

Aldersgate Advocate



But we have this
treasure in jars of
clay to show that
this all-surpassing
power is from God
and not from us.
2 Corinthians 4:7

Beside the Alabaster Jar

November 16, 2006

Dear friends,

Advent, this season leading up to Christmas, offers a time of reflection and renewal as we get ready for the birth of Jesus Christ. Over the years, I have found that when I take the time to consider the meaning of Christ's birth, my Christmas celebration takes on new significance. Yet, I am very much aware of the very busy schedules that we all lead throughout the year and more intensely during this season.

I pray that each of you will find a place during this season to reflect on the true meaning of Christmas. It's not about material gifts and office parties; nor is it about having the "perfect" Christmas with plastic smiles pasted on sad interiors. Christ's mass (Christmas) acknowledges the birth or beginning of the one who will be our redeemer, the one who makes us new, even if we are 55 going on 56, or 75, going on 76. Jesus Christ re-creates God's love in our lives.

Sometimes our lives become so hectic that we are getting ready for our next appointment while still in the middle of the current activity. Going from one thing, to the next, and to the next, makes it hard to relish life in the moment we are living it. My one word of advice, as we move into Advent, is to experience the *kairos* moment of life especially when you find yourself caught up by the *chronos*, or chronological moment.

Many of you are aware that in July and August, my family was preparing for the birth of a child. My first birth grandchild was born on August 12th, 2006. I was excited, reflective, and a little nervous during the time leading to Jefferey's birth. I planned for the ways in which my life would change as a result of his birth and I thought about my own years as a young mother during the years of my young adult life. Once Jefferey was born, life seemed to slow down. What was important became clear!

Isn't that what this Advent/Christmas season is all about? Acknowledging what or Who is the priority in our lives?

How has your life changed since you first accepted Christ? How will your life change as a result of your re-connection with His birth? How will you get ready for the gift of God's love in your life? Please take the time to consider these questions.

Blessing to each of you during this holy season

Pastor Sharon

Worship News

Each Advent, the worship planning team plans for themes that will help prepare us for the birth of Christ. We plan for worship that will offer an hour of reflection in the sometimes frantic weeks that lead up to Christmas. This year, you are invited to share your favorite Christmas candle holder and candle with your church family. Please bring these to the office, and they will gradually be added to our altar as the weeks go by. Aware that the gifts that God offers are sometimes the most valuable, we are suggesting that what God offers is all we really want for Christmas.

"All I Want for Christmas is a Promise" helps us to look at promises from scripture that are fulfilled in the birth of Christ. **On this first Sunday of Advent, Dec. 3rd**, we will worship at 8:30 and 10:45, with the early service including Word and Table. Children will want to join Cheryl in the 10:45 service as we begin to build a cradle to welcome the Christ child. Our lessons include references to God's promise in Jeremiah 33:14-16 and Luke 21:25-36.

On the second Sunday of Advent, Dec. 10th, our new drama group is preparing a presentation that considers the connection between hope and repentance. Our theme, "All I Want for Christmas is Hope," will be emphasized with our hymn "Hope of the World." The gospel lesson for this day is Luke 3:1-18 and tells the story of John the Baptist, the one who prepares the way for our Lord.

Sunday, Dec. 17th begins with worship in the morning, and our theme is "All I Want for Christmas is a Joy-filled Heart." The choir will offer a joyous arrangement of Isaiah 12 with their anthem, "Cry Out!" Lessons for the day are Zephaniah 3:14-20 and Luke 1:46b-55, Mary's magnificent praising of God's activity in her life. Also at 10:45, our Junior Choir will sing, introducing our Christmas Pageant which will be presented in its entirety in the afternoon of the 17th. **At 4:00 p.m. we will gather for our Christmas Pageant**, this year followed by a potluck supper coordinated by Congregational Life. Also, the new Aldersgate Band will be performing Christmas carols and we hope to have a special offering from a few of our high school students. Please mark your calendars now for this experience that will fill our hearts with joy.

