

# Aldersgate Hinge

Live a Life of Faith — December 2025

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## From the Pastor

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Miracles! We long for them, pray for them, even try to see them where there may not be one. But we know miracles are real because of Christmas. I think of Christmas as the Miracle of Miracles: God, stooping down, becoming one of us...not on a whim but out of love!

And when God stoops, God really knows how to stoop – not born a king or president...not a rich merchant or Lord of the manor...but born a humble birth...a peasant's birth...maybe even lower than that...at least most peasants have a roof over their heads...as leaky as it might be.

I am struck by how the Good News of Jesus' birth upended the lives of those who first heard it. Shepherds leaving their flocks (possibly at great peril to the animals they were supposed to protect) to go and witness the impossible; wise men leaving the observatory where they read the stars to go on a 2-year journey following a star unlike any they had ever seen; Mary and Joseph becoming unexpected parents to a child unlike any ever born. Their lives were turned upside down. It has been said that the birth of Christ was God's grand intrusion into this world. It definitely was for the characters in the Gospels.

Most folks, me included, don't like intrusions. Maybe that is why we have added so much to the celebration of Christmas. Maybe we want something to distract us from the idea that in the birth of Jesus, God is saying, "I've got good news of great joy, but..." There is always a 'but' isn't there? To be honest, I would rather deal with the incarnation in a big flourish of celebration than to have to think what it means that God chose not only to intrude upon our world, but that God wants to intrude upon my life. I like a Christmas that doesn't demand very much from me...well, except buying a few gifts and preparing a few extra sermons. But I think God has other ideas. Well, that's enough of all that kind of talk. I have some distractions to get back to. Or who knows, I might end up hearing what God says after the "but" this year. But then again, maybe that won't be a bad thing.

Merry Distraction...I mean Christmas!

*Pastor Wilson*



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**Aldersgate United Methodist Church**

*Transforming Lives and Serving Christ with Joy*

4115 Dewey Avenue, Rochester, New York 14616-1216 • (585) 663-3665 • [www.aumcgreece.org](http://www.aumcgreece.org)

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# Our Ministry of Concern

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## Prayer Concerns

People are added and removed from our ongoing prayer list upon request. *Please call the church office to ADD, REINSTATE, or REMOVE names.*

### Aldersgate people with new or ongoing health concerns:

Rick Baker, Angie Benton, Paul Brown, Ted Carstens, Dick Caupp, Mike Dunn, Nathan Dunn, Wendy Dunn, Bette Edgett, Dick Edgett, Joyce & Ali Farrokh, Patti Forbes, Shirley Geier, Anton Gilson, Judy Hare, Doug & Becky Hess, Mary Lou Jones, Dick Keegan, Debbie Lenau, Harry & Roxana Muthersbaugh, Suzanne Nyantole, Kathy Peck, Cindy Purzycki, Charlotte & Roger Ridley, Ron Rozinski, John Simm, Michael Smith, David Stanley, Laura Wagner, David Whitt, Bob Winter, Jeanette Zeh and the caregivers of all those with ongoing health concerns

### Friends & Relatives of AUMC People with Health

**Concerns:** Nancy Anderson & family; Brother Andy, Denise, James, Maddie, Selina, sister Nikki, Mike Sullivan (Gloria Baker); sister Diana Ross, Christine Salonen (Kathy Bernardi); Lisa Robinson (Karen Best); Bernice Bird; Layla Jean, Millie (Lisa Deutsh); Quinn Aldridge, Eileen Harloff, Sally & John Miller (Wendy & Mike Dunn); Marianne Galligan, Reed & Lois Galligan (Sue Galligan & Karen Sladden); Tammy Gilzow; Jason DelVecchio, Carol Poole, Billy Haley, Noel, Bev Palandro (Nancy Jones); Mary Jones (Pastor Wilson's mom); Lee Hartman, Rich Hartman (Nan & Rich Keller); Rick (Debbie Lenau); Barbie Anzalone (Kim & Eric Lindenau); Barbara Marsh; Doug Potter, sister Susan Kiesel (Sabrina McLeod); Karen Smith, Roger (Candy Metzger); Jeanne Sutton, John Burke, Bonnie Bush, Nicole Mohrmann (Rich & Bobbi Mohrmann); Mary Jane Bargy (Debbie Pankey); Ester Peprah; Ann Collins, Buddy Good, Anne Bratko (Cindy Purzycki); Cheri Riley, Ellie Wagner (Karen Rice); grand-niece Norah (Jan Rothfuss); Nephew Christian (Laurie Ruell); Lonnie Ruffino; Jack Linder (Tammy & Juan Ruiz); Ali Musleh, Hilde DiNatale (Anna Simm); Lewis family, Bev, Bruce (Debbie Simm); Debbie Glinski, Fred (Mary Sims); Dominic Mammolite (Jerry Sisson); Aubrie Robinson (Sara Smarcz); Nancy Miller (Michael Smith); brother Chris (Maria Stanley); Michael, Bill Weber, mom Shirley Weber, Matthew (Annette Thompson); Joe Troiano (Julia Troiano); Dennis Pankey; Kaylle Van-Allen, Cindy Andrews, Michael Appleton, Bobbi Jo (Laurie VanAllen); Jimmy VanKouwenberg, brother Phil (Louie VanKouwenberg); Ruth Walter; sister Bercehe (Steve & Jeanette Zeh)

