



ALDERSGATE HINGE

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**Aldersgate
United
Methodist
Church**

Michael's Minutes

Will You Do Your Part?

When Jesus saw the crowds, harassed and helpless, like sheep without a shepherd, he said to his disciples, "The harvest is plentiful but the workers are few. Ask the Lord of the harvest, therefore, to send out workers into the harvest field." With Easter quickly approaching, I am reminded that there will be many people gathering at our church this holiday. Like the disciples, let's open our eyes and look. The harvest is plentiful, and we are God's instruments for communicating grace and mercy to the many who will gather with us.



trust of sharing His love with our guests this Easter. In a real way, we become tangible representatives of God's redemptive love.

Ensure that our celebration is about the Lamb! Easter is not

about pretty dresses, chocolate candies, chasing down "Peter Cotton Tail", or finding brightly colored eggs; it is about the lamb who was slain to take away our sins and the sins of the world. May we be reminded that Jesus, the Lamb of God, came to offer hope to the helpless, life to the dead, and restoration for the broken. That is worth celebrating!

So how can we do our part this Easter?

Ensure that this is a place filled with love! Beyond any program, music ministry, or creative gimmick, the single greatest impact on guests is experiencing the presence of God through the love of the church. Honestly, it does us no good to tell people that God loves them, if they do not feel love from us. Through everything from a smile in the parking lot, a warm handshake in the narthex, and friendly conversation, God has given us the sacred

This Easter, it is my prayer that our church will have eyes to see the harvest field in front of us. May God give us the courage to invite our unchurched family and friends to one of our Easter services, and may the love of God that resides in your heart, give rise to a deep celebration of the good news of Jesus' resurrection.

Because We Are Called,

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- Vital Church Initiative
- VBS
- Church Electrical Usage
- Financial 2015
- UMK Activities
- Bob Farr—Special Service.
- Nursery Caregiver



HEAVENLY SHOWERS

All God's blessings go together, like links in a golden chain. If he gives converting grace, he will also give comforting grace. He will send "showers of blessing." Look up today, O parched plant, and open thy leaves and flowers for a heavenly watering.

—Charles H. Spurgeon

MUSINGS OF THE EDITOR

This issue of the *Hinge* is another double issue due to the editor's travels. Many activities are going on in our church.

Of course first and most important, this is the season of Lent culminating in Easter Sunday on March 27, a bit early this year.

On page 4, you will find information on the visit of Bob Farr and a special service on April 17, So be sure to see the article on this visit and mark your calendar for the one service followed by a potluck afterward.

Shelly Snyder has two article on the VCI initiative which you will want to review.

Doug Jackson and the trustees have more information on our energy saving activities.



Bruce Menning and the Finance Committee have important information on how our finances worked out last year. The news is good.

Addie Maxwell has four articles of interest scattered throughout this issue all of which are important to various members. Jeff Tefft also tells us about "Remedy", our youth group.

And as usual, there is information on our 55 and 3F's, our active senior's group.

Wow, lots going on and I did not even touch on our Lenten study groups and pictorial pictures, both of which will be ongoing for the next month. God is at work in our church and you should make sure you are part of the activity.

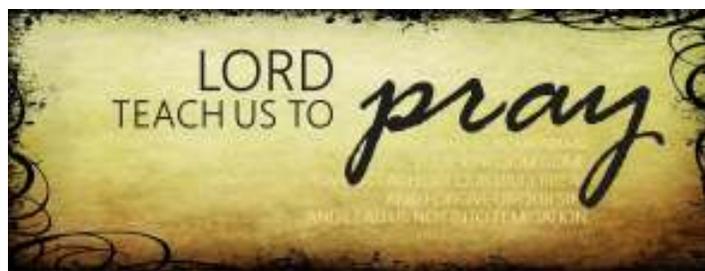
Jack

WORSHIP



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?

| | |
|-----------|--|
| March 6, | Acts 2:42-47 ALLmost: More Than A Pot-Luck Dinner |
| March 13, | Matthew 4:18-22 ALLmost: Follow The Leader |
| March 20, | Matthew 6:5-15 ALLmost: Lord, Teach Us To Pray |
| March 27, | Luke 24:36-49 ALLmost: Why You Need A Church Family |
| April 3 | Guest Speaker: Rev. Len Clevenger |



