A parish priest in a small French town commissioned a local poet and wine commissaire, Placide Cappeau de Roquemaure, to write a poem for the village’s Christmas Eve mass. Cappeau read through the birth of Christ in the gospel of Luke en route to Paris, and finished the poem O Holy Night by the time he reached the city. Cappeau turned to his friend, Adolphe Charles Adams, to compose the music to the poem, and three weeks later, the song was sung in the village on Christmas Eve. Initially, Cantique de Noel (the song’s French name) was widely loved by the Church in France, but when leaders learned that Cappeau was a socialist and Adams a Jew, the song was uniformly denounced as unfit for church services. But the common French people loved it so much, they continued to sing it. The song came to the U.S. via John Sullivan Dwight, an abolitionist during the Civil War. Moved by the line in the third verse, “Chains shall he break, for the slave is our brother, and in His Name all oppression shall cease,” he published it in his magazine and quickly found favor in the north during the war. Even though it was banned in France, the song was still popular among the people. On Christmas Eve in 1871, in the midst of fierce fighting between France and Germany during the Franco-Prussian War, an unarmed French soldier jumped out of the trenches, walked into the battlefield, and started singing, “Minuit, Chrétiens, c’est l’heure solennelle ou L’Homme Dieu descendit jusqu’à nous,” the song’s first line in French. After singing all three verses, a German soldier emerged and started singing, “Vom Himmel noch, da komm’ ich her. Ich bring’ euch gute neue Mar, Der guten Mar bring’ ich so viel, Davon ich sing’n und sagen will,” the beginning of a popular hymn by Martin Luther. Fighting stopped for the next 24 hours in honor of Christmas Day. Soon after, the French Church re-embraced O Holy Night.

May the peace, love and joy of God’s gift to the world given on that most holy night be with you and your family this Christmas and always!

From the Pennington family to yours,
Merry Christmas!
TRUSTEES HAPPENINGS

During our November Trustees Meeting, we visited issues requiring repairs or replacement. We understand each brings its own inconvenience to our congregation and we respect individual concerns it may cause each Ministry that allows our church to function on a daily basis.

**During our walk around, we noticed mold in the emergency stairway and the steeple closet.**
Cleanup is scheduled for the first week of December.

**Chancel lighting out (the tall ladder used to change them is missing).**
A new ladder has been generously loaned to Aldersgate.

**The oven has broken in room 137 kitchenette.**
A new oven is being sought, either through purchase or donation.

**The hot water heater needs replacing in room 137 kitchenette.**
A new water heater is to be installed.

**Ice machine in Fellowship Hall broken.**
The ice machine has been fixed.

**The Auditorium kitchen sink leaking.**
Pipe repair is completed.

**Columbarium fountain not working.**
The electric power source is being evaluated for problem.

These of course are only a few of the issues that require attention. The list is numerous and many can be completed by non-professional help. Any member who can volunteer their time and energy would be greatly appreciated, especially issues that pertain to individual interests around the church.

**The big-ticket items that are still facing us are:**

- Boiler replacement - urgent/critical
- Air handler replacement - urgent/critical
- Music Room addition roof -urgent/critical
- Solar Panel investigation – planned upgrade
- Window replacement – planned upgrade
- Parking Lot repave – planned upgrade
- Organ rebuild – planned upgrade

The trustees would like to wish everyone a Merry Christmas. May everyone be blessed and safe.
From Your Lay Leaders

Sharon Owens and Ferris Wharton

layleader@aldersgatede.org

We have all heard the expressions, “preaching to the choir” and “preaching to the converted.” Both expressions mean the same thing - attempting to persuade someone of something about which they are already favorably disposed. These are idioms and are not meant to be taken literally, since literally there is great value in preaching to the choir and to the converted. Regular worshipers no doubt understand and appreciate the spiritual value of the messages our pastors here at Aldersgate preach “to the choir” and “to the converted” at each of our three worship services every Sunday.

