



December 2024

# The Messenger Aldersgate UMC

*A significant place where disciples are made*



## An Unlikely Encounter

**The Rev. Dr. Kyung-hee Sa**

I ran into an unexpected snowstorm in Maine a while ago. I was on my way back to the parsonage with our sons, after dropping off my husband Jung-Moon at the airport. It was late at night. It was snowing so heavily. I couldn't see well. I didn't know there was a steep downhill. The car slid off toward the side of the road. Thankfully, it stopped when I put on the brake, but it ended up being in the snow ditch. Our sons and I tried to pull the car out with all our might. It didn't move an inch. I was so scared. My mind went blank. Fear gripped us. We feared we would be frozen to death on the road on a cold winter night in a remote area. We were far away from our home. We didn't see any cars on the road. After about 30 minutes of desperate work to pull the car out, we finally saw a car approaching. A man stepped out of the car. He offered to help and took out equipment to get the car out of the ditch. Even now I just can't think of any words to express thanks to him. He said, "I am glad I am here for you."



This unlikely encounter reminded me that life is not all about me, but about all of us: you, me, and everybody else. That night I experienced God's grace and amazing presence in the midst of tangible fear--so real on that snowy night. How can we as real-life people not believe in encountering an incarnational presence? We are so divinely interconnected that God works through our lives to bring help, hope, and healing to us.

People around me talk about the uncomfortable and scary times, especially after the Presidential election. Many openly talk about uncertainty, worries and fears. Some lose sleep over the future of our country. We suffer from disrupted peace. I cannot help but believe that God is mindful of us—Immanuel, God is with us. It's time to overcome those negative narratives and embrace the scandalous love of God. I anticipate God shows up to give us time and opportunity to encounter an incarnational presence for such a time as this. What if God shows up in your unlikely story this Advent season? Advent might just be the best time for a God encounter. When God shows up, we experience an incarnational presence through stories of pain and promise. We prepare hearts and spirits to embrace the wonder of God's love, allowing us once again to live into the freedom from sin and death through God's salvation and reliving what God has done through the birth of Jesus Christ to Mary and Joseph. God wants to birth something new in each of us despite our imperfect life and circumstances. Are your eyes and calendar open for an unlikely encounter?

This Advent we dare to go on an unlikely journey. Practice saying "no" to merely surviving. Say "yes" to actively waiting for what God wants to birth in you and in me.

## Arts at Aldersgate Christmas Concert

**Sunday, Dec 15,  
2:00 p.m.**

Please join us for our annual Christmas Concert. Details elsewhere on this page. This inspiring concert is a simple and wonderful opportunity to invite someone to visit the church, and we encourage each member of Aldersgate to bring a guest and fill the Sanctuary! The concert will last approximately an hour and fifteen minutes, and will be followed by our usual grand reception in the auditorium. Admission is free as always, and we will collect a free-will offering at the end of the program. Join us as we sing, play, and ring in the Christmas season!

ALDERSGATE  
ADVENT WORKSHOP &  
CHRISTMAS TREE LIGHTING

**Sunday, December 1**

ADVENT WORKSHOP AT 5:30 PM  
CAROLS AT 6:40 PM  
TREE LIGHTING AT 7 PM

Join us to make Christmas crafts, sign Christmas cards, sing carols, enjoy hot chocolate, and our second outdoor Christmas tree lighting!



**More activities on the following  
pages!!**

# December Events

[www.aldersgate.org](http://www.aldersgate.org)



2313 Concord Pike  
Wilmington, Delaware 19803

### Worship Services

9 AM Contemporary

11 AM Traditional

10 AM Sunday School for all ages

### Christmas Eve

#### Worship Services

4 PM Family Service with  
Children's Nativity

9 PM Traditional Service  
Candlelight Service



**Advent Workshop and  
Outdoor Christmas Tree Lighting  
Sunday, December 1 at 5:30**



**UWF- Cookie Walk  
Saturday, December 14 at 9 AM**



**Christmas Concert  
Sunday, December 15 at 2 PM**



**Blue Christmas Worship Service  
Thursday, December 19 at 5:30**  
\*A light supper will follow

**JOY OF  
CHRISTMAS**

**DECEMBER 15, 2:00 PM**

Featuring Chancel Choir, Aldersgate Brass, Gateway Ringers, Junior Choir, Vocal Impact, Cherub Choir and Journey Band

**Guest Musicians: Susan Ryan, John Packard, and  
a String Ensemble**

The concert will include well-known carols, selections by John Rutter, and more











## Christmas Pageant

Come be a part of the service.