On the morning of Dec. 24th, we will celebrate the fourth Sunday of Advent with one service at 9:30 a.m. This simple service of carols and the stories connected to their composition will help us to acknowledge that "All I Want for Christmas is a Blessing." In the evening, we will re-member, or re-connect to the birth of Jesus and reflect on the meaning of his birth in our lives. Each service will conclude with the lighting of Christmas candles and singing Silent Night.

On the morning of Dec. 31st we will have one service at 9:30 a.m. We are tentatively planning a watch night service that will include a recommitment to faith in Christ through John Wesley's Covenant Service. Lessons include Ecclesiastes 3:1-13, Revelation 21:1-6a, and Matthew 25:31-46. Finally, on Jan 7th we will celebrate the Epiphany (manifestation) of Christ. The gospel lesson is Matthew 2:1-12, the traditional story of the magi, and we hope to have the magi visit at our 10:45 service.

Scripture Readings - December



December 3 – 1st Sunday in Advent

Psalm 25, 1-10
Jeremiah 33, 14-16
1 Thessalonians 3:9-13
Luke 21:25-36

December 10 – 2nd Sunday in Advent

Luke 1:68-79
Malachi 3:1-4
Philippians 1:3-11
Luke 3:1-6

December 17, 3rd Sunday in Advent

Isaiah 12:2-6
Zephaniah 3:14-20
Philippians 4:4-7
Luke 3:7-18

December 24 – 4th Sunday in Advent

Luke 1:47-55
Micah 5:2-5a
Hebrews 10:5-10
Luke 1:39-45

December 24th – Christmas Eve

Psalm 96
Isaiah 9:2-7
Titus 2:11-14
Luke 2:1-20

December 31 – 1st Sunday after Christmas

Psalm 148
1 Samuel 2:18-20, 26
Colossians 3:12-17
Luke 2:41-52

Scripture Readings - January - 2007

January 7

Isaiah 43:1-7
Psalm 29
Acts 8:14-17
Luke 3:15-17, 21-22

January 21

Nehemiah 8:1-3, 5-6, 8-10
Psalm 19
1 Corinthians 12:12-31a
Luke 4:14-21

January 14

Isaiah 62:1-5
Psalm 36:5-10
1 Corinthians 12:1-11
John 2:1-11

January 28

Jeremiah 1:4-10
Psalm 71:1-6
1 Corinthians 13:1-13
Luke 4:21-30



Aldersgate's Prayer Ministry

As a community of faith, Aldersgate believes strongly in the power of prayer. There are many opportunities for you to participate in a group prayer ministry such as the Prayer Gathering on Tuesday morning at the Early Bird Bible Study at 6 a.m. and Tuesday evenings at 6:30 p.m. at Aldersgate and, of course, at any time wherever you are! We ask for you to continue to pray for: Nancy, Jan and Al, Bob and Peg, Dave, Judy, and Linda.

If you have a prayer request, please notify Debbie. She will alert AUMC's faithful prayer partners! We continue to hold all the people you have requested in prayer in the Sunday morning bulletin for a four week period of time. If you would like someone lifted in prayer for another four weeks, all you need to do is contact the Church Office or Pastor Sharon, and we are pleased to continue your request.

As we are preparing for December in November, I am reminded of a Thanksgiving Prayer that is appropriate for *each* new day! May you be blessed, and with your blessings, may you and I generously share all that God has given to us. JS

Gracious God, give us generous hearts:

- to share whatever gift it is that you have given to us...
- to acknowledge you as the giver of all good gifts...
- to give without counting the cost...
- to share without expecting something in return...
- to be wise in the way of caring for ourselves and others...
- to hold all of our treasures with open hands.
- to have gospel priorities and to align our life, love and time in their light...
- to be gracious and un-begrudging in our giving...
- to recognize the abundance of blessings in each passing day...
- to know the freedom that comes with true generosity...
- to experience the heart of the widow giving her mite....
- to accept our talents, whether many or few, and to use them in service of the Kingdom...
- to grow in giving thanks for everything...
- to be happy with having what we need and to be wise enough to know what it is that we want and do not need...
- to fall more deeply in love with the God of all generosity so that our hearts are strong enough to give away freely whatever is asked....

