



# ALDRERSGATE HINGE

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**Aldersgate  
United  
Methodist  
Church**

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# Michael's Minutes

## Dead Fish

If you know me at all, you know I'm not a huge fan of fishing. Once, at the repetitive request of a very good friend, I agreed to go ice fishing, and it was an outing that mixed something I don't enjoy with being cold. The experience almost persuaded me to believe in purgatory.

However, regardless of my opinion about the sport of fishing, there is a lot we can learn about our faith from this outdoor activity. For example, in his book *Renovate or Die*, Bob Farr makes the following poignant statement: "Only dead fish go with the flow all the time." He is right. When you're drifting, you're going down stream, and when you're coasting, you're going down hill.

However, we are compelled by the resurrection power of Jesus to not simply be swept along by the current of our culture, but to live as vital disciples of Jesus Christ with passion, focus, and persistence. So how do we become a vital disciple? Let me offer a couple thoughts.

1. Clarify Your Values. It has been said that unclear values lead to confusion, conflicting values lead to tension, false values lead to deception, and wrong values lead



to dysfunction. Do you know what you value? The Bible tells us the importance of clarifying our values when it says, "we will no longer be like children, forever changing our minds about what we believe because someone has told us some-

thing different or because someone has cleverly lied to us and made the lie sound like the truth." Ephesians 4:14 (NLT) Clear values keep us on track to vitality.

2. Admit Your Authority. Simply put, who is in charge of your life? Who has final Veto-Power on your beliefs and decisions? Most people appeal to one of three sources: Self, the World, or God. Understanding your highest authority will help you determine every other decision in your life.

The Bible tells us that Jesus came that we might have life. As you begin this New Year, I urge you to clarify your values and admit your authority so that you might have life and not simply go with the flow like a dead fish.

Because We Are Called,

*Michael T.*

## A GREAT HEART

Great beauty, great strength and great riches are really and truly of no great use; a right heart exceeds all.  
—Benjamin Franklin

## MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

Winter has come and with it travels by the editor. The next two issues including this one of the *Hinge* will be two-month issues. Much is happening at Aldersgate. You need to read the article on the Vital Church. This is Aldersgate moving forward. Then there is all the vegetation removal at the rear of the church. There is an important article about that activity and what may be possible in the future.

Of course there are the regular articles by our staff and planned activities by various groups in the church. There are many opportunities for you, as members, to become involved in the activities of our church.

It is good to have a vital church that we can all be part of.



I think about what has happened over the past several months. Miracles have occurred both spoken and unspoken. Listening in church to our prayer time in the service gives us an opportunity to both hear what is happening to others but also share how God is active in our lives. It is also an important time to ask others to pray for us. Pastor Michael often talks about how wonderful our church is. I hope that all of you agree. Being an active member of the church is an important part of living this good life that God has provided.

*Jack*

## WORSHIP SCHEDULE

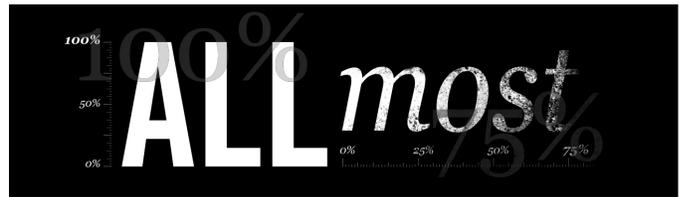


You know about the iPod, iPad, iPhone and iTunes, but have you ever considered what iValue? In this thought provoking new series, Pastor Michael T. will explore how we make deci-

sion by probing our secret values. Whether you are a techie or technically challenged, a curious guest or a long time member, this teaching series will help you clarify your values.

January 10,	Ecclesiastes 10:10	iValue
	"Knowing What Really Matters"	
January 17,	1 Samuel 17:1-7	iValue
	"Forward in the Face of Critics"	
January 24,	John 11:1-7	iValue
	"The Power of Good Timing"	
January 31,	Special Combined Worship Service	
	One Service at 10:AM then a potluck	
	Psalms 139:13-16	iValue
	"Playing To Your Strengths"	

Aldersgate has embarked on the exciting journey called The Vital Church Initiative (VCI), a holistic process of renewal and health. This is so important we don't want anyone left in the dark. Plan to join us for the special worship service and pot luck meal as we explore what it means to be a Vital Church.



It seems that we get so comfortable with "almost". We talk about being "almost" on time, or "almost" eating right, but what would happen if our surgeon "almost" graduated from medical school or a pilot "almost" passed his flight examination? In this new teaching series, Pastor Michael T. will go straight to the heart of what has been holding you back from experiencing the abundant life of Christ by asking the question: Does Jesus have ALL of you or ALLmost?