(Lord Teach Us to Pray: LTUTP)

Every single phrase of The Lord's Prayer connects us to one of God's answers to the things that stress us most. In this foundational series, Pastor Michael will walk us through the Lord's prayer and what it means to be spiritually connected to God and one another.

| | |
|----------|---|
| April 10 | Revelation 3:14-22 LTUTP: Connecting With God |
| April 17 | (Combined Service 10am) Rev. Bob Farr |
| April 24 | Proverbs 3:5-6 LTUTP: The Serenity Of Surrender |
| May 1 | Ephesians 2:1-10 LTUTP: The Freedom of Forgiveness |
| May 8 | Romans 11:33-36 LTUTP: Love Wins |

JEFF'S JOURNAL

1 John 4:10 NIRV *Here is what love is. It is not that we loved God. It is that he loved us and sent his Son to give his life to pay for our sins.*

On behalf of the Remedy Youth group, thank you for your support in this year's sub sale.

Not only were we able to donate 100 subs to the homeless, with your help, we were also able to put \$800 in our equity account for this year's Mission Trip! Your support is a blessing.

With the season of Lent upon us and Easter approaching, I truly hope you had a chance to participate in this year's Lenten small group study. During our Lenten study time, Remedy had many meaningful conversations and discussions. Remedy has a couple more fundraisers scheduled



for this spring. This year's annual Lasagna luncheon is on March 13th from 11:00-1:00. (Take out available) On April 24th we will also be holding our annual Cupcake sale, between services. Hope to see you there!

Thanks again for all your love, prayers, and contributions.

Until next time,
Jeff Tefft

1 Peter 4:10 (NLV)
¹⁰ *God has given each of you a gift.*

UMK



UMK is our Christian Fellowship group for those in 3rd – 5th grade that meets monthly. Through various activities, sharing and discussion, we learn what it means to be a follower of Jesus Christ.

Our year is moving along quickly and what a blessing to spend time with this amazing group of young children. As I am writing this article...the UMKids are in the midst of their pledge drive for our annual **No-Electronics-A-Thon**. They selected the following missions: World Vision/Child Survival Kits & Samaritan's Purse/The Greatest Journey (Discipling Program for children all over the world) to support through the pledges they collect. They will forego all entertainment electronics the week of March 6th...as they sacrifice for the benefit of others and for His Kingdom purpose.

We will have our next UMK gathering on March 20th... Movie Night. The UMKids will make the final movie selection from an assortment of movies selected by Addie. This is a great opportunity to invite a friend or two...the more the merrier. Snacks will be provided. Please let us know if you have any food allergies.

2015-2016 Schedule

March 20 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Movie Night

*April 22-23 5:30 pm – 9:00 am Friday – Saturday (5:45 pm – 9:30 am)
UMK Church Lock-in/Mission

May 15 6:00 pm – 8:00 pm Bowling @ Northern Lanes

Please contact Miss Addie if you have any questions or suggestions regarding UMK. We look forward to seeing everyone at our next gathering.

Blessings,

Addie Maxwell

Sharon Morris

989-708-1758/akdmax67@gmail.com

*Please note the new dates for Lock-in...disregard any earlier versions of the UMK Calendar.

"They devoted themselves to the apostles' teaching and to the fellowship, to the breaking of bread and to prayer."

Acts 2:42

SPECIAL SERVICE

Sunday, April 17 - 10am Combined Worship Service
Pot Luck Luncheon Immediately Following the worship service.

Guest Speaker: Bob Farr

Bob Farr is the Director of the Center for Congregational Excellence for the Missouri Annual Conference of the United Methodist Church



NURSERY CAREGIVER

Our Aldersgate church nursery program is now seeking two reliable and experienced nursery caregivers, who love working with young children. The paid positions require availability Sunday mornings from 8:00 am until 12:00 pm (possibly a little longer if parents are late picking up) and occasional special events. Candidates must be 18 years of age or older and agree to, and pass, a background check. Candidates must be willing to abide by the AUMC Protection Policy for Minors & Vulnerable Adults and classroom expectations. If you or someone you know has a desire to serve Christ by serving our church families, please contact Addie Maxwell at akdmax67@gmail.com for further details.



