

Call to Me
and I will answer you



August 2025

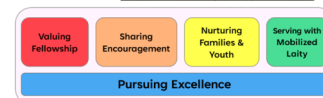
J E R E M I A H
33:3

The Messenger

Aldersgate UMC



A significant place where disciples are made



Carrying You in My Heart

The Rev. Dr. Kyung-Hee Sa

Dear beloved Aldersgate family,

As I write my final newsletter to you, my heart is full—overflowing with deep gratitude, tender memories, and abiding love. Serving as your pastor has been a profound blessing, and I carry you with me into every next step.

Each Sunday, I was embraced—sometimes quite literally—by the unwavering love of our children. Almost every week, little hands would reach for a hug, offering crayon-colored notes that read, “I love you, Pastor Kyung Hee.” One precious child would quietly slip out of her seat at the 9 a.m. service and meet me in the center aisle to walk out together in recessional—a holy moment of joy and grace I will never forget. In these sacred gestures, I glimpsed the heart of Aldersgate—a community rooted in love, warmth, and vibrant faith.

Some of the most moving moments took place right in our sanctuary, when concerts for the community and the annual children’s musicals filled the space with music, laughter, and the Spirit’s presence. Though they happened within our walls, they reached far beyond them—welcoming neighbors, friends, and strangers to encounter the joy and creativity of Christ through you.

I’ve also cherished my visits with members at Cokesbury Village and Maris Grove. Though they can’t attend worship regularly, their deep support, wisdom, and love for the church have spoken volumes about the enduring strength of faith and community across generations.

And through our Readiness and Catalyst Initiatives, I’ve learned to trust God in the most transforming way—entering the unknown, listening more closely, and gleaning God’s hope in every challenge.

As Paul wrote, “I thank my God every time I remember you... being confident of this, that he who began a good work in you will carry it on to completion until the day of Christ Jesus” (Philippians 1:3, 6).

May the God who goes before you lead you always with grace. May Christ dwell richly in your hearts, and may the Spirit empower you to be light and hope in this world. Amen.



Thank You
Pastor Kyung-Hee
and Jung-Moon



Emmanuel Dining Room

“Feed the hungry and help those in trouble. Then your light will shine out from the darkness and the darkness around you will be bright as noon.”

Isaiah 58: 10-12

Staff members Cheryl Merritt, Pam Downey, Anastasiia Sidorova and Susan Schranck served meals on July 16 to over 250 people.

Thank You!

Blessings,

Anne Murray, asmpelican@gmail.com



HOPP Food Distribution - Friday, August 22, 2025

Volunteers are needed to distribute free food boxes/bags provided by the Longwood Foundation's HOPP Ministry to anyone in need in our community. 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.



A Few September Events

September will be here before we know it.

Saturday, September 6 - Saturday of Service

Sunday, September 7 - Rally Day

Sunday, September 14 - Sunday School Begins



**All of August
Single Worship Service
10 a.m.**

Welcome our Newest Members to the Aldersgate Church Family



Congratulations to new members Connor and Lynzy McGee and Gregory and Barbara Rice.
Congratulations to the Rice family on the baptisms of Angelyn and Gwendolyn.
Thank you Burkett family for sponsoring.



Left to right: The McGee Family with 2 sons, Pastor Kyung-Hee, the Rice Family with 4 daughters, the Burkett Family with 2 daughters.

CONGREGATIONAL CARE



Staying Connected: Maris Grove Summer Gathering

In June, Susan Schranck and I met with some of our Aldersgate family living at Maris Grove for a time of fellowship and communion. Attendees included Dot Baughman, Mary Bushman, Bob Pyle, Barbara and Bill Bareford, Pam Wright, Ann and David Benfer, and Jessica Johnston. Special thanks to Pam for reserving the room for us!

We went around the table and members shared different ways they like to stay engaged with the life of the church:

Attend seasonal gatherings like this one

Watch worship services online

Call the church office for prayer needs or a ride

Read *The Messenger* for updates

Visit the columbarium with loved ones from out of town

We discussed how folks wishing to visit the columbarium outside of normal office hours should please call the church to schedule an appointment so that we can let you in.

As AUMC approaches its **75th anniversary**, we took time to reminisce about the faithful service of our members. Mary shared memories of teaching Sunday School and Dot reflected on her committee work choosing the floral curtains and green paint for the Auditorium! This led to a spontaneous challenge for one another to generate a list of favorite old hymns: *Hymn of Promise*, *The Navy Hymn (Eternal Father, Strong to Save)*, *On Eagle's Wings*, *A Mighty Fortress Is Our God* were lifted up. We challenged ourselves to try and think of other hymns before our next meeting in the fall so that we can suggest them for future worship services.

