



Good News

Aldersgate Mission: "To Know Jesus And To Make Him Known"

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December 16, 2018

Of Ugly Sweater Parties & Dirty Santa

Have you seen the ugly sweaters on sale recently? Manufacturers are making and retail stores are selling sweaters that are purposefully ugly or just weird. When the ugly sweater phenomenon began, it was a light-hearted joke on the fashions of previous years, where gaudy Christmas themed sweaters would be worn ironically for laughs. It is a fun but certainly bizarre way to celebrate.

What do you play at ugly sweater parties? You play a game where gifts are given. Sounds nice, right? Well, the gifts are a mix of nice things, gags, and the outdated contents of somebody's pantry. I guess it's true that it's better to give than to receive. That is, unless you like what someone just before you opened. Then, Dirty Santa gives you license to steal the gift.

Aren't these strange ways to celebrate Christmas? Underneath the fun of dirty Santa and ugly sweaters, there's a little darkness. We laugh at what people wear. We give unwanted gifts and steal what we want. In a season where we look for merry and bright, peace on earth and goodwill toward others, these seem out of place.

Yet, the truth they gently and merrily tell us is important. The darkness that creates the irony of these fun games exist in dangerous and damaging ways in this world.

When Mary and Joseph bring the infant Jesus to the Temple for circumcision, they encounter Simeon, an old man who has been awaiting and watching for the Messiah. When Simeon recognizes Jesus, he celebrates saying that he can die in peace, knowing that the Messiah has come. Yet, when Simeon speaks to Mary, the young mother of this just over a week old child, he says that this child would be opposed by many. Then, he said to Mary, "And a sword will pierce your very soul" (Luke 2:35).

Simeon's words aren't what you would expect to a new mother, but they are reminders to us of why Jesus had to come in the first place. The world is a mess. We are broken. We are sinful. We are in need. The world is set right, and we are healed, forgiven, made whole through his suffering. The idea that Jesus would have to suffer for our fulfillment has been the topic of theological discussion throughout the history of the Church. Yet, what we read in Scripture and what is passed down to us are confirmations that setting things right does not come without cost.

I hope that your Christmas is merry and bright, filled with sugar plumbs and whiskers on kittens. I also hope we all experience the great goodness of God by recognizing our deep need.

Peace,

About Good News Newsletter

Good News Newsletter is the primary communication tool to share how Aldersgate United Methodist Church is living into its mission: To know Jesus and to make Him known. Soon Good News Newsletter will transition to a weekly digital newsletter and a more in depth monthly mailout.



Aldersgate's United Methodist Women and United Methodist Men support missions in a big way. The UMW have been supporting ministries for women, children and youth for over 100 years. Through member donations and fundraising they support our ministerial students and a variety of ministries, including our Weekday Children's Ministry, Mary Ellen's Hearth, Aldersgate's Benevolence Fund, adult and youth mission trips, the Methodist Children's Home, and the Family Sunshine Center. This year they have raised \$6,382 for outreach by selling casseroles, baked goods, and handmade crafts.

Through their annual barbeque the UMM raise funds to support groups and ministries like the United Methodist Committee on Relief (UMCOR), Society of Saint Andrew, Common Ground of Montgomery, Boy Scout Troop 307, and Cub Scout Pack 307. They help to underwrite our church's adult and youth mission trips, and award stipends to our seminary students, helping prepare future clergy for ministry. Funds are also provided for special needs among our mission partners, the Aldersgate Food Pantry and outreach events such as the Fall Festival and VBS. This year they raised \$3,100 from BBQ sales.

Announcements

1. Gentle Reminder from the Finance Committee:

Pledges are running behind approximately \$30,000 year to date for 2018. We know life is busy with family, work, football, and the upcoming holidays, so it is easy to get sidetracked. The Finance Committee would be very appreciative if you would 'catch up' by December 30. Thanks!

2. 2018 Contributions

All contributions to be credited to 2018 must be received in the office by noon on Monday, December 31, 2018. If you are sending a contribution by U.S. Mail, it must be postmarked no later than Monday, December 31, 2018 and online contributions must be completed by December 31, 2018. Anything received after that time will be credited to 2019. The office will be closed on Monday, December 31, 2018 but Dory Hector will be in the office to receive any last minute contributions. If you

have any questions, please call Dory Hector or email her at dory@aldersgateumc.org.