...Remind us often of how much you cherish us, of how abundantly you have offered gifts to us, especially in the hours of our greatest need. May we always be grateful for your reaching into our lives with surprises of joy, growth, and unearned love. Amen.

From "Fresh Bread and Other Gifts of Spiritual Nourishment by Joyce Rupp

From the Church Council/Finance Meeting, November 15, 2006

"BREAKING NEWS"

Preliminary Budget for 2007

In preparation for the annual Charge Conference scheduled for Nov. 30 the Church Council met Wednesday (Nov. 15, 2006) to reconcile the budget requests with expected income for 2007. The meeting lasted about two and a half hours. We started with a projected shortfall of more than \$44,000.00 dollars. Here are some of the largest changes made at the meeting:

- Staff Parish

saving over \$1,500.00 on health insurance by signing up for automatic payment (10% discount)

saving over \$1,000.00 on conference pension expenses by signing up for automatic payment

- **Women's Ministry** proposed having a rummage sale to help fund our St. Paul's feeding ministry. It is hoped that this will raise \$1,000.00.

- **Trustees** have removed over \$5,000.00 in a window replacement project for the parsonage. They may use money from their long term fund.

- For the past several years Carol has requested \$2,000.00 to recondition and repair the hand bells and every year it gets deferred. This year is no different; however, there is money that has been designated as a music fund. It is currently at \$529.00 and it is accumulating slowly. This money can be used for the hand bells when it gets to be enough.

- Due to the generosity of some present, there is \$10,750.00 in increases to the expected income identified.

There were other smaller changes that were identified as able to be funded by existing designated funds. We closed the meeting with a projected budget deficit of a little less than \$16,400.00. This is not much different than the budget that was approved for this year. So far this year the committees are doing well controlling costs and we haven't had to ask the Trustees to dip into their long term fund to cover a deficit, which was the contingency plan built into last year's budget.

Bob, Treasurer

The Church Council voted to submit the enclosed budget with the deficit to the Charge/Church Conference on November 30th. You are invited and encouraged to attend this meeting at 7:30 p.m. (Joanne - Secretary, Church Council)



**Our
Proposed
Budget**

	2006 Budget	2007 Requests (initial)	2007 Requests Proposed
Income			
Operating Income	242,253.00	242,053.00	252,803.00
Mortgage Income	48,000.00	48,000.00	48,000.00
Income total	290,253.00	290,053.00	300,803.00
Expenses			
Mission Shares	46,984.00	32,282.00	32,282.00
Pension		10,666.00	9,599.40
Admin	5,713.80	6,173.80	6,173.80
Education	4,400.00	4,950.00	4,300.00
Youth	300.00	300.00	200.00
Cong Life	50.00	-	-
Hospitality	825.00	500.00	500.00
Evangelism	200.00	1,000.00	-
Witness	-	-	-
Finance	2,100.00	2,244.00	2,244.00
Outreach	5,000.00	6,815.00	5,720.00
Staff-Parish	142,996.63	164,548.11	159,770.61
Trustees	46,359.08	49,705.00	43,580.00
Women's	1,500.00	1,700.00	1,200.00
Worship	2,150.00	5,600.00	3,600.00
	258,578.51	286,483.91	269,169.81
Operating gain (loss)	(16,325.51)	(44,430.91)	(16,366.81)
Mortgages			
Church Interest			
Church Principle			
	37,903.56	9,475.89	9,475.89
Parsonage Interest	15,786.96	15,786.96	15,786.96
Mortgages Total	53,690.52	25,262.85	25,262.85
Mortgage gain (loss)	(5,690.52)	22,737.15	22,737.15
Overall gain (loss)	(22,016.03)	(21,693.76)	6,370.34



Aldersgate is a family of faith ...

If you enjoy knitting or would like to learn, you are invited to join our Prayer Shawl Ministry. This group of people

of all ages (including several children) meets on Thursday evening from 7 – 8:30 p.m. in the Concord Room. Please join us whenever you would like to knit, sing, and pray!