Members shared their excitement after hearing about all that our youth are engaged in like VBS and the mission trip and some of the newer community partnerships such as working with the Wilmington Kitchen Collective, the Free Little Pantry, and HOPP monthly food drive-thru. One member shared, "I continue to give to Aldersgate because this is my church and I want to see this continue." We're looking forward to gathering again at Maris Grove in the late fall. All friends of Aldersgate around Maris Grove are welcome to join us!

Subject: Social Media Help Needed

The Communications Team is looking for someone to be the Social Media manager for the church. If you are interested in posting on Facebook and maybe Instagram for AUMC, please contact Betsy DIEMER at 302379-4770.



Pen-Del Annual Conference, May 2025– Cheryl Merritt, Reserve Lay Member



In May, I attended the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference in Ocean City, MD as Aldersgate's Reserve Lay Member. The theme of this year's conference was Rejoice in the Lord – Dwell in Joy!

Worship is interwoven among holy conferencing and ministry updates over the 3-day conference. Pen-Del is known for our worship! The energy in the room is electric with everyone praising together. We witnessed powerful Bible study teachings and sermons from Bishop Latrelle Easterling and Bishop Sandra Steiner Ball reflecting on Paul's letter to the Phillippians 4:4-9 where Paul references Isaiah and the wilderness. We were reminded that when we find ourselves in the wilderness, the unknown, and the messiness of life, this is where we learn to trust God to do a new thing! We were encouraged to rejoice and dwell in joy!

We heard many conference ministry updates during the general and laity sessions. Camp Pecometh, UWF, UMM, UMCOR, VIM and Missional Action Planning just to name a few! Young people's ministry was highlighted with the announcement of the new ministry director, Natiya Bennett. They encouraged folks to attend the upcoming Intergenerational Worship Forum June 2026 and Ignite Youth Rally March 20-22, 2026. Methodist connectionalism was celebrated as we have a built-in network of congregations making it easy to multiply the impact of our ministries when we work together!

During the business part of conference, we engaged in holy conferencing and voted on UMC constitutional amendments and local resolutions. We voted on 4 amendments: Regionalization (moving from a US centric church structure to a global structure), revising inclusive gender and ability language for membership, strengthening anti-racism work, and clarifying criteria for elected clergy to General Conference. A 2/3 aggregate world vote is needed to pass these therefore, the voting results are expected in November.

We adopted local resolutions: Apportionment plan of \$3,965,755 to support ministry needs, improved clergy pension and health benefits, kinship care policy for clergy, and closing of Union UMC in Salisbury, MD and Red Lion UMC, in Red Lion Delaware.

It was my honor to represent Aldersgate this year. If you ever have the opportunity to attend annual conference I highly recommend it. I shared my experiences in our worship service on July 13th. If you have questions about any of the material, presentations, or voting items please ask anytime! I also invite you to watch the livestream next year and watch this year's recordings on the Pen-Del website pen-del.org/2025-annual-conference. It will lift your spirits and renew your faith in unexpected ways! "Rejoice in the Lord always; again I will say, Rejoice!" (Phillippians 4:4)





Sunday School Classes Begin September 14

All Classes Begin at 10:00 am

Nursery - Gr. 1 (Room 132)

Gr. 2 - Gr. 5 (Room 137)

Gr. 6 - Gr. 12 (Student Ministry Center)

Please prayerfully consider volunteering your time and talent to our Sunday School classes - teachers and substitutes needed.

Questions: pam.downey@aldersgatede.org



IMPACT begins
9/17

6:00 pm - 7:30 pm

Youth Grades 6 - 12

Get ready for some lively conversation with our *What If?* series


What if... *Ananias hadn't healed Paul?*

... *Eli had not recognized God?*

... *Judas had not betrayed Jesus?*

and many more!

Dinner begins at 6:00 pm



Please prayerfully consider volunteering in Youth Ministry.
pam.downey@aldersgatede.org

BACKPACK BLESSING

AUGUST 24

10 AM SERVICE



Thank you to our Vacation Bible School participants and their families.

A total of \$271.10 was raised for UMCOR. It was inspiring to see the pennies, nickels, dimes and quarters that were donated.

Thanks also to the money counters who counted and organized all of the change!



You are invited

Confirmation Information Meeting

Sunday, September 28, 2025
12 Noon Room 236

FOR STUDENTS ENTERING GRADES 7-12 WHO HAVE
NOT YET BEEN CONFIRMED AND THEIR PARENTS
QUESTIONS? PAM.DOWNEY@ALDERSGATEDE.ORG

YOUTH AND YOUNG ADULT MINISTRIES

Pam Downey,
**Director of Youth and
Young Adult
Ministries**



We are already planning Vacation Bible School 2026!

Save the Date
June 15-19, 2026



Mission Trip Send Off—Saturday, July 19

Director of Congregational Care, Cheryl Merritt asked those going on the trip to make a circle and everyone else made a larger circle around them. Cheryl then offered a prayer.