This note is not addressed, at least not entirely, to the choir or to the converted. Instead, it is addressed to those readers of the Messenger who, for one reason or another, have seen their attendance at worship fall off a bit. If you find yourself in that category, please consider coming to the 9 a.m. traditional service. Since mid-September, Pastor Don Schuler has been providing the message. Each Sunday, Pastor Don’s sermon will leave you informed, challenged, inspired, and most of all, feeling closer to God through Jesus Christ.

If you haven’t been to church in a while, please come to the 9 a.m. traditional service this Sunday. Try it, you’ll like it.

Please remember, if you have special prayer concerns, you can share them on the pew cards during worship at all services. We hope to see you at church.

Already thinking about a way to relax and rejuvenate after the busy holiday season? Come join us at Pecometh for our Christian Meditation Workshop and Winter Silent Retreat!

Our Christian Meditation Workshop will be held on Sunday February 17th from 2:30 pm-6:00 pm. Join us as we explore ways to draw near to God and enrich our experience of the Holy. We will visit some of the teachings of the great Spiritual leaders through the centuries, engage in some guided practices of prayer, meditation, and contemplation, and spend some time with prayer practices of your own choosing. The cost is $35/person and includes program fees and a light snack. Register for any length of overnight stay for the Silent Retreat and you can attend the meditation workshop for free!

Our Winter Silent Retreat will be held February 17th-22nd. Come experience a daily rhythm of prayer, simple meals, communing with God in nature, communion, and spiritual direction. Like river water in a jar in which the sediment falls to the bottom, revealing the clear water, allow your spirit to settle and clear by resting in God. Rates range from $59 for 1 day to $469 for 6 days/5 nights. All costs are per person and include program fees, meals (lunch on first day through lunch on final day), and single occupancy overnight accommodations. Each participant will also have one scheduled hour each day with a spiritual director. During self-directed reflection time, participants may walk the grounds, visit prayer stations, pray, reflect, rest, journal at their own pace.

For more information, and to register, visit our websites at www.pecometh.org/winter-silent-retreat and www.pecometh.org/christian-meditation-workshop or by calling 410-556-6900.
Welcoming Everyone

A group of members of our church gathered in November to discuss identifying our congregation as one that states it welcomes all people, including LGBTQ persons. The official organization that aids in this process is called Reconciling Ministries Network and we would like Aldersgate to be listed as a welcoming congregation with this network.

The Reconciling Ministries Network equips and mobilizes United Methodists to resist evil, injustice, and oppression as we seek justice for people of all sexual orientations and gender identities.

The next meeting of Aldersgate's group will be Sunday, December 16 at 9:45 a.m. in the Library. For information about our group, please contact one of us. You are welcome to join us!

Betsy Diemer, Ellen Schlecht, Mary Cooper, Joanne Smeltz, Nancy Hough, Anne Murray, Judy Morton, Cheryl Merritt, Don Moyer, Grace DiGiacoma, Adam West, Brian Merritt

Make A Difference

Neighborhood House Food Pantry

The Neighborhood House is one of the food pantries that received food items from the Harvest Food Drive at the end of September. By the middle of October, the shelves were almost empty once again. Due to the changes in the Food Stamp Policies, there is a greater demand on the food pantry. The biggest demand is for sources of protein, including canned tuna, Spam, corned beef hash, canned chicken, spaghetti and meatballs and other nonperishable items that provides protein and can make a meal.

Your donations can be placed in the grocery baskets located at the top of the parking lot entrance steps or in the narthex. Your support will be appreciated by those in need.

Rummage Sale Silver Polishing Service

Laura Parrish will polish silver donations to the rummage sale. She must receive the silver before Palm Sunday (April 14, 2019). Contact her at 302-477-1718 to let her know if you are bringing silver to church or to arrange for pick up. (Bringing silver to church is better, but she will pick up larger donations or from people who cannot get their donations to church.)

As you are shopping in Amazon throughout the year, please sign up for Amazon Smile. Amazon donates 0.5% of the price of your eligible AmazonSmile purchases to the charitable organization of your choice. Make your charitable organization Aldersgate Church and the donation will go directly to Aldersgate’s Smile account. Support your favorite charity at no extra cost when you shop at smile.amazon.com. Every little bit helps.