If you have someone you would like to receive a Prayer Shawl, please let Cheryl Hamel or the Church Office know of your suggestion. Many people have received comfort from our Prayer Shawls and Lap Robes – and it is a joy to work on them together on Thursday evenings. We invite you to join us! We will not meet on November 23 (Thanksgiving) or November 30th (the Church/Charge Conference), but will resume on December 7th.

Thank You Notes

To Our Aldersgate Family,

I want to thank everyone for keeping me in their prayers over the past few months. It is hard to describe but I felt your presence, surrounded by your love and most of all I knew I was never alone. This brought me much peace and helped me meet each day's challenges.

I also want to thank you for all the cards, visits, and flowers. The nursing staff frequently asked me where I got my strength. I told them I was blessed with a loving and caring extended family at Aldersgate.

Thank you, Nancy

Dear Friends,

I feel so blessed to have so much support from you during Nancy's illness. By your prayers you gave me patience and strength. I certainly appreciated the lunches and the invitations to your homes to share a meal with your families. I am so grateful to my drivers for bringing me back and forth to the hospital. Thank you for caring.

In gratitude and love, Lois

Peg and I wish to thank all our friends in the Aldersgate Church Family for the gifts and cards. We sincerely appreciate the wonderful relationships that were formed over the last 25 years. The memories of doing God's work together will always be warm and uplifting.

If anyone would like to contact us in our new home, here is the information(contact the church office)

The Outreach Committee is so grateful for all the food that has come in as a result of their request for needed food items. Special thanks to Cheryl and Victor Hamel who hosted an "Open House" and suggested that if people wanted to bring something for the Food Pantry – they could do so. And the response was tremendous! So thank you for again responding to the suggestion with your usual Aldersgate generosity.

Thank you to Dan and Jane Vooyoys for painting the stairs in the back entrance of the Church.

To the "Mighty Men" of Aldersgate,

Believe it or not, everything was moved out of the Church Office on Friday, October 6th by Bill Wilder, Walt Ciesluk, Victor Hamel, Dan Vooyoys and Jack Scott! On Saturday, the office was painted (if you haven't seen it – take a look) by Joe, Paul, Garth, Bob, Charles, Peter, Dan and Jack. Then everything had to be put back in the office – that occurred on Saturday afternoon with Bill, Walt, Dan and Jack. Gail, Pat and Joanne prepared lunch for our wonderful workers! It was a great time – it was fun and Joanne is the happiest Church Secretary in the New England Conference! Thank you so much!

FAIRE NEWS - SCHEDULE

If you have greens or shrubs to trim, please contact Bob Peterson or Dave Jones before November 24th.

Help decorate wreaths and swags - create center pieces November 26th - 29th

Gracious Regifting - new or gently used holiday items and gifts - drop off on November 26-29th.

Fellowship Hall set up - November 29th

Crafts, Jewelry and Table set up - November 29 and 30th.

Food/Fudge/Baked Goods - Pastor Sharon Deliver on November 30 -Thank you

Called out by Jesus Christ to serve our congregation, community ...

News from Outreach

The children in the McCarthy Middle School free lunch program have more than doubled this year.

Your generous support of the Christmas Tree and Angel Tree programs is needed more than ever. Thank you in advance for your generosity toward these children.

Remember, the Santa Tree will be set up on the table in the hallway on Sunday, November 26th.

**and the world through loving,
witnessing...**

**Rolling Ridge - A Sacred and Beautiful
Space Set Apart for Rest and Renewal
Discovery and Community**

Upcoming Opportunity

December 5 *Waiting in Expectant Hope: Learning to Listen to God* – Retreat Leader:

Rev. Margaret Benefiel 9:30 – 3:30 p.m., \$35.00

Do you long for a listening heart? Do you wonder why some people seem to be able to hear God's voice so easily while you don't? Do you suspect that God might speak to you if only you could slow down enough to listen?

Come apart to a beautiful, restful place this Advent to explore these questions. This will be an experiential retreat, in which participants' own experiences will serve as the foundation for learning to listen to God.

Registration includes full facility use, program materials, beverage service and a gourmet lunch.

Call Rolling Ridge at 978.682.8815 for your reservation!