Come & Sing Choir

Have you ever thought about singing with the Chancel Choir? You're invited to our Summer Come & Sing Choir on **Sunday, July 27th, August 3rd and August 24th at 9 a.m.** Everyone is welcome—no robes, no weeknight rehearsals—just come as you are and enjoy singing for the 10 a.m. worship! It's a no-pressure way to experience choir with no obligation to join in the fall.

Help Restart Our Kids' Chime Choir - Volunteer Needed!

Do you love working with children? Can you read music? Are you excited about helping young people grow in faith and music?

Aldersgate's Music Ministry is looking for a dedicated volunteer to lead our children's chime choir - a fun, faith-filled ensemble where kids will learn music basics, grow in confidence, and participate in worship through ringing.

For more information or to express interest, please contact our Music Director Anastasiia Sidorova at anastasiia.sidorova@aldersgatede.org

Let's help our children ring out their joy and faith together!



The Journey Worship Service is Moving!

The Journey worship service is moving to the Auditorium on September 14! Along with this physical move, we are seeking God's guidance on making this an important complement to Aldersgate's existing traditional worship service. You can expect the Journey service to be an intergenerational, family-friendly, less formal worship experience that will meet worshipers where they are. There will be lots of music and lots of energy! The service will remain at 9 a.m. each Sunday. We welcome new ideas and are eager to hear from you! Reach out to Anastasiia Sidorova or Henry Daum to get involved. Please join us in praying that this change will further God's impact on our community.

Countdown to Rally Day - 7 Weeks!



It's hard to believe, but Rally Day is just around the corner-and we're already counting down! Mark your calendars now for a meaningful and joy-filled weekend as we launch a new season of ministry and connection here at

Aldersgate UMC. We'll begin with a Day of Service on Saturday, September 6th in the morning, where everyone is invited to come together to serve both our church and our community.

Then on Sunday, September 7th at 10 a.m., we'll gather for a Unified Worship Service in the Sanctuary. This joyful service will bring our whole congregation together in one place, with inspiring music from many of Aldersgate's Music Ministries -Gateway Ringers, Chancel Choir, Journey Band , Aldersgate Brass, and more! It's a beloved Aldersgate tradition to come together after summer and step into a new season as a church family!

Following worship, everyone is invited to stay for our Church Picnic-a time to relax, reconnect, and enjoy great food and fellowship. Come learn about how you can Gather, Grow, and Go with Aldersgate in new ways this fall.

Bring a friend, bring a chair, and bring your appetite!

LEAD TEAM REPORT

At our June meeting, the Catalyst Team proposed to the Lead Team to work together to move Aldersgate ever forward towards being a more vital church. The goal is to share learnings from the Catalyst experience with the Lead Team members in order to apply the lens of church vitality into decision making and encourage the Lead Team to move beyond church maintenance work and lean into visioning for the church's future.

Next steps include a commitment for Catalyst Team at each Lead Team meeting to introduce vitality concepts and action steps to test over the coming month. In between monthly Lead Team meetings, Catalyst Team members will be in conversation with the Lead Team members to offer 1:1 coaching on vitality concepts specific to the teams that they lead. The effectiveness of this relationship model will be re-evaluated in 6-12 months.

The proposal was accepted by the Lead Team, and 1 to 1 coaching is underway in preparation for our next Lead Team meeting.

The Lead Team members are:

Senior Pastor Rev. Dr. Kyung-Hee Sa

Co-Lay Leader Anne Murray

Co-Lay Leader Diane Shea

Board of Trustees Chair Debbie Mulrooney

Finance Committee Chair Bob Reis

Staff Parish Relations Rep. Kathy Daum

Communications Chair Betsy Diemer

Dir. of Children & Youth Ministry Pam Downey

Gather Coordinator Henry Daum

Grow Coordinator Ellen Leonzio

Go Coordinator Stacie DiGiacoma

Chair Bill Culliton

Co-Chair David Harrington

Welcome to Aldersgate's Interim Pastor

Rev. Jennifer Kerby

Bishop LaTrelle Easterling has appointed Rev. Jennifer Kerby as the Interim Pastor of our Congregation. Pastor Kerby will begin her new responsibilities on October 1. Pastor Kerby has some commitments in September that do not allow her to start full time until October 1. She will begin to meet with staff and leadership beginning in mid-August.

A native Delawarean having grown up in Newark, Rev. Jennifer is a lifelong follower of Jesus, through a wide variety of life stages, work and community service experiences, and cultural/ethnic communities. During her adventuresome twenties, she migrated beyond the state borders, living in Boston, MA (attending theology school the first time) and Gilroy, CA (the Garlic Capital of the World so they claim). After that, a growing family, along with supporting her husband's business, working part-time and volunteering at church and nonprofits kept her occupied through her thirties and early forties.