February 7,	Romans 12:1-8	ALLmost:
	You've Got To Be Connected!	
February 14,	YOUTH SUNDAY	
February 21,	Ephesians 3:14-21	ALLmost:
	How to Live Spiritual Strong	
February 28,	1 Corinthians 6:12-20	ALLmost:
	Your Body Matters!	
March 6,	Luke 16:1-15	ALLmost:
	It's More Than Just Money	

## Addie's Line

*"No eye has seen, no ear has heard, no mind has conceived what God has prepared for those who love him." 1 Corinthians 2:9 NIV*



We have celebrated Christmas – Christ's arrival. But as followers of the Lord Jesus Christ we know the story is still unfolding. As individuals and as a church, we have the opportunity and privilege of being a part of this continuing story. How is God calling you? Do not let your eyes and ears be focused on the message the world shares or sometimes screams at us but instead focus on what God's Word says to all who will partake. Be still and know that I am God (Psalm 46:10). He is Sovereign and over all things...including His right and perfect plan. Just as the apostle Paul wrote to the church at Corinth...we can't imagine what God has planned. Why? Because He is God and we are not. We can trust Him because He is trustworthy. All that He does is done in Love because God is Love. Do you trust Him with the small stuff or in the overwhelming moments of life? Do you live daily with the understanding of the magnitude in which He loves you... enough to die for YOU? This should move us to a life lived with expectancy and urgency...to share with others what Christ has done for you & what He offers to all who will receive. If you are reading this and do not know Christ in this way, please talk to a Christian friend or someone on our ministry staff.

As we look forward to 2016 we have wonderful program-

ming opportunities for those from nursery to adult which includes 9:00 am Nursery Care & Toddler/ Preschool D.I.G (Deeper in God), Children's D.I.G (Kindergarten – 5<sup>th</sup>) and 10:30 am Children's D.I.G (1<sup>st</sup> – 5<sup>th</sup>), Nursery-Kindergarten Care, Middle High D.I.G, High School D.I.G and Adult D.I.G. Additionally we have our upcoming church-wide Lenten study beginning in February and Vacation Bible School during the week of June 20th-24th.

If you have feedback, a particular study or theme within Christian Education that you would like offered or suggestions for ways we can improve, please don't hesitate to contact me at 708-1758 or akdmax67@gmail.com.

I would like to thank each of you who have blessed the Christian Education Area in 2015 - for the times you stepped forward and assisted in the classroom, taught a D.I.G class, participated in a study, worked on props or cooked a meal for VBS, supported UMKids through the No-Electronics A-thon, supplied snacks for the High School D.I.G class and the list goes on. To my church family, I pray for all God's blessings for a safe, happy & healthy 2016.

Love in Christ,

*Addie*

1 Peter 3:15

## Jeff's Journal

1 Peter 4:10 New Living Translation (NLT)

*<sup>10</sup> God has given each of you a gift from his great variety of spiritual gifts. Use them well to serve one another.*

Happy New Year! On January 1, 2016 I celebrate one year as the youth director; and I could not be happier! I really have enjoyed this last year. As 1 Peter 4:10 tells us God has given us all spiritual gifts and we are to use them serve one another. It has really amazed me that once I started doing this how my faith has grown exponentially.

So my challenge to all of you is to attend the 101, 201, 301, and 401 classes Pastor Michael is leading and The Holy Spirit is teaching. Hopefully you will discover, if you



haven't already, what your spiritual gifts may be so you can put them into action. Trust me you won't regret it.

I think January is going to slow down a little bit for the remedy youth group. And that's okay. We've been very busy. We'll continue meeting on Sun. evenings for Bible study, fellowship, and worship. At the end of the month we will be going on our annual ski trip to Nubs Nob and staying the night at Harbor Springs UMC.

Until next time,

*Jeff Tefft*

1 Peter 4:10

## Celebrating Great Commitment!

As a tribute to his hard work and dedication, Kevin White earned Boy Scouting's highest rank of Eagle Scout and was recognized at a Court of Honor ceremony held at Whiting Forest on Sunday, November 29.

Along with Kevin, the special ceremony honored fellow Eagle Scout recipients Trent Sloggett and Chris Ludington.

Kevin's parents, Doug and Diane White, along with his scoutmaster and mentor were honored for their tireless contribution to Kevin's success.

The Scout Oath states: "On my honor I will do my best to do my duty to God and my country and to obey the



Scout Law; To help other people at all times; To keep myself physically strong, mentally awake, and morally straight."