**CAN'T SLEEP? TRY COUNTING
YOUR BLESSINGS!**

CHURCH SCHOOL NEWS

HALLOWEEN FAMILY FEST

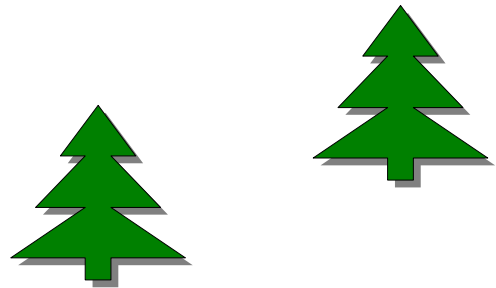
Over 100 people gathered on Saturday, October 28th for a haunting evening filled with spooky fun, laughs and screams, and a Halloween feast of food. A big thank you goes out to the Junior Youth and their parents for helping to cook up a delectable meal. Thank you to our top chef, Maria! The Senior Youth worked for several hours in creating the best ever haunted house and fun house for all ages to enjoy. Thank you to the helping hands of many parents with setting up, teaching crafts, and cleaning up.

ALL AGE ADVENT WORKSHOP

Sunday, December 3rd

9:30 – 10:30 a.m.

Fellowship Hall



Everyone is invited to join us in celebrating the first Sunday of Advent! You will be creating crafts that our either made from something in nature, or something that is recycled. You will have the opportunity to make Woodsies, jingle bell ornament, bird feeders, candle votive, sheet music ornament or listen to special stories about Advent. There will also be special refreshments served. THERE WILL BE NO CHURCH SCHOOL CLASSES DOWNSTAIRS. Everyone is encouraged to enjoy this special day together as a family!

Bethlehem's Best

POTLUCK DINNER & CAROLING PARTY

SUNDAY, DECEMBER 17TH

4:00 – 6:30 P.M.

The Junior Choir, Worship Arts children and the church school will be presenting this year's Christmas Pageant, "Bethlehem's Best" for the congregation, neighbors and friends at a new time! Please come and share in the joy and excitement as the children share the joy of the birth of our Savior. We will follow with a potluck dinner so please bring a dish to share. After we eat, our very own Aldersgate Band will lead us in singing our favorite Christmas carols and songs and their will be other surprises!

WORSHIP ARTS

Children, ages 4 through 5th grade are invited to join our worship arts team for crafts, stories and songs! We meet on Tuesdays, from 4 – 5:30 p.m. Cheryl Ortolf will also pick your child up after school at the South Row School. Please talk to her ahead of time so you can make the proper arrangements with the school

JUNIOR CHOIR:

Tuesdays: from 5:30 – 6:30 p.m.

All youth in grades 4 – 8 are welcome to join us in this exciting choir We continue to work hard on our musical for Christmas.

JUNIOR BELLS:

Thursdays: from 6:30 – 7:15 p.m.

All children (in grade 3 or higher), youth and adults are welcome to join us as we have fun learning how to play bells. You do not have to have any experience to join us. If you have any questions, please see Becky Adams.

NO CHURCH SCHOOL ON DECEMBER 24TH & 31ST

MERRY CHRISTMAS & HAPPY NEW YEAR !

JUNIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

This new fellowship group is for young youth in grades 4th, 5th and 6th grade. Our mission is to provide your children with a safe, healthy and loving environment to help them grow and experience Christianity. Please see Cheryl Ortolf, David Driscoll or Maria Karafelis if you have any questions or would like to help.

CHRISTMAS FAIRE

Friday, December 1st & Saturday, December 2nd

All junior youth are encouraged to help at our popcorn stand during the Christmas Faire. You can sign up to work for an hour on Friday, from 3 – 8 p.m., or Saturday, from 9 – 1 p.m. Please see Cheryl to sign up.

MOVIE NIGHT

Friday, December 8th from 6:30 – 9:00 p.m.

Come join us for a movie and lots of popcorn!!! Friends are always welcome.

EARLY NEW YEAR'S PARTY

Sunday, December 31st from 7 – 9 p.m.