If your child will be at the 4 o'clock service on Christmas Eve and wants to be in the nativity pageant please let the Sunday School teachers know so we make sure we have the right number of costumes.

Ages 3 +.

(Sandy Anderson, Jen Davison, Amy Honisch)

Hello Aldersgate Family,

*I am excited to be a part of the Children's Ministries team. Thank you for your encouragement and support as I step into this new role as Director of Children's Ministries. A special thank you to Sharon Jennelly who worked tirelessly to make the transition as seamless as possible – wishing her great joy in retirement! Please do not hesitate to let me know if you have any suggestions, comments, wishes and wants. May our children be blessed by our work together.*

Pam Downey

[pam.downey@aldersgatede.org](mailto:pam.downey@aldersgatede.org)

## YOUTH GRADES 6 - 12



# IMPACT

WEDNESDAYS

6:00 - 7:30 PM

**FUN - FOOD - FELLOWSHIP**

DINNER SERVED

QUESTIONS:

[PAM.DOWNNEY@ALDERSGATEDE.ORG](mailto:PAM.DOWNNEY@ALDERSGATEDE.ORG)





### **Congregational Care**

Change is all around us. Change in the daily weather and seasons, changes in our health or mood, changes in elected leadership, changes at church, or changes in our home or finances. However, what hasn't changed, is God's love and presence with us.

In this role of Director of Congregational Care, I see every day the many ways that Aldersgate spreads God's love as we care for one another. Many of you have brainstormed with me new ways to spread that love even further. When you hear of folks in need of visitation or Pastoral care, or if want to help in new ways, please continue to call the church at 302-478-2575 or email me at: Cheryl.merritt@aldersgatede.org

Let's keep the conversation going!  
**Cheryl Merritt**

*Aldersgate families,*

*One week ago, 46 of us were able to gather to share a moment of worship and prayer together in our "Light up the Labyrinth" service. Bishop LaTrelle Easterling shares her post-election statement on our Conference Webpage and we are sharing it with you below. In her message, she encourages us to recommit ourselves to our baptismal covenant, calling us to stand in solidarity with one another as the family of God, seek grace, yearn for justice, and live as children of light.*

*We hope to see you in worship on Sunday where we continue to pray for peace and remember our call as Christians to share the light of Christ with our neighbors. Let's continue to take care of one another in love.*

**Cheryl Merritt**

The following is Bishop LaTrelle Easterling's post-election statement:

Beloved of God:

The presidential election has been held and our nation elected a new administration. There are those who are rejoicing. There are those who are devastated. This is true within our congregations and our communities and evidences a very different interpretation of the candidates and what is best for our country. The chasm between these two interpretations may be as wide as we have experienced in recent memory. Such circumstances can lead to suspicion, resentment and perhaps even hostility toward one another. As we live into the days ahead, may we be mindful of these varied perspectives and maintain respect for one another's worldview. And, may we repent of our failure to listen to one another and understand one another more fully.

While our approach to the election may be different, for Christ-followers there is one thing that remains consistent and is sacrosanct: our baptismal covenant. Through the waters of baptism, we renounce sin and make a profession of faith. We renounce the spiritual forces of wickedness, reject the evil powers of this world and repent of sin. We accept the freedoms and power God gives us to resist evil, injustice and oppression, in whatever forms they present themselves. We confess Jesus Christ as our Savior, put our whole trust in his grace, and promise to serve him as Lord of our lives. Finally, we commit to doing this in union with Christ's Church, which is open to all ages, nations and races.