## E-Mail Prayer Chain

PLEASE help us keep the weekly prayer concerns list updated. During office hours, send prayer chain requests to Diana Jason in the church office at [office@aumcgreece.org](mailto:office@aumcgreece.org). If your request needs posting after office hours, contact Chitie Edgett at [cge1935@gmail.com](mailto:cge1935@gmail.com). Confidential prayer requests should be sent directly to Pastor Wilson at [PastorWilson@aumcgreece.org](mailto:PastorWilson@aumcgreece.org).



### When Sharing Your Prayer Requests...

Prayer changes everything, and our church has a vibrant prayer ministry. When contacting the church office or our Prayer Chain Coordinator, Chitie Edgett, please let them know if you want your prayer request to be shared with only the Prayer Chain and Pastor, or if you want your prayer request shared with the Prayer Chain and our church congregation at Sunday worship. As we Live Stream and use email communication, we want to respect those who wish their prayer request to remain confidential.

**Nursing Homes/Living Centers:** Dick Keegan — Cobbs Hill Manor



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# Church Events & Opportunities

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## Blue Christmas Service

A BLUE CHRISTMAS SERVICE seeks to recognize that the holidays are not a joyous time for everyone. Grief, personal struggles and sometimes the pressures of the season can make Christmas a less than joyous time. This service recognizes this reality and seeks to create a space for healing and finding God's presence in the midst of difficult times. Please join us on **December 14 at 5:00 PM** in the Sanctuary.

## What a Blessing—26 Devotions from 26 Unique Voices!

This year's Aldersgate **GOD WITH US** Advent Devotional beautifully reflects the faith, creativity, and care that shape our church family.

A heartfelt thank you to each of our writers and artists for offering your stories, reflections, and gifts. Your words and images are a true blessing—a powerful reminder of Emmanuel, God with us.



Special thanks to Brian Winter for thoughtfully designing the devotional into a beautiful booklet for all to enjoy. Copies are available for everyone in the Gathering Space. Donations are welcome to help cover printing costs—suggested donation: \$3.00 per devotional.

## February Conflict Skills Workshop

A Conflict Transformation Skills for Churches Workshop will be held on Friday evening/Saturday **February 6 and 7** with "snow dates" of February 20 and 21. The workshop will be led by Pastor Wilson using materials from the Lombard Mennonite Peace Center. All are welcome to attend. Look for more information in the coming weeks.

## Live Nativity Walk



161 MARSH ROAD PITTSFORD, NY 14534

**Sunday, December 7 | 2:00–4:00 PM** (Meet inside the farm market)

Step into the story of Christmas as you walk the Live Nativity through an interactive wooded trail. Along the way, enjoy a cup of hot cocoa and reflect on the wonder of the season.

This meaningful experience is a beautiful way to celebrate the birth of Christ with family, friends, and community. All are welcome!

From Website: No dogs or smoking on the property. Dogs of all sizes make our animals nervous and unsettled. Please allow them to feel comfortable and safe in their home by keeping our barnyard dog free. Thank you! Trained service dogs are permitted.

Sign up sheet is located on the main bulletin board or email Rhonda Simonelli [rsimonelli@aumcgreece.org](mailto:rsimonelli@aumcgreece.org). Thank you!

## Church History Event Rescheduled, Jan. 9

We are now planning to gather on Friday evening, January 9 (snow date of January 16) to share our memories of events and times here at Aldersgate. This is an opportunity to honor God's work at Aldersgate UMC throughout its history and to have fun as we remember, or hear for the first time, important parts of our story. Everyone present will be invited to share. What happened in the past that should be celebrated? What challenges did the church face? If you have any "memorabilia" from our past, please bring it along as a display table will be set up. More information will be available soon.