Pastor Michael T. and Youth Director Jeff Tefft contributed to the special service by offering the opening invocation and remarks of gratitude for the Eagle Scout projects completed by each of the fine young men honored in the ceremony.

As a congregation, we celebrate Kevin for his commitment and pray God's blessing on his future endeavors.

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## VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

As I write this article...Christmas Day is nine days away. For many the idea of any discussion around Vacation Bible School seems a tad early. Yet thoughts and prayerful consideration have been given for the 2016 VBS selection. So mark your calendars to join us for ***Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace*** the week of June 20<sup>th</sup> - 24<sup>th</sup> from 5:45 pm – 8:30 pm. This is a wonderful ministry that takes a tremendous number of people to get it organized! Therefore, I encourage you to prayerfully consider if God is calling you to be a part of this opportunity. Who is God asking you to invite even now? Schedules get full...so don't miss out.

This year we will experience how Joseph became part of God's story. Throughout the week we will see how God enabled Joseph to interpret Pharaoh's dreams, how Pharaoh put Joseph in charge and that Joseph was able to lead Egypt through a great famine. We will also see how Joseph forgave his brothers and settled his family in Egypt. During our time together we will also see that God is a giver...of hope, of special abilities, wisdom, forgiveness & a family.



From Opening to Closing and everything in between, we will be transported to ancient Egypt. We will gather and travel as small "families" where we will meet Bible-times heroes, visit the Egyptian Marketplace and spend time exploring the unique culture of Joseph's world. We will visit with Joseph and attend games at the Pyramid Playground.

A light supper will be served beginning at 5:45 pm and an adult class is in the plans. This gathering provides opportunities from toddler – adult. Beginning in mid-January the VBS Servant Roster will be located on the "What's Up" board outside of fellowship hall. If you have a smile and a willingness to show Christ's love to children of all ages, we have a place for you. Call if you have any questions or would like to serve in some capacity.

Serving Together,

*Addie*

"For I know the plans I have for you," declares the LORD, "plans to prosper you and not to harm you, plans to give you hope and a future." Jeremiah 29:11

Be ye fishers of men. You catch 'em—He'll clean 'em.

## VEGETATION REMOVAL

I would like to update you on activities involving the southern property area behind the church. The land parcel owned by Aldersgate occupies about 7 acres of land and has a 610 ft. southern boundary (over two football fields long), backing up to Eastlawn Arms Apartments. With our southern “natural area” in place we have been an invisible neighbor partially surrounded by trees, brush and overgrown vegetation.

In the past, this area has been allowed to grow up in a “wild condition.” I understand it was used as a brush dumping spot for many years when the city would not collect tree/brush debris from non-profit properties. Periodically when dead or badly leaning trees posed an immediate hazard, they were dropped in place and allowed to decompose at that site. In addition, growth of brush, vines, weeds and invasive grasses have occurred in this place. Along with this type of vegetation comes the appearance of poison ivy, thorns and a great breeding location for mosquitoes and other invasive species. This area is located within 150 feet of our children’s playground area and the volleyball court. In addition, a number of discarded empty bottles and cans from alcoholic beverages have been found and broken glass has already been removed from this entire area.

During summer clean-up of the area, a trail was cleared to encourage apartment residents to visit our Church. A sign has been established at our southern border to encourage more visits to our church and playground area. It is my belief that our southern border area can better serve the Outreach Mission goals of our church community by being something other than a “natural area”. A well maintained space of open grass, and the absence of overgrown brush and deadfall debris, better portrays the welcoming arms of Aldersgate.

While the entire 610 feet of our southern border does not require cleaning and clearing, at least half of this area would benefit our church mission. Many of the mature, healthy and non-deformed trees along the north side of our “natural area” will be left in place.

Potential future uses for this space include:

1. A New Lawn Maintenance Shed---Jackie’s current shed is very old and greatly undersized. She has yard equipment stored in the church furnace rooms



and the current shed requires her to dismantle equipment to store them.

2. A covered picnic area of moderate size could be located next to an equipment shed and provide meeting/picnic space for our youth group, church attendees and neighbors during the warm summer months.
3. Community Gardens- this area could be utilized for establishment of community gardens which may be of interest to current attendees of Aldersgate as well as some of the adjacent neighbors.
4. This area could be further utilized for placement of a Solar Panel Array (either free standing or on the roof of the gazebo/equipment shed.) These panels could further enhance the Aldersgate Image as a modern church and help to further reduce our electrical utility bills.
5. As the cost of Geo-Thermal HVAC systems keeps coming down and our current heating and air-conditioning system moves closer to needing replacement, this area could serve as an ideal location for the required Ground Loop System.