Aldersgate YMCA Members:

Because I no longer drive due to vision issues, I am having difficulty getting to the Brandywine Y. Wednesdays are basically covered but I would like to exercise more than once a week. If you are heading to the Y to work out and could give me a lift, I would be very grateful. You can reach me via phone – 302-425-5222, text 302-650-2760 or email judymorton1@gmail.com. Thanks!

Judy Morton
UMW Epiphany Program & General Meeting -
**Sunday, January 6th at 12:45 p.m.**

In the Auditorium.

Musical program, "Music with Rob McFarland". Rob McFarland, Aldersgate's Music Director, will present a program of secular and religious music. All women are invited to celebrate Epiphany as Aldersgate's United Methodist Women! A light lunch will be served. UMW officer installation and pledge service will also be held. Please sign up in the Auditorium after services on December 16th and 23th. As a winter mission project, we will be collecting a love offering for Southbridge Neighborhood House.

**UMW Pecan Sale**
UMW will be selling pecans after each service while supplies last. Pecans are $12.00 a pound and come fresh from the grower in halves and pieces. Orders may be placed with circle leaders or with Laura Parrish (302-477-1718).

**FISH of Northern Delaware, Inc.**

FISH is an organization of individual volunteers working together to provide free rides to and from doctors, dentists, clinics, and hospital appointments for those who have no other means of transportation. FISH operates in northern New Castle County and responds to requests one week in advance. I have been a volunteer driver for FISH for over a year, and I find it a very fulfilling ministry. FISH needs telephone volunteers who help schedule the riders and drivers, and needs drivers who are able to determine the number of days that they want to volunteer and are also able to restrict the number of riders or the areas they are willing to serve.

If you are looking for a meaningful ministry that serves those in need, this may be the right one for you. For more information on FISH, feel free to contact me at 652-8541 or call FISH directly at 658-2954.

*Henry Daum*

**CALLING ALL BAKERS:** Please help make this annual community event a huge success by BAKING COOKIES for the walk, labeling them Cookie Walk, and bringing them to the Auditorium kitchen on Friday, December 7 by 4 p.m. or Saturday, December 8 between 7 and 8:30 a.m.  **THANK YOU !**

**Become a member of Aldersgate UMC!**

Our next new member class is being offered Saturday December 1 from 10 a.m. to noon. Childcare available upon request. In this class we will answer your questions about Aldersgate and the United Methodist church, give you a tour of the building, and introduce you to the ministries and people in our congregation. The next “class” of new members will be installed on Sunday, December 9th. Please contact Cheryl Merritt, Membership Coordinator, to reserve your seat for this class or to schedule another day and time to fit your schedule in the future.

newmembers@aldersgatede.org
Finance Committee

Who comprises the Finance Committee? (Parentheses indicate term expiration)

| Chair – John Prince (2020) | Ex Officio: 
| Brett Landis (2019) | Pastor – Chris Pennington 
| Janeen Ernst (2019) | SPRC – Mike Pittenger/Jennifer Pendley 
| Dorothy Whiteman (2019) | Trustees – Tom Lugg 
| Preston Cooper (2020) | Treasurer – 
| Dennis Snyder (2020) | Business Administrator – Kevin Botbyl 

As of the end of October (33% through the fiscal year), Contributions are 24% of budget and 14% below last year. Total Income (includes Preschool, Building Use, etc.) is 24% of budget and 9% below last year.

Those teams with budget responsibility are doing a good job of managing expenditures as expenses are 29% of budget and 6% lower than last year.

However, the bottom line is a net loss of $59k vs $53k last year (12% greater loss). We really need your help with Contributions. If we all do a little more we can close this gap.

The 2019 Stewardship Campaign is underway. A new approach was taken this year via e-mail for the church family who can receive electronic communication in order to reduce our every increasing office expenses and simplify the process. For the rest of the church a paper mailing was done that includes the traditional pledge card. Please respond before the end of December so we can commence the next fiscal year budget process in January.