The senior youth are inviting the junior youth to join them for games, food and fun! Please bring a snack to share and photos from the past year of times of joy in your life. We will create a celebration wall of the joys in our life and talk about and draw our hopes for the New Year. You may also bring any art supplies that will help us create this mural.

SENIOR YOUTH FELLOWSHIP

We are a fun group of spiritually focused youth who celebrate Christ's presence among us by engaging in community and group activities, church participation and mission projects.

All youth in grades 7 – 12 are welcome to join us at any time; you do not have to be a member of the SENIOR youth group. There is no special sign-up sheet; you just come when you can. We ALWAYS welcome friends, or anyone else that happens to be with you. You are an important part of this group!

CHRISTMAS FAIRE

Friday, December 1st & Saturday, December 2nd

Many hands are needed to help run the children's corner this year! We will be offering 4 different crafts for the children, and we will be selling handmade candles (that you have made) and wrapping paper (that you have also made!). The money we collect for selling these 2 items will be used towards our trip to Youth 2007. Please see Cheryl Ortolf ASAP to sign up for a time slot. The faire will be Friday from 3 – 8 p.m. and Saturday from 9 – 1 p.m. You will receive points towards your trip for every hour you work at the fair.

NEW YEAR'S LOCK IN!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!!

Sunday, December 31st from 7 p.m. to noon on Monday

All our welcome to join us ring in the New Year! We will be hosting the junior youth for the first part of the evening. Please bring a snack to share and photos from the past year of times of joy in your life. We will create a celebration wall of the joys in our life and talk about and draw our hopes for the New Year. You may also bring any art supplies that will help us create this mural. We will also watch movies (you're welcome to bring some, they must be PG13 or under), play games (bring your favorite), and just have fun together.

YOUTH 2007

JULY 11 – 15, 2007 IN GREENSBORO, NORTH CAROLINA

United Methodist Youth and Youth Workers from across the globe will be traveling to Greensboro, North Carolina in July to form a spiritual community unlike anything you've experienced before. Several of our youth and adults participated in Youth 2003 and had a fantastic experience. We will once again participate in Youth 2007. The deadline for the reduced registration fee is Sunday, November 26th. You may register after that date, but it will cost more. There are already over 10 youth interested in going so please see Cheryl if you are interested in going. We will be traveling by train, staying in a hotel, and will be working hard at fundraising. If you have any questions, please see Cheryl.

... AND TEACHING GOD'S WORD.

SPIRITUAL GROWTH CLASSES AND SMALL GROUPS

Jesus tells us in Matthew 18:20: "For where two or three are gathered in my name, I am there among them."

We are encouraging you to join one small group this year to help connect with our church family and also help you in your faith journey. Please take some time in prayer, and listen to where God may be leading you in your faith journey!

Early Bird Class

Tuesdays: 6 – 6:45 a.m. Concord Room

Leader: Charles

The theme for the coming year is "Being a Faith Community". Plan to rise early and participate in this Bible study as together we explore and gain understanding of what it is to be a community of faith.

Thursday Morning

Thursdays: 10:00 a.m. Concord Room

Leader: Pastor Sharon

This class is a low key community study that acts as much as a support group as it does a Bible study. We are studying the gospel of Luke using the Interpretations study guide book.

Prayer Gathering

Tuesdays: 6:30 – 7:15 p.m. Concord Room

Leaders: Debbie, Carol

My House Will Be A House of Prayer

Is Aldersgate a house of prayer? We sure hope so, and we also hope that you'll consider on Tuesday evenings at 6:30 for our weekly prayer gathering. There's no pressure to pray out loud; some weeks we've spent the better part of 45 minutes in silent prayer and it has been a powerful experience. There are other weeks when the 45 minutes seems barely long enough to speak all the requests that are on our hearts. This is a really rewarding time spent in the presence of God Who Hears what is on our lips and in our hearts. Please join us! For more information, call the church office.

Prayer Shawl Ministry

Thursdays: 7:00 – 8:30 p.m. Concord Room

Leader: Cheryl

If you like to knit, or would like to learn how to knit, please join us on Thursday evening in the Concord Room to knit Prayer Shawls. If you have someone in mind who would love a Prayer Shawl as a reminder of God's love that surrounds and gives comfort, please let us know.