After hearing the call to ministry (the second time) and with four children, ages 15-3 at home, she entered Lancaster Seminary in September 2001 (yes just days before 9/11), was commissioned as a Probationary Elder in 2005 and ordained as a Full Elder of the Peninsula-Delaware Annual Conference in 2008. She loves joyful and vibrant worship in many expressions inclusive of traditional, contemporary, reflective/meditational, participatory and conversational; when worship is Spirit led, it becomes life affirming, life-giving and life transforming. She is also gifted and experienced in the areas of administrative ministry and Christ-based social justice advocacy. She returns to full-time ministry after retiring in 2020 from Mount Lebanon UMC.

She and her husband, Brent Apotheker, celebrated 38 years of life together this year and are enjoying being home alone now that their four children have all found their way in their lives, careers and pursuits beyond their childhood home on Foulk Road.

They are looking forward to this next chapter of their lives with Aldersgate and pray God's blessing on all that we will do and experience together in Jesus' name.

After August 3 and until October 1, Chaplain Rev. Metty Mesick will fill in as needed to preach, lead worship, and cover pastoral emergencies.

Celebrating Pastor Sa

Sunday, August 3rd, will be Pastor Sa's last day with us. We will have a reception for her after the single service at 10 a.m. in the auditorium. There will be two baskets in the Narthex that Sunday - one for cards and one for a love offering for Pastor Sa and Jung-Moon. If writing a check, it should be made out to Aldersgate UMC with "love offering Pastor Sa" written on the memo line.

For those who won't be able to join us in person on August 3rd, here are other options for cards and donations.

Cards only can go directly to Pastor Sa at Aldersgate. Mail them to her attention or put them in her mailbox. (HUB Mailbox #5)

Donations can be mailed to the attention of Susan Schranck or put in her mailbox. (HUB Mailbox #10/11)

Those wishing to donate via Amplify can do so and just designate 'love offering Pastor Sa'.

Help us celebrate Pastor Sa's time with us and wish her and Jung-Moon a warm farewell.

Anne Murray and Diane Shea, Lay Leaders



Fay Whittle July 17, 2025

HAPPY ANNIVERSARY

Dan and Julia Shay	August 2	17 years
David and Betty Dunbar	August 5	53 years
John and Marian Wright	August 10	51 years
Chris and Donna Ruggiero	August 12	30 years
Dave and Penny Short	August 13	48 years
Ralph and Emily Bankert	August 14	60 years
Michael and Lynne Conlan	August 14	49 years
Richard and Kathleen Brady	August 18	41 years
Bob and Carolyn Reis	August 19	53 years
Doug and Donnie DeVoll	August 21	60 years
Robert and Debra Mulrooney	August 21	32 years
John and Mary Jane Prince	August 22	33 years
Vincent & Diana Vandenbraak	August 22	43 years
Khris and Rebecca Townsend	August 25	24 years
Rick and Tina Betz	August 29	55 years
Richard and Lorraine Fleming	August 29	72 years
Bill and Edith Harvey	August 30	45 years
Bill and Deborah Hartnett	August 31	52 years



Angelyn Lily Rice	July 13, 2025	Daughter of Greg and Barbara Rice
Gwendolyn Marian Rice	July 13, 2025	Daughter of Greg and Barbara Rice



United Women in Faith



SAVE THE DATE !

Fall Program and PotLuck

September 15 , 2025
6 pm

All are welcome!





CRAZY LADIES AND UWF

THANK YOU FOR ALL YOUR HELP FILLING THE PANTRY AT NEIGHBORHOOD HOUSE

REMINDER: COLLECTION FOR THE AUMC LITTLE PANTRY WILL CONTINUE THE NEED IS GREAT!

Summer Worship Schedule

July and August

One Service at 10 a.m.

You can find the live stream

https://www.facebook.com/AldersgateDE/live_videos/

Or YouTube

https://www.youtube.com/channel/UCnZoqvVVH4kvH_BknkW3y3w

and hit the subscribe button.

Upcoming Events

Friday, July 25: HOPP free food box distribution

Sunday, August 3: Pastor Sa Reception

Friday, August 22: HOPP free food box distribution

Saturday, September 6: Saturday of Service

Sunday, September 7: Rally Day, 1 Service 10 a.m.

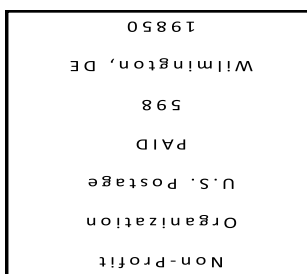
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Aldersgate United Methodist Church—A significant place where disciples are made!

ADDRESS SERVICE REQUESTED



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