Electronic giving options:

**Automatic Deductions** - To make your life simpler, consider a monthly win-win payment option for both you and the church. It’s very simple to set up; just contact Susan Schranck at 302-478-2575 or pick up the form at church information stands or download from our website.

**Online** – Make a donation on our website: [www.Aldersgatede.org](http://www.Aldersgatede.org)

**Text to Donate** – Make a donation via Text message! 302-213-6168

Of course, checks and cash are always preferred.

Aldersgate is committed to being good stewards of your faithful contributions.
Aldersgate 2019 Youth Musical Audition Information

Saturday, December 1, 2018  10 a.m. – 2:30 p.m.
Sunday, December 2, 2018  11:30 a.m. – 2:00 p.m.
Location: Aldersgate Music Center & Bell Choir Room
Anyone in 2nd grade or older is eligible to audition. Please bring a completed audition form along with a photo of yourself & Registration Fee to the audition (see below). Audition forms can be downloaded from Signup Genius, found on the Bulletin Board by the Music Center or online at www.aldersgatede.org.

There are MANY singing AND non-singing roles. You will be asked to sing a portion of either Conjunction Junction, No More Kings or I'm Just a Bill and/or a brief song of your choice. You may be asked to read from the script. Sign up for an audition time at Signup Genius using the link below: https://www.signupgenius.com/go/20F0B4FA8A72CA6F94-audition3

Up to three (3) people can sign up in each time slot. You MUST Sign up for an Audition time.
Anyone who does not sign up in advance will not be guaranteed an audition.
NEW THIS YEAR – REGISTRATION FEE to be submitted with Audition Form

$60 per Cast Member includes Schoolhouse Rock Live t-shirt, DVD, rehearsal snacks & production costs

$30 per Crew Member/Additional Cast Family Member includes Schoolhouse Rock Live t-shirt, rehearsal snacks & production costs but NO DVD

Registration Fee is payable by Cash or Check (written to Aldersgate UMC)
T-shirts for non-Cast/Crew & additional DVDs will be available for purchase at an additional charge.
If the Registration Fee is an issue, please let Mrs. Atwater know – there are some scholarship monies available.

*If you are unable to access the Signup Genius form or cannot attend the auditions, but would like to be in the show, please contact Mrs. Atwater to arrange an audition at Janet@JanetAtwater.com.

There will be a read-through Sunday, December 16th and rehearsals will begin on Saturday, January 5, 2019. Most rehearsals will be on Sundays, although some Saturday rehearsals and additional days may be needed, especially if you are cast in a lead role.

Performances will be Friday, March 1st @ 7 p.m. and Saturday, March 2nd & Sunday, March 3rd @ 2 p.m.
For questions or more information, contact Janet Atwater: Janet@JanetAtwater.com
Calling All Budding Young Actors for the Nativity Pageant

There will be a Nativity Pageant at the 4 p.m. Christmas Eve Service. If your child is interested in participating by being Joseph, Mary, Angel, one of the 3 Wisemen, a Shepherd, Angels of the Children’s Choir, or an animal (sheep, cow, camel, or donkey), no speaking lines just action. Please contact sharon.jennelly@aldersgatede.org or 302-478-2575 ext. 118 and plan to arrange a time be fitted for your part before planning to arrive by 3:30 p.m. on Christmas Eve.

Student and Children’s Ministries

ADVENT WORKSHOP
SUNDAY, DECEMBER 2, Noon-2 p.m.
Fellowship Hall

All families are invited for the traditional Advent Workshop at Aldersgate. Join us in creating memories with decorative ornaments, decorating cookies and having fun together. Pizza provided. Contact Sharon if you are able to lead a table and/or able to provide about 50 crafts for this event. Contact sharon.jennelly@aldersgatede.org or (302)562-5808, sign up in the HUB binder or Facebook event. $ Donations will be accepted.
Youth Ministry