We have an ongoing problem with leaves collecting on the flat roof and plugging the gutters. This requires individuals going up on the roof several times during the fall to clean them out. We have two parking lot light poles, whose illumination is compromised with trees in close proximity, especially in the summer. We also have a very large tree branch hanging approximately 20 feet over the back of the church. We could consider removal of the trees that might attain a height of greater than 20 feet that are within 50 feet of the building. A mature tree outside the office entrance has caused the sidewalk to heave. This has become a major issue for our staff and members. Therefore, these trees should be replaced by shrubs or dwarf trees.

While I have recently joined the group of Trustees, I have not had an opportunity to run this paper by them for their review. It represents one person’s thoughts on our property and how to best utilize our land resources for Christ.

Please let the Trustees or me know your thoughts on these issues.

Respectfully yours,

*Douglas R. Jackson, M.D.*

## THE VITAL CHURCH

What comes to your mind when you think about a vital church? See the board, on the wall, just outside the sanctuary and please add your comments.

The mission of our church, as stated in THE BIBLE, 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.”

How are we, the Methodist church in general, and Aldersgate in particular, making disciples in a transforming way that changes the lives of those we come in contact with? How about changing the lives of those you love? How are you, personally, carrying out that mission?

Whether church attendance is up or down, MANY congregations are aging. Why is that? Are we missing something? We sure are. We seem to be missing a generation. It is not about us, it is about those that do not yet know HIM. We are Jesus followers. We are to GO and share the news and make MORE Jesus followers. Sounds simple. If we do not do that, who will? (Sounds like the lyric of a great song!)



God is working in, around and at Aldersgate. God has a plan. He is moving. We need to figure out how to jump on God's plan. You will never walk on water if you do not get out of the boat. Can you even imagine walking on water?

The VCI (Vital Church Initiative) team recently read *RENOVATE OR DIE*, written by Bob Farr. This book will open your eyes. As a church we must understand where we are now and where GOD is calling us. We must understand what is relevant in the community and the world. We must understand that we, as a church, cannot be everything to everyone. We serve a risen Savior and He is our King and Fortress.

Let's talk more about where God is calling Aldersgate and start to make some plans to get there.

VCI (VITAL CHURCH INITIATIVE) Introduction

Sunday, January 31, 2016

One Service, 10:00 AM

Potluck to follow. Bring your ideas and your questions.

Peach & Joy,

*Shelley Snyder*

## RIGHT NOW MEDIA...CHECK IT OUT!

We have been called as followers of Jesus Christ to “Go and make disciples of all nations...” Our hope is that through the various offerings at Aldersgate, we are equipping people to grow in their understanding of God and for believers to grow as disciples of the Lord Jesus Christ.

One way we are equipping individuals, families, small groups, the youth group and church leaders is through our subscription to Right Now Media. **Right Now Media allows everyone in our church to have FREE access to a video library of over 10,000 Bible studies.** Right Now Media has been described as the Netflix of Christian Bible Study. The video library covers many areas of interest including: personal devotion, marriage, parenting, finance and small group studies. These resources are from over 150 leading Christian publishers & ministries. There is also a Kids area that accesses an enormous library of both



entertaining and educational Bible based content options.

It is a simple process and takes just a few minutes to sign-up for Right Now Media. You can watch the content from your TV, desktop, laptop, Roku, iPhone and iPad app. *So what are you waiting for?*

Ask yourself... What are you doing to grow into the mature followers of Christ that we are called to be? You can pick what time works best to tune into Right Now Media...for some it might be 5:00 am for others midnight. Enjoy your personal devotion or invite others to journey through a Bible study with you. The options are numerous.

If you have questions, need further information, assistance in getting signed up or would like suggestions on what study to select...please contact Julie MacLauchlan at 631-1151 or [admin@aumcmidland.org](mailto:admin@aumcmidland.org).

## YOUR NEW BOARD OF TRUSTEES

A new slate of officers has been elected by the Aldersgate Board of Trustees at their recent meeting. The following board members were placed in board leadership positions:

- Greg Eagle, Chair
- Dick Boyer, Vice-Chair
- Jeri Smith, Secretary
- Larry Leach, Treasurer



For the first time in a while, the Board of Trustees is fully staffed. The other members are Scott Tefft, Sharon Clow, Al Klashak, and Doug Jackson. Please thank them for their dedicated service to the church.

## ADDRESS CHANGES

Greg Eagle welcomes new 2016 members Shelly Brewster, Duane Brooks, Dave Licht, and Dick Boyer to the board. A long term serving member, Larry McCoy is departing the board and will be missed greatly. Larry served many years and served as chairperson. His passion, hard work, constant presence, and leadership will be missed.