EASTER POSSIBILITIES

The message of Easter is not only that Christ is risen, not only that suffering is not the last word, not only that God gives new life, but this: Nothing is impossible with God.

—The Rev. James Martin, S.J.

Nails didn't hold God to a cross. Love did. The sinless one took on the face of a sinner so that we sinners could take on the face of a saint!

—Max Lucado

THE VITAL CHURCH

How do you approach conflict? A decision needs to be made and you are part of the team charged with making it. You and another church member, also on the team, strongly disagree. What do you do? Do you criticize, become defensive, want instant solutions, threaten resignation and/or become negative? Do you see the part you play in the problem? Or, do you become thoughtful, reflective, acting on principle rather than instinct, do you stand back, stand down, listen and observe? Do you stay calm in the heat of the anxious situation? Are you aggressive or passive?



Recently the Vital Church Initiative (VCI) team, in preparation for the monthly training session, read CONGREGATIONAL LEADERSHIP IN ANXIOUS TIMES by Peter Steinke. Peter explores how a leader's "presence" can have a calming influence on reactive behavior. Rather than reacting to the reactivity of other, leaders with self-composure and self-awareness elicit a more thoughtful response.

Are we all on the same team? Yes! We are. We are on God's team.

Be angry but do not sin (Eph. 4:26)

In thinking be mature (1 Cor. 14:20)

Have no anxiety about anything (Ph. 4:6)

Steinke's book outlines five recurring issues of troubled congregations.

1. High anxiety
2. Systemic impasse that polarized parties
3. Lack of clear sense of mission
4. Poor boundaries such as gossip, hearsay, intimidation, misuse of funds, voting irregularity, not confronting questionable behavior
5. Avoidance of problems

We want to steer clear of these issues at Aldersgate. Conflict is inevitable and can lead to good things. Anxious times often result in learning. Understanding how you react when the storm rages will help you manage anxious times. Members of the VCI team each completed an inventory of their personal conflict style. If you would like more information contact a VCI team member.

Peace & Joy,

Shelley Snyder

INTENTIONAL, UNINTENTIONAL, OR ACCIDENTAL?

The quest toward a more vital church requires discerning God's plan for Aldersgate. Everything we do must fit with God's plan and direction. After all, it is not about us. It is all about the Kingdom of God. We must discern God's true plan, not merely what we individually desire.

According to George Bullard, (GBullard@TheColumbiaPartnership.org and/or www.TheColumbiaPartnership.org) a "congregation is more likely to exist ten years from now if it takes intentional actions focused on its current understanding of its spiritual strategic direction. It is marginal or uncertain in its future vitality and vibrancy if its actions are good but unintentional regarding its direction. It is less likely to exist if its actions are accidental and clearly without focus."

"Faithful, effective, and innovative congregations are highly intentional in the actions they take regarding programs, ministries, and activities. The sharpest congregations based on high expectations of members, an empowering shared vision, and clear core values are intentional in their actions so their spiritual strategic direction might become a reality."

"Being intentional based on the spiritual strategic direction of the congregation empowers them to say "yes" to actions that align with that direction, and "no" to actions that do not. While they bless people who feel called to engage in ministry outside the focus of the congregation, they are also tenacious to focus congregational resources—as ex-



clusively as possible—on programs, ministries, and actions that empower their deeply owned sense of direction."

"Other congregations engage in good actions regarding programs, ministries, and activities. Many of these actions are high quality in nature and effectively serve people. However, they are not focused on the spiritual strategic direction of the congregation and thus can result in a high quality congregation that is not making progress in fulfilling its vision. Their actions are often focused on the present; doing well today for immediate gratification."

"Many congregations can even be doing some innovative things. They are definitely faithful to their core ideology involving mission, purpose, values, and vision. At the same time they do not understand that their programs, ministries, and activities need to undergird this core ideology. A disconnect exists between believing and doing."

Too many congregations are accidental in their actions. They are engaging in activities that are faithful to the core discipline or base program design of their denominational family, but little else. Their actions are short-term and near-sighted. Their actions fail to have long-term impact on the spiritual strategic journey."

Let's be intentional and laser focused at Aldersgate!