***Continued on next page***

This regenerated identity in Christ supersedes all other identities, affiliations, affinities, or memberships. At this time in our nation's history, and always, the waters of baptism must run deeper than the waters of our secular identities.

As United Methodists and those who are baptized, we are called to live out our faith in communities – not as partisans, but as those baptized into the image and likeness of Jesus Christ— building beloved community and creating God's kin-dom. This new life compels us to live the prophetic mandate of working for justice, loving mercifully and walking in humility with God. It requires that we treat others as we want to be treated. We are called to love our neighbors as ourselves and to understand that we are, in fact, our brother's and sister's keeper. We have pledged that we stand in solidarity with Christ as he announces the purpose and promise of his ministry: to bring good news to the poor, release to the captives, sight to the blind and free those who are oppressed. This is our sacred task, and it supersedes all others.

Further, as United Methodists, we have, through our Social Principles, affirmed that while we embrace diversity as a precious gift and understand the challenges it can create, we are called to a disciplined discipleship “to do no harm, do good, and follow the ordinances of God.” We reject any governmental use of threats and other forms of coercion and hold government officials accountable to use their power in service to the common good. This includes the responsibility to uphold the Constitution of the United States of America and the rights, protections, liberties and freedoms it affords to all its citizens. This is our duty as citizens and it supersedes all other agendas or enticements.

Wherever you stand on the outcome of this election, there are those in our churches, communities, and country who feel threatened, targeted, rejected and vulnerable. This includes the poor, immigrants, migrants, LGBTQIA+ people, women, and communities of color. To love them as neighbors is to see their pain, acknowledge their grief and stand in solidarity with them against evil, oppression or tyranny. God holds each of us in a beloved, healing and empowering embrace, including those who feel righteous indignation and anguish. May we know with certainty that God is with us.

So beloved, today we remember who and whose we are. Today we pray for the President-elect, Donald Trump, and his administration. Today we recommit ourselves to our baptismal covenant. Today we stand in solidarity with one another as the family of God. Today we seek grace. Today we yearn for justice, but we must also be willing to take a moment to grieve with those who wail at our unrealized possibilities. Let us always remember that God is present.

Lord, let us hold fast to our hope that remains rooted in the resurrected Christ. Let us live as children of light. Let us embody the high calling of our faith and be willing to act as the hands and feet of Jesus, the Christ, knowing that blessed are those who hunger and thirst for righteousness, for they shall be satisfied.

In Christ's love,

**Bishop LaTrelle Miller Easterling**



## UFW Reversal Advent Calendar

A holiday tradition back by popular demand (& great need) is the 2024 UFW Reverse Advent Calendar Food Drive. The Reverse Advent Calendar provides an opportunity for individuals and families to help those with food insecurity in our community. Instead of receiving a small item with a traditional advent Calendar, participants get to donate food items. It's a way to focus on giving and can be a great way to teach children about social responsibility. Donations can be dropped off in the red shopping carts by the glass doors or in the narthex.. Donations will be used to fill Aldersgate's Free Little Pantry.

*Sponsored by UWF Hanna Circle.*

## REVERSE ADVENT CALENDAR

**Food Drive Sponsored by UWF Hannah Circle**

Please bring items for December 1-8 on December 8

Items for December 9-15 on December 15

Items for December 16-22 on December 22

December 23-24 on Christmas Eve

❖ Pop-Top cans, when possible

- December 1 – box of cereal
- December 2 – peanut butter
- December 3 – stuffing mix
- December 4 – boxed potatoes
- December 5 – macaroni and cheese
- December 6 – canned fruit
- December 7 – canned tomatoes
- December 8 – canned tuna
- December 9 – dessert mix
- December 10 – applesauce
- December 11 – granola bars
- December 12 – a jar of spice
- December 13 – canned beans
- December 14 – box of crackers
- December 15 – package of rice
- December 16 – jelly
- December 17 – box of pasta
- December 18 – spaghetti sauce
- December 19 – chicken noodle soup
- December 20 – tomato soup
- December 21 – can of corn
- December 22 – can of meat/chicken
- December 23 – can of carrots
- December 24 – can of green beans

\*\* Donations can be dropped off in the red shopping carts by the glass doors or narthex. Food donations will be used for the Aldersgate Free Little Pantry.