ADULT VOICE CHOIR

CHANCEL CHOIR – Rehearsal, Tuesday 7:30 p.m.

Director: Carol

This choir provides musical leadership for our 10:45 a.m. service. As always, new members are sought and welcome. Youth are also welcome to join us. The only requirements are a tuneful voice and a joyful spirit! There are plenty of strong voices and music readers to support those who would like to develop music skills and have a chance to sing the praises of God.

HANDBELL CHOIR

SHEPHERD BELLS – Rehearsal, Thursday 7:15 p.m.

Director: Carol

This is a performing choir for people wanting to have fun playing bells. You may have the opportunity to play at weddings, handbell festivals, Christmas performances and community events in addition to monthly participation in worship.

Advent study on the Gospel of Luke

Sundays , November & December

Leader: Peter

Concord Room

9:35 – 10:35 a.m.

All are welcome to join us as we prepare for the season of Advent. The gospel of Luke sets forth the words and works of Jesus as the divine-human Savior, whose compassion and tenderness extended to all who were needy. In addition to presenting the story of Jesus' work in Galilee and his last week at Jerusalem, Luke includes more episodes of Jesus' final journey to Jerusalem than do any of the other Evangelists. We will be using various resource materials in helping us study the gospel of Luke. Please see Peter for more information.

Begin at the Beginning - A New Study in Genesis

Sunday afternoons: 4:00 – 5:30 p.m.

Leaders: Debbie & others

There's something new this year at Aldersgate – a Bible study that will continue as long as necessary!

Would you like to really dig in to Scripture? To linger on difficult passages and ask the hard questions? This is your chance. We'll start at "In the beginning..." and journey through Genesis, encountering huge lives lived in faith for a great and glorious God.

This study will be structured to fit the needs and desires of the class. We'll spend as much time as we need to mine the riches of God's Word. Will everyone make every class? Of course not, but that's okay. We'll take notes and provide extra materials for all who want them. And who knows... when we've made it to Genesis 50:26, we may keep right on going through Exodus!

Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway?

Beginning on Sunday, December 10th and 17th in the Library

Leader: Ginny

All are welcome to take some time and slow down during this hectic season and remember the true meaning of Christmas! We will use a resource, "Whose Birthday Is It, Anyway" which includes inspiring reflections and fun activities. Some of the topics we may discuss are: What Happened to Christmas?, I Am a Recovering Christmas Hater, Putting Christ in Christmas, etc. Some of the activities you can learn about are: Gifts of Kindness,

Reducing Christmas Chaos, New Christmas Traditions You Can Share, etc. Each participant will receive their own booklet to use during this Christ-centered season.

Christianity and World Religions, Wrestling With Questions People Ask

Beginning on Sunday, January 7th for 6 weeks

Leader: Walt

Concord Room

9:35 – 10:35 a.m.

"Christianity and World Religions" is a video-based small group study and outreach program that examines Christianity and four other major world religions: Hinduism, Buddhism, Islam, and Judaism. The study is designed to help participants wrestle with some of the tough questions people ask, such as: Why are there so many different religions? How should Christians view other religions? How is God at work in other religions? And what is the fate of those who earnestly pursue God through other religions?

In addressing these and other questions in the course of this study, we will describe how these four religions began, present some of their essential teachings, and suggest ways in which they differ from and are similar to Christianity. In the final session of the series, we will explore some of the basic beliefs of Christianity and will discuss the question, "Why Christianity?"

The hope in offering this study is that as we seek to understand the faith of others, who in today's society are our friends, neighbors, and coworkers, we will gain new understanding that will enable us to build bridges with them so that we might grow in our Christian faith, seek peace in our world, love our neighbor, and find positive ways to share the gospel.

New Membership Class

Beginning on Sunday, January 7th for 3 weeks in the Library

Leader: Pastor Sharon

We are inviting anyone who would like to find out more about what it means to join Aldersgate U.M.C. This class will help to orient you to our congregation and introduce you to some other new members. We will also learn about the Methodist faith. If you are interested in joining this class, please speak to Pastor Sharon Jones.