Peace & Joy,

Shelley Snyder

PRAYER NEEDS

Get Well Wishes & Prayers:

Hospitalizations:

Lael Nussbaum – St. Mary's – 1/12/16

Don Hammond – MidMichigan– 1/18/16



Chris Laitner – MidMichigan – 1/18/16

Sue Pauling – MidMichigan – 2/5/16

Leo Clow – Florida – 2/17/16

Jack Higgins—Mt. Pleasant McLaren 2/25/16

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.

ALDRSGATE UNITED METHODIST CHURCH-ELECTRICAL CONSERVATION

Utility unit costs (electrical and natural gas) for our church have gone up over 50% since year 2000, with an additional 7% electrical rate increase request before the Michigan Public Service Commission at this time.



1. 2013= (\$7,625 elec + \$3,777 nat gas) = \$11,402/20,000 ft²= \$0.57 /sq ft/yr
2. 2014= (\$6,482 elec + \$3,863 nat gas)= \$10,345/20,000 ft²= \$0.52/ sq ft/yr
3. 2015= (\$4,333 elec + \$4,991 nat gas) = \$9,324/20,000 ft²= \$0.47/sq ft/yr

Aldersgate in 2013 used 57,073 kWh of electricity (156.4 kWh/Day) at a cost of \$7,625 (\$20.87/Day). In autumn of 2014 the trustees upgraded to energy efficient LED bulbs in the parking lot, sanctuary, office, lobby, lounge, kitchen and bathroom areas. The cost of the upgrade was covered by private donations and incentive rebates offered by Consumers Power.

Results from our final Consumers statement from 2015 reveals the following results. Total kWh used for 2015 was 31,724 (87 kWh/Day) compared to 57,073 kWh (156.4/Day) used in 2013. In addition our cost dropped to \$4,591 (\$12.58/Day) compared to the daily cost of \$20.87/Day in 2013. These changes have occurred in spite of greater church utilization.

Natural Gas use and expenses have not changed substantially over the last 3 years of monitoring, but now represent about 50% of our utility billing. Our natural gas use (measured in MCF=thousand cubic feet) has increased about 8% from 2013 through 2015.

The industry standard for comparing energy utilization in buildings is the ECI (ENERGY COST INDEX). The ECI gives the cost (of electricity and natural gas), per square foot of enclosed building space to operate for a full year. Aldersgate is approximately 20,000 square feet. Aldersgate's ECI results for the last 3 years:

Our goal is to decrease Aldersgate's ECI to \$0.40/sq ft/yr which is recognized as an achievable goal for efficiently run houses of worship in our climate zone.

Your continued help with turning off unused lighting will further help Aldersgate conserve monies that can be better used in our other ministries. Aldersgate has over 700 light bulbs and fixtures so there are many areas where unused light can be inadvertently left on. Your continued support in this area will be much appreciated. We are enrolled in a contest with 166 other Michigan buildings to see who can reduce electrical use per sq. ft. the most, your help is appreciated. More MOTION ACTIVATED LIGHT SWITCHES ARE COMING to Aldersgate.

Respectfully,

Douglas R. Jackson, M.D.

God proved his love on the cross. When Christ hung, and bled, and died, it was God saying to the world, 'I love you.'

—Billy Graham

ADDRESS CHANGES

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Oshawa Ontario L1G 8C9
(905) 436-4869

Kayla Roosa
597 Redstone Road
Wheeler, MI 48662

IT'S TIME TO THINK SUMMER...

Christian Camp & Retreat Opportunities are available for Kindergartners through Adult.

For some within our church family, camp has been an important part of their spiritual growth for many years. For others, this is a new idea. Either way...camp is a means in which God draws people to Himself...transforming lives through new found faith in Jesus Christ or a renewal of mind and spirit that takes someone to a deeper relationship with God.

There are traditional camps as well as special interest camps like...Music, Art, Horse, Fishing, Sports, etc. Prayerfully consider this wonderful opportunity for your child, youth or the entire family. When making your decision...ask yourself...What is truly more important than an opportunity that draws me closer to God?

In our desire to support those who would like to participate...we have Christian Camping & Retreat Scholarship funds available. The scholarship is intended to provide partial tuition assistance to persons who are attending a



Christian Camp or Retreat experience for the stated purpose of spiritual formation and Christian discipleship.