The youth ministry at Aldersgate has been working on making sure that our faith is centered around more than a North American perspective for the last few years. Every Sunday, our students end their lesson by praying a prayer from the World Council of Churches Ecumenical Prayer Cycle. Each week, we pray for a different area of the world throughout the year and pray for things that these churches specifically are bringing to our attention. I’ve been amazed at how often these concerns from all over the planet are focused on ecological issues, or where people around the world find God in the midst of nature. It is easy for us to believe that we are the only ones who might be working to combat climate change or that no one else cares. However, from our time sharing prayers with people all over the world, it is extremely apparent at Christians everywhere are concerned about taking care of our home. Personally, one of the places where I experience God the most is in the woods. It’s always been a place where I feel at home and find God. When I think about the woods, I think of the woods and mountains of North America. That concept seemed to fade away as I read a prayer written by a Christian in New Zealand who described finding God in the woods. I recommend checking out the prayer cycle as a way to pray and learn about the concerns and blessings of Christians around the world.

Adam

Greenness

Dear God, there are times when I hear your voice most clearly in greenness: in the singing of sap, the conversation of the leaves, the whisperings of shoot and stem, root, sap and cell, calling me back to creation to feel again the freshness of you running through everything like a bright emerald current. God of greenness, you know well my tendency to fill my life with my own methods of communication. Thank you for constantly returning me to the simplicity of yours. Again I experience you in the rejoicing of bare feet on a damp forest path, in the wonder of light thrown against a kaleidoscope of tree ferns, in the myriad textures of moss-clad trees, in the shining of you beneath every surface. Beloved Creator, coming to our greenness is always a coming home, a time of peace and grace as the unimportant in me falls away and I know again that bright green shoot of my own beginning which comes from you and is one with you, bright and beautiful God.

Aldersgate Volunteers Recognized

Read Aloud Delaware presented Aldersgate with the Dorothy Traynor Award on November 8th. This award recognizes the contributions of our many members who have served the cause of this state-wide non-profit. The mission of Read Aloud Delaware is to combat illiteracy by seeing that every preschool child in Delaware is regularly read to one-on-one. Volunteers go to preschools serving lower-income families to read to the children individually. Members volunteering in some way during the past year include Betty Aldrich, Sandy Anderson, Cheryl Beeson, Mary Kay Hawkins, and Nancy Hough. Previous readers include Paul Aldrich, Kirk Anderson, Mary Cooper, Linda Miller, and Renate and Carl Muendel. This is one of many ways Aldersgate serves in the community.

Greetings:

First of all, we want to thank all of you for the love and hospitality we have been shown since our arrival at Aldersgate. We feel honored to be part of this congregation and appreciate our acceptance into the church family.

This will be our first Christmas here and we are looking forward to celebrating this special time of the year with you. There are plans for special music, study and exciting worship over the next few weeks preparing us for the coming of the Christ Child. And, even though this is a very busy time of year, I hope you can make time to take advantage of all the opportunities we have at Aldersgate to remember the “real reason for the season.”

May you and your family have a very Merry Christmas and a Christ-filled New Year.

Pastor Don and Marty
POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

ORDERS CAN BE SUBMITTED NOV. 25\textsuperscript{TH} THROUGH DEC. 16\textsuperscript{TH}

Each plant is $10.00 Please make checks payable to Aldersgate UMC.

Purchased poinsettias may be picked up from the Narthex following any service on Christmas Eve. DEADLINE: SUNDAY, DECEMBER 16\textsuperscript{TH}

Name: ______________________________ Phone: __________________

# of Plants: _____ Total Amount Enclosed: ($10/plant): __________________

Plant #1: Please Circle: In “Memory of” or In “Honor of”

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Plant #2: Please Circle: In “Memory of” or In “Honor of”

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Plant #3: Please Circle: In “Memory of” or In “Honor of”

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

Plant #4: Please Circle: In “Memory of” or In “Honor of”

___________________________________________________________________

___________________________________________________________________

For accounting purposes, please enclose payment & order form in a pew envelope, SEPARATE from your offering. Thanks!
December Events

Saturday, December 1 - 8:00 a.m. - Gift Wrapping
Sunday, December 2 - Noon – Advent Workshop
Saturday, December 8 - 9:00 a.m.- Cookie Walk
Sunday, December 9 - 2:30 p.m.– Christmas Concert