## From Your Lay Leaders:

Welcome to the most joyous season of all... Christmas! At Aldersgate we have many traditions, both old and new, that help us to honor the birth of Jesus Christ.

Aldersgate is a wonderful place to come and embrace the celebration. We are focused on Jesus' birth, and the activities we have planned allow us to slow down and appreciate why we celebrate Christmas in the first place. We encourage everyone to participate in two, three, or more Christmas events. There is something for everyone!

I also wanted to thank the Aldersgate family for allowing me (Sharon) to serve as a Lay Leader for the last six years. It has been an honor serving you and representing you, the congregation during this time. While I won't be acting as a Lay Leader after the end of 2024, I will still be very active in our Church.

Blessing to All

***Sharon Owens and Anne Murray***

## THANK YOU !

### THE PECAN SALES WAS A SUCCESS !



WE ARE SO GRATEFUL  
FOR OUR ALDERSGATE  
COMMUNITY

THANKS TO YOU FOR THE  
CONTINUED SUPPORT OF  
WOMEN, YOUTH AND CHILDREN  
MINISTRIES



United  
Women  
in Faith

## Catalyst Core Team

### Our Mission Possible

As we continue our year-long Catalyst initiative, we are currently focused on integrating everything we've discovered about our congregation's gifts and passions, our leaders' purpose and focus, and the community's hopes and needs. Our objective is to discern the one thing our congregation is uniquely positioned and called to do. With the guidance of our Synergist, Jack Shitama, we'll develop an idea for an experiment based on that one thing that will help us learn more about where God is calling Aldersgate and about our community.

We are excited and challenged by this next phase of Catalyst. It's comforting to know that we have the support and involvement of our conference and the three other churches sharing this experience.

We thank you for your prayers of support and encouragement.

### LEAD TEAM MEETING MINUTES

(October 22, 2024)

#### Boy Scout Finances and Accounts

"Annual Unit Charter Agreement" includes:

Aldersgate responsibilities:

Administering the assets of the "Unit", and,

Authorizing a separate bank account for the "Unit" using Aldersgate's EIN, and providing the "Unit" with policies and procedures for financial reporting and asset management.

Scouting Unit responsibilities:

Follow all Charter Organization policies and procedures regarding the management of funds.

Trustees will review these responsibilities and propose plans to ensure compliance.

#### Apportionment:

The Lead Team approved a proposal to our District Superintendent to reduce Aldersgate's 2025 Conference Apportionment from \$126,820 to \$100,000, together with supporting documentation.

#### Other:

Kathy Daum reported that during a recent meeting with parents of younger members, strong interest was expressed in returning the "Contemporary Service" to the auditorium.



# Mission Trip

We are headed to  
Appalachia!

July 19 - July 25, 2025

All are welcome.

Questions:

pam.downey@aldersgatede.org



IGNITE OCEAN CITY, MD  
MARCH 7-9, 2025

Let's go, let's go, let's go  
Ignite Youth Conference 2025!

## Spotlight on Confirmation

Almost 1000 stickers - Confirmation Class challenge - Can you find  
GOD'S LOVE  
from among all the imposters?



### Save the Date!

#### Aldersgate Youth Players Performances 2025

Friday, February 28<sup>th</sup> @ 7 p.m. and

Saturday, March 1<sup>st</sup> & Sunday, March 2<sup>nd</sup> @ 2 p.m.

#### Become an Aldersgate Youth Musical "Angel"!

In the theatre, people that provide financial support to help underwrite the cost of doing a show are called "Angels." All contributions are tax deductible.