In order to be considered for the scholarship a perspective applicant must be an active participant in the principle ministries of Aldersgate. The scholarship amounts will be based on individual need, and the parent or guardian must pay any portion not covered by the scholarship. Occasionally, full scholarships are given in cases of extreme hardship. A scholarship application must be filled out completely and submitted not less than 45 days

prior to the start of the camp or retreat. Scholarship applications will be evaluated by the Pastor and Christian Education Committee at their earliest convenience. Please note that a submission of an application does not ensure that any or the entire amount requested will be granted.

If you would like further information please contact either Addie Maxwell at 989-708-1758/ akdmax67@gmail.com or Pastor Michael Sawicki at 989-492-4465/ michaeltsawicki@gmail.com.

55 AND 3 F'S

Our group of active senior's have meetings scheduled in both March and April. This group is for those over 55 years of age and/or retired from active work. It is a fun group which meets for a social activity within the church atmosphere. Come and join us.

The March meeting will feature Jennifer Root. Jennifer will be telling us about the STAR program she has as part of the rehab facility at MidMichigan Medical Facility. This meeting will be on March 14 in Fellowship Hall. Fran and Charley Longsdorf will be the host for this meeting.

The April meeting will be April 18. Our guest for that



Senior Adults

meeting will be Ron Sharp. Ron trains leader dogs and will have one of his dogs with him for the meeting. Larry and Marg Ault will be the hosts for this meeting.

Both meeting will be held in Fellowship Hall starting at Noon and as usual will be a potluck.

All you have to do is bring a dish to pass. Table settings, coffee, tea and ice water is furnished. There will be a sign up sheet on the "What's Up at Aldersgate" bulletin board outside Fellowship Hall prior to each meeting. It is very helpful in planning if you will indicate your intention to be at the meeting by signing the sheet.

EVANGELISM TIP



We draw people to Christ not by loudly discrediting what they believe, by telling them how wrong they are and how right we are, but by showing them a light that is so lovely that they want with all their hearts to know the source of it.

—Madeleine L'Engle

VACATION BIBLE SCHOOL

Mark your calendars to join us for *Egypt: Joseph's Journey from Prison to Palace* the week of June 20th - 24th 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 and 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. Look for the VBS Servant Roster in the narthex (lobby). **If you know how to sew and have a willingness to assist please let me know at your earliest convenience.** If you have a smile and a willingness to show Christ's love to children of all ages, we have a place for you. Please contact me at 708-1758 or akdmax67@gmail.com if you have any questions or would like to serve in some capacity.

Serving Him 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

SEEN AROUND CHURCH

- Did you see Rae Vaught on the front page of the *Midland Daily News* as part of Piano Fest?
- Dick Skochdopole was in the newspaper twice for Kiwassee Kiwanis, one for helping New Hope Village and the second time for reading to preschool children.
- Jennifer Root was mentioned in an article about helping Sherry Kalina with rehab from cancer treatment.
- Youth running the service on Valentine Day for us adults. Noah Frick, Aubrey Root, Anna Frick and Jeff Tefft provided the sermon. The Worship Band, "Aboveground" featured Hannah Sawicki, Aubrey Root, Jeffrey Root, Garrett Mai, FaithAnne Sawicki, and Brandan Short. Others participating in the service beside those mentioned above were Lauren Smit, Will Tefft, Gage Spitnale, Katie White, Emily Yoder, Mackayla Pirie, Emily Yoder, Kevin White and Sam Yoder. Thanks to all of you. A great service.
- UMK no Electronics-a-Thon has started.
- 55 and 3F's heard from Carol Rumba from Creative 360 in February and Beth Sorenson from Children and Family Services in January.
- Dick and Nan Skochdopole were honored by Creative 360 as part of their "Yes We Can" program honoring community leaders.
- Thanks to Joanne Fuller for playing the piano at the second service on February 21.
- Good subs from the youth for the Super Bowl. And they gave 100 subs to the Open Door!
- Good Samaritan fund received \$2400 on Christmas Eve. This money is used to help many non members in the community with rent, utilities, etc.
- Many attending Lenten small group study groups.
- Thanks to all who gave cookies for AAA and NA, food for emergency food pantry (Agape Sunday) and pop cans for youth drive.

