us and sent his Son as an atoning sacrifice for our sins."

1 John 4:10

HOW FAR TO CHRISTMAS?

How far is it to Christmas Day?

The journey's just as long
as taking time to listen
to a joyful angel song.

It's just as far as one can go
in doing a loving deed
that helps someone feel better
or that meets their special need.

For Christmas is a journey



that the heart makes every year.

It starts right with your family
and those you hold so dear.

It travels on to strangers
'round the world to everyone
with the message that God loves us
and that's why he's sent his Son!

—Peggy Ferrell



This Latin word for peace is frequently seen in Christmas art and decorations, reminding us that Jesus came as the Prince of Peace (Isaiah 9:6). After announcing the Savior's birth to the shepherds, the angels sang, "Glory to God in the highest, and on each peace ..." (Luke 2:14, NKJV).

THE VITAL CHURCH

What comes to mind when you think about a vital church? Do you think that Aldersgate is a vital church? Why or why not? This is a question that many churchgoers around the country are asking themselves. The adjective "vital" could be defined differently by two people. In today's world, everyone has an opinion of what they are looking for in a church. What did Jesus say about a "vital" church? Does HIS definition match your definition?

The mission of the church is referred to as the Great Commission. Hear these words of Jesus from Matthew 28: 19-20: "Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."

Go and make disciples! This is our mission, as a church, as a Christian. How are we doing that?

There was a horrific act of terrorism in Paris November 13th. By the time you read this it will be old news. The world is aching for Jesus. Our calling....our charge.....is to share the message of love to a hurting world. This is



spiritual warfare and we cannot be complacent. If we neglect God's plan, Satan wins.

Here are a few facts presented during a recent session of the Vital Church Initiative (VCI).

In 2007, 78% or approximately 178 of 227 million adults identified themselves as Christian in the US.

In 2014, 71% or approximately 173 of 245 million adults identified themselves as Christian.

In the Detroit Annual Conference UM churches there was a decline in average worship attendance from 77,699 in 2012 to 70,998 in 2013. Total decline was 6,701 or 8.6%. In 2014 the decline was another 9,588.

The good news is that resurrection is possible. We must wake up and stop this decline, together. It is possible with God as our focus. He is good.

During this Christmas season invite a friend to worship with you.

Peace & Joy,

Shelley Snyder

HOSPITALIZATION??

If you are going into the hospital, please call Julie in the Church office to let us know. We want to extend to you our love and support through prayer, cards and visits while you are recovering. No personal information will be asked for or shared. Call: 631-1151.

55 AND 3 F'S

The December meeting of our active senior's group, 55 and 3 F's will meet Monday, December 7 at Noon in Fellowship Hall for a pot luck. Our guest for this meeting will be Chelsey Rowley from Momentum Midland. Chelsey will discuss the current thinking of Momentum Midland concerning changes they foresee for Midland. It should be a very enlightening presentation.

This group is for those 55 years of age or over and/or retired from active work. We meet monthly for fun, food and fellowship. We enjoy the company of others in our church in a social atmosphere while enjoying good Meth-



Senior Adults

odist cooking. If you have not tried this group before, this would be an excellent opportunity to try us out.

Table settings, coffee, tea and ice water are furnished. All you need to do is bring a dish to pass. It is helpful in planning the meeting if you would indicate your intention to attend by signing the sign up sheet on the "What's Up at Aldersgate" bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall. Dick and Nan Skochdopole will be the hosts for this meeting.

PRAYER NEEDS

Deaths:

The family of Mary Ann Stoecker who passed away November 2, 2015.

The family of Marshall Chao who passed away on November 16, 2015



SEEN AROUND CHURCH

- Hope you all saw Bob Bauder's picture on the front page of the Midland Daily News playing the trumpet for Veteran's Day. A thank you to all who served to protect this wonderful country
- Members gathered around the Sharing Tree taking tags and bringing in brightly wrapped Christmas gifts for others in the community.
- Again this year Thanksgiving Baskets has wowed us all. All that food, all those volunteers from all over the community. And most important, those who received the food! A wonderful program at Thanksgiving. Thanks to Elaine and Dean Tobey for organizing this effort again this year. Of course to all of the volunteers from our church who helped with the program.
- The two programs mentioned above are two of our hands on local missions projects of the church. Thanks to the missions committee for organizing these efforts again this year, a big thank you also.
- Lots of pop cans coming in for the youth
- Church conference held
- Women put on the usual good soup supper for all.
- Additional church members buying personalized bulbs for the sanctuary tree.
- United Methodist Kids helping with Thanksgiving baskets
- Baptism of Breanna and Kaylee Emrick daughters of Missy and Timothy Emrick.
- Sound board training.
- Pledge service for the financial well being of the church in 2016.
- Aldersgate families enjoying Thanksgiving dinner with friends and relatives.



BARRIER FREE FACILITY

I would like to provide an update to new plans regarding church entrance automation and solicit comments and recommendations on this important project that is still in the planning stages.



The Board of Trustees is beginning the process of accepting recommendations and construction bids from contractors specializing in outside entrance door automation. The Church Council has graciously committed sufficient financial resources to implement a long needed facility accommodation for those who are challenged by barriers such as manually operated exterior doors. Council could not have allocated financial resources for this project without the generous and thoughtful financial stewardship of our congregation. At this stage, we have asked three door automation businesses to submit bids to automate the Narthex main entrance doors with traditional blue disabled push plates to activate the door opener.

In addition to the door opening system, the Trustees have asked for proposals to install an automated door locking and unlocking system for the main entrance and the two Sunday School double door entrances. Behind the scenes, for many years, a large group of congregation volunteers have served as church lock-up personnel whose duties included making sure all exterior doors were properly secured and locked. The Trustees believe an automated locking system would increase security, allowing these volunteers to help in other areas around the church. Also, an automated locking system would eliminate the hassle and insecurity of traditional brass keys cutting and distribution, since the new system would use key fobs or plastic key cards instead. Finally, a digital locking system would allow us to better track those entering the church after hours, such as outside groups, the occasional contractor, and temporary facility users (meetings, weddings, etc.).

I hope this explains our direction and plans. If you would like to know more or comment, please contact Greg Eagle or one of the other trustees.

Greg Eagle, Chairman Board of Trustees

Expectancy is the atmosphere for miracles.

—Edwin Louis Cole