If you would like to become an **Aldersgate Youth Musical "Angel,"** please:

Donate online at [www.aldersgatede.org](http://www.aldersgatede.org) by selecting Youth Musical and put "Angels" in the Notes. Fill out the form below with a check made payable to Aldersgate UMC with Youth Musical in the subject line. Forms and checks may be:

Given to Janet Atwater or placed in her box in the Hub (Youth Musical Director)

Mailed to Janet Atwater c/o Aldersgate: 2313 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE 19803

**THANK YOU SO MUCH!**

#### Aldersgate Youth Musical "Angels" Program

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Amount Donated: [ ] \$25 [ ] \$50 [ ] \$100 [ ] \$250 [ ] Other \_\_\_\_\_

May we list your name in the program as an "Angel"? [ ] YES [ ] NO

David Yeatman passed away on  
November 17, 2024



HAPPY  
ANNIVERSARY

Tom and Barbara Lugg

Dec 16 57 years

Jung Moon Kim and Pastor Kyung-Hee Sa

Dec 22 39 years



Volunteers are needed to distribute free food boxes/bags provided by the Longwood Foundation's HOPP Ministry to anyone in need in our community. In December, **we meet on Friday, the 20th**. We gather in the Aldersgate parking lot at 12:15 p.m. to set up and get organized, and then distribute boxes from 12:30 p.m. until 1:30 p.m. Volunteers are needed to hold up signs at the curb on Concord Pike, direct the flow of cars to our distribution point as they come in, and place boxes/bags into cars. This is a rewarding, hands-on ministry that directly serves our local community and also provides opportunity for fellowship.



## Cookie Walk!

**Saturday, December 14th**

**Doors open at 9 a.m. - until cookies are gone!**

Fill a box with homemade Christmas cookies for \$15/box.

Christmas Crafts, baked goods, holiday snacks,  
and "New to You" Christmas decorations

Monetary donations also accepted.

Proceeds support Missions for Women, Children and Youth.

## Calling all Bakers!

**Cookies are needed for the Cookie Walk to be a success**

*Cookies labeled "Cookie Walk" can be left in the small kitchen next to the auditorium by 4 p.m.  
Friday, December 13th or Saturday, December 14th between 7 and 8:30 a.m.*

Sign up to bake cookies in the Narthex after services starting Nov 24th or by  
clicking:



United  
Women  
in Faith

<https://eeumw.wufoo.com/forms/uwf-cookie-walk-bakers/>



# POINSETTIA ORDER FORM

ORDERS CAN BE SUBMITTED NOVEMBER 1, 2024 THROUGH DECEMBER 6, 2024

Each plant is \$16.00 Please make checks payable to Aldersgate UMC.

Purchased poinsettias may be picked up from the Narthex  
following any service on Christmas Eve. **DEADLINE: Friday, DECEMBER 6, 2024**

Given by: \_\_\_\_\_ Phone: \_\_\_\_\_

# of Plants: \_\_\_\_\_ Total Amount Enclosed: (\$\_\_\_/plant): \_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_ I will pick up my poinsettia order

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"

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

Plant #5: Please Circle: In "Memory of" or In "Honor of"

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

For accounting purposes, please enclose payment & order form in an envelope,  
SEPARATE from your offering. Thanks!



Worship Schedule: In-Person & Live Streamed

Journey Service at 9 a.m. in the Sanctuary

Sunday School at 10:05 a.m.

Traditional Service at 11 a.m. in the Sanctuary

You can find Live-Stream at:

<https://www.facebook.com/pg/AldersgateDE/videos/>

Or YouTube at: [AldersgateDE - YouTube](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnZoqvVVH4kvH_BknkW3y3w)  
Or

[https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnZoqvVVH4kvH\\_BknkW3y3w](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnZoqvVVH4kvH_BknkW3y3w)  
And hit the subscribe button



Annual Rummage Sale  
April 26, 2025!!



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Chili & Chocolate XXIII

Saturday, Feb 1, 2025, 5 PM - save the date!

2025 wildcard category: **GRAINS**

Note: Sign-ups will start in December.



Aldersgate United Methodist Church—A significant place where disciples are made!

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED

Non-Profit  
Organization  
U.S. Postage  
PAID  
598  
Wilmington, DE  
19850

Aldersgate  
United Methodist Church  
Open Hearts. Open Minds. Open Doors.  
2313 Concord Pike  
Wilmington, Delaware 19803  
(302) 478-2575  
[www.aldersgatede.org](http://www.aldersgatede.org)