Julie & Mike Jackson (Bella)  
 P.O. Box 3441  
 West Wendover, NV 89883

Elaine Wood  
 865 Creekridge Drive  
 Holland MI 49423 (989-400-9803)



## 55 AND 3F'S

The senior's group will be meeting in both January and February. The January meeting will be Monday January 11 at noon in Fellowship Hall. Our guest will be Beth Sorenson Prince, director of the Family and Children Services. She will tell us about a camp they have for children plus bring us up to date on the activities of the Family and Children Services in general. Jim and Alice Morgan will be hosts for this meeting.

The February meeting will be Monday February 15 at Noon in Fellowship Hall. Our guest will be Sharon Mortensen, director of the Midland Area Community Foundation. She will update us on the latest activities of the Foundation. Dick and Barb Boyer are the host for this meeting.



Both meetings will be a potluck so bring a dish to pass and be prepared for good company and an interesting program with others from Aldersgate. If you have not joined us for a luncheon, you need to consider it. It is a social activity in a church atmosphere and the food is always good.

Table settings, tea, coffee, and ice water are furnished along with some bread.

In order to properly plan for the meeting, we would appreciate you indicating your intention to attend by signing the sign up sheet on the "What's Up at Aldersgate" bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall. If you have any questions ask the host or Jack or Nancy Higgins.

## A GOOD START



He who fritters away the early morning, its opportunity and freshness, in other pursuits than seeking God will make poor headway seeking him the rest of the day. If God is not first in our thoughts and efforts in the morning, he will be in the last place the remainder of the day.

—E.M. Bounds

## PRAYER NEEDS

### Get Well Wishes & Prayers:

### Hospitalizations:

Barb Boyer – MidMichigan Health– 12/7/15  
FaithAnne Sawicki – Covenant Hospital – 12/7/15  
Randy Hoyle – A Detroit Hospital – 12/9/15  
Tom Birdsall – MidMichigan Health – 12/14/15  
Melissa Bellenger – MidMichigan Health 12/17/15  
Barb Boyer - Midland & Covenant - 12/31/15  
May the God who “heals all our diseases,” grant healing to these friends.

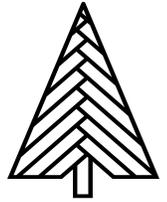


### Hospitalization??

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

## SHARING TREE

Members of Aldersgate opened their hearts and wallets and donated 168 gifts to the Sharing Tree Project. On Saturday December 5 Sam Yoder, Jeff and Scott Tefft helped us move gifts from storage and on Sunday Marge Klashak and Larry Leach helped move gifts from the tree to the prep room. Then, Alice Morgan, Rachael McKay, and Matthew Birdsall helped prepare the gifts for delivery on Monday. On Monday Larry Leach and Doug Jackson moved gifts from Aldersgate to Blessed Sacrament and Jan Baumgras came to help but was not needed. Thanks to all who helped with this project and especially to anyone whose name we inadvertently left off. This is one of our local mission outreach projects of Aldersgate.



Sharing Tree

*Jack and Nancy Higgins*, Sharing Tree Coordinator

## SEEKING THE BEST

I believe that appreciation is a holy thing — that when we look for what’s best in a person we happen to be with at the moment, we’re doing what God does all the time. So in loving and appreciating our neighbor, we’re participating in something sacred.

—Fred Rogers

## SEEN AROUND CHURCH

- Elaine Tobey made the Midland Daily News as did quite a few others helping pack Thanksgiving Baskets. (Oh! and Dean was mentioned as the co-coordinator) Great job you two. We are very proud of you.
- By the way, Dean accepted a check for Thanksgiving Baskets from Kiwassee Kiwanis at a recent meeting.
- We had a wonderful Christmas program under the direction of David Heise with Addie Maxwell’s coordination of the actors. The Biblical costumes added to the whole experience. Thanks to all who worked on this wonderful program which was presented to a full church.
- Sharing tree gifts being delivered to Blessed Sacrament Parish Hall.
- “Hanging of the Greens.” The church looks beautiful for the Christmas season.
- Confirmation candidates meeting with Pastor Michael.



- Women of the church having a cookie exchange and providing cookies for the visitation ministry.
- Youth spaghetti dinner after church. The youth did an excellent job serving us all and the spaghetti was very good.
- Our thanks to those who faithfully lock up the church each day. We are grateful.
- The flyer on our Christmas Eve service sent to many homes in our community.

## SHELL



A scallop shell, pointing downward with three drops of water falling from it, is often used to symbolize baptism and the washing away of sin. The three water droplets stand for the Trinity: Father, Son, Holy Spirit.