3. Aldersgate Initiative: A Place at the Table

While celebrating Christmas this season, we invite the people of Aldersgate to practice hospitality by inviting at least one person to join them for a meal, a coffee, a get-together, etc. Our goal is that more than 50 people would be welcomed to a table and shown the love of Christ through the invitation and fellowship. Look for the "A Place at the Table" bulletin board (at the T) and pin your 'chair' to the table. Instructions will be displayed.

4. Annual Poinsettia Sale/Mission Project

Each Christmas the Aldersgate family decorates the sanctuary with beautiful poinsettias given in honor or memory of loved ones. This year these will be displayed on Dec. 23 and 24 for the Christmas Eve services. Those donating poinsettias may pick them up after the services or have them sent to one of our sick or shut-in members. This year you may also remember loved ones through a gift of any amount to help build a house in Ensenada, Mexico, for a needy family. The cost for the house will be \$5,725. Poinsettias are \$12.00 each. Checks can be made payable to Aldersgate UMC with "Poinsettias" or "House" in the memo line. Please place the bulletin insert order form together with your payment in the offering plate or turn in to the church office by Sun., Dec. 16.

5. Family Promise

We would like to thank everyone who supported Family Promise over this past year. Family Promise is a ministry that offers hope and shelter to those in need. We pray that you would consider serving in 2019 as a dinner host or overnight host. Family Promise is also looking for a local leader. Is it YOU? This role is supported by Minister of discipleship and local mission team. You will have the opportunity to sign up individuals to serve. We will serve families during the following dates in 2019: January 20-26, March 31-6, July 21-27, October 13-19. If you have any question on how you can serve please contact Richard at Richard@aldersgateumc.org.

6. White Christmas

Aldersgate thanks you for your support of the United Methodist Children's Home. We raised \$9,156 last year and our goal is \$10,000 this year!

7. Offices Closed:

December 24 and December 31.



8. United Methodist Women's Quilting Ministry.
We celebrate the work of our United Methodist Women's quilting ministry. Over 180 quilts plus blankets and throws (363 total) were delivered to Lynn Haven United Methodist Church on December 13 for Hurricane Relief.

Events

Christmas Eve Service
Sunday, Dec. 23 | 5 p.m. | CAC

Modern Christmas music with experiences to heighten the meaning of the season.

Christmas Eve Candlelight Service
Monday, Dec. 24 | 5 p.m. | Sanctuary

A Traditional Christmas Eve Service of Carols, Communion and Candlelight.

5th Sunday Fun-Sunday
Dec. 30 | Sunday School Classes | Aldersgate

Wear your craziest Christmas sweater and join us in children's Sunday School for Christmas Carol karaoke. *Contact Katie Blair at katie@aldersgateumc.org for more information.*

Not So Late New Year's Eve Party
Dec. 31 | 10:30 a.m. - Noon | CAC

All children K3-Fifth grade are invited to celebrate New Year's Eve with a countdown to noon instead of midnight! We will sing, work on a mission project, play games and eat lunch. There is no cost, but registration is required. *Please register online at aldersgateumc.org.*

Chancel Choir
Wednesdays Beginning January 2 | 7 p.m.

Youth Worship Arts Choir
Sundays beginning January 6 | 4 p.m.

Young In Heart
January 8 | 11:30 a.m.

Ring in the new year with Young in Heart! We will have lunch and play bingo! Lunch is \$6/person. *Please make reservations by January 6 by contacting Margaret Watkins at 334-272-2212.*

Children's Heartworks Lab
Wednesdays Beginning January 9th | 6 - 6:45 p.m.

Heartworks Lab opens! This is for Elementary children grades Kindergarten - 5th grade. Children will participate in STEM activities that follow along with a scripture memory verse and a Bible lesson.

Youth Winter Retreat
Jan. 25- 27, 2019 | Shocco Springs
Youth! Kickoff 2019 with Winter Retreat! This will be a

high energy and reflective weekend spending time in scripture, worship, outdoor activities, small groups, and games. We will start our new year in a place of the Bible full of new beginnings: Genesis. Come grow closer to God and closer to one another while being immersed in Creation at Shocco Springs. *For more info. contact Miles Barnhardt at miles@aldersgateumc.org.*

Night of Praise
Sunday, February 3 | CAC

Save the date!

Parents' Night Out
February 8 | 5:30 - 9:30 p.m.

Parents, enjoy a nice evening out by yourselves! Children ages infant through 5th grade are invited to join us for a night of fun! The cost is \$15 per child with a \$40 max per family. Registration is required. *Register online at aldersgateumc.org beginning on January 21st.*

Volunteer Opportunities

Knitting and Crocheting Ministry

Thank you to everyone who gave to the Knitting and Crochet ministry. We have donated 237 shawls/lap throws for the patients to the cancer center; a baby blanket to babies born into the Aldersgate Church family; and prayer shawls for those in distress. Numerous prayer shawls were taken by our members to the people in Ecuador. We are knitting and crocheting throws and shawls with a goal of 75- for the hurricane victims in Florida. Come join us. We met every Wednesday from 2 p.m. to 3:30 p.m. in room 25.

Mid Week Gathering

Wednesdays, Beginning back on January 9th
Dinner served from 5:15 - 6 p.m.

Family- \$25

Adults- \$6

Youth- \$5

Children- \$3

College Students- Free

Food Pantry

Month of December

Donations Needed: canned fruit and vegetables

The Food Pantry Ministry could not continue to serve others without the wonderful help and support from the members of Aldersgate. You are the hands of feet of Christ! Thank you!

Please place all donations in the containers throughout the church. All monetary donations may be placed in the offering plate, mark "food pantry" on your check.

www.aldersgate.umc.org

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Number 51

Join us for worship this Sun. Dec. 16

8:15 a.m. | Chapel Service with Holy Communion
10:30 a.m. | Contemporary Worship
10:30 a.m. | Traditional Worship Service

Attendance | Sun., Nov. 9, 2018

Morning Worship—328 Sunday School—218

Our gifts to God | Nov. 30, 2018

Budget for 2018	1,274,545
Operating Budget Requirement to Date	1,168,758
Operating Budget Income Received to Date	1,068,143.58
Operating Budget Expenses to Date	1,122,465.03
Total Pledges to Faith Promise	90,335
Total Received through 11/30/2018	41,541

Building Fund Drive Goal	110,000 by <u>Dec. 31, 2018</u>
Pledges	81
Commitment to giving	69,195
Total Received	77,685.25

Aldersgate Weekly Calendar of Events Sun., Dec. 16 — Sat., Dec. 22, 2018

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16

8:15 a.m. Chapel Service with Weekly Communion
9:15 a.m. Sunday School for Adults, Youth, Children
10:30 a.m. 3D Kid's Worship (2nd, 3rd, 4th Sundays) | *Chapel*
Contemporary Worship Service | *CAC*
Traditional Worship Service | *Sanctuary*
4:30 p.m. Joyful Bells | *Rm. 29*
Youth Worship Arts | *Youth Area*
5:00 p.m. Youth Small Groups | *Youth Area*

MONDAY, DECEMBER 17

11:00 a.m. Monday Women's Bible Study | *Rm. 26*
7:00 p.m. Career Christians Circle | *Rm. 25*

TUESDAY, DECEMBER 18

10:00 a.m. Food Pantry Waiting Room | *Rm. 29*
11:30 a.m. Hope Circle Lunch | *Baumhower's Eastern Blvd.*
4:30 p.m. Young Meadows Basketball | *CAC*
6:00 p.m. Scout Den Meetings | *Rooms 15-29, CAC*

WEDNESDAY, DECEMBER 19

9:30 a.m. The Covenant Bible Study | *Rm. 26*
2:00 p.m. Knitting & Crocheting Group | *Rm. 25*
5:15 p.m. Soup Supper | *Rm. 26*
5:45 p.m. Advent Study | *Rm. 25*
Grief Support Group | *Rm. 24*
7:00 p.m. Chancel Choir Rehearsal | *Choir Room*

THURSDAY, DECEMBER 20

6:30 a.m. Men's Emmaus Reunion Group Mtg. | *Parlor*
8:00 a.m. Pathfinder Christmas Party | *CAC, CAC Kitchen*
9:30 a.m. All Staff Worship | *Chapel*
10:00 a.m. Food Pantry Waiting Room | *Rm. 29*
Open Time of Prayer | *Rm. 28*
7:00 p.m. Sierra Club - Montgomery | *Rm. 25*

FRIDAY, DECEMBER 21

8:00 a.m. WCM K4 Christmas Pajama Party | *Rm. 22*
6:00 p.m. Boy Scout Lock In | *CAC*

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 22

Boy Scout Lock In | *CAC*