# Christmas Grace Program

(Previously known as White Gifts)

Helping Needy Families for 60 Years



It's not too late to help make this a special Christmas for some needy families in our area. Please consider how you can lend a hand or make a contribution towards this worthwhile program.

**We provide:**

- Gifts for each family member
- Gift card to purchase groceries for a Christmas dinner – and hopefully a little more.

**How can you help?** Using your own funds or Christmas Grace funds:

- Adopt a family, shop and deliver gifts
- Shop for individual gifts
- Deliver gifts
- Help wrap presents

**Your financial support is needed.**

- Checks can be made out to Aldersgate (please write Christmas Grace on the memo line).
- If giving by cash, you can use a pew envelope and mark the donation "Christmas Grace."
- You can also give online at: [give.aumcgreece.org](http://give.aumcgreece.org) (select the Christmas Grace tile).

**Questions?** Call Tracy Winter at 585-727-3564 or email her at [tracy.winter75@gmail.com](mailto:tracy.winter75@gmail.com)

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## Successful Fundraisers



Thank you to everyone who came out and made our Texas Roadhouse Fundraiser a joyful evening! With a great turnout and plenty of fun, we raised \$225 to support our Children's Ministry programs at Aldersgate.

### **Another Fun Crafting Workshop**

We hosted 35 crafters on Black Friday who came for 12 hours with their friends to work on their Christmas cards and scrapbooks. This fourth workshop of the year raised \$1,625. In 2025, the four crafting events brought in a total of \$9,746. Money raised through the craft workshops is used to help pay bills and salaries, as needed, whenever regular giving is not quite enough to cover our expenses. It is also used for some special projects during the year. The next one will be a 2-day event the first weekend of March. Volunteers will be needed to provide food and help staff the event.

## Christmas Tree Thanks



A heartfelt thank-you to Betty Judd for donating this year's beautiful Christmas tree! We're also grateful to Mark DeVincentis, Mike Simonelli, and Michael Bartter for their help with pickup and setup. Your generosity and teamwork bring warmth and joy to our holiday season!

### **January 2026 Hinge Deadline**

All items for the next newsletter are due by **December 20**.

Please send to: [karenladden@hotmail.com](mailto:karenladden@hotmail.com)





## United Women in Faith

### Reading Circle Christmas Luncheon

The Reading Circle is hosting its annual Christmas luncheon on Thursday, **December 11 at 1:00 PM** in the church library. Everyone is invited; you don't have to be a member of the reading group to attend. There will be food, music, a craft, and, of course, lively conversation and fellowship. Our reading selection for the month is four letters from the book *Season's Greetings* by Ruth Boling. Contact Maureen Whalen at [whalenmt.7976@gmail.com](mailto:whalenmt.7976@gmail.com) for a digital copy.

There is a sign-up sheet on the Bulletin Board in the Gathering Place, where you can also indicate which food you would like to bring.

### Yarn & Darn — December 2

If you like to knit/crochet (Yarn), bring your needles and yarn, or if you have a sewing project (Darn) you are working on, join us in the former office space in the basement from 1:00 to 2:30 PM the first Tuesday of each month. Come enjoy some fellowship while doing God's work.



### THANK YOU

A BIG THANK YOU to everyone who helped out at the United Women in Faith Rummage Sale. We could not have done it without you. For everyone who brought in your donations – without them there would be no sale; for those who helped sort, price, and put out the items; for the people who worked the sale; for all the bakers; and for those who came in at the end to pack and clean up, I thank you. You all are very much appreciated. Prayers were said and God provided, as he always does.

Until next year...

*Candy Metzger*

## Stewardship Corner

### Stewardship Campaign Update

The Joy of Generosity — we are blessed by the 39 families who pledged a total of \$154,080 for our 2026 budget expenses. Five of these are new pledges. Sixteen of the pledges are increases from last year that altogether committed \$21,258 more dollars than in 2025.

In addition, we have received 20 pledges towards the building fund totaling \$20,837.

With this money and several gifts we received to the building fund in November, we are confident that we will be able to pay off the mortgage by June 1, 2026. Praise the Lord! And a huge thank you to everyone for their generous financial support of our church!

P.S. It's not too late if you still want to submit a pledge and haven't done so yet.



## Let's Celebrate!!



### DECEMBER BIRTHDAYS

Karen Sladden	December 8
Zuni Garcia-Simons	December 10
Maria Stanley	December 10
Kimberly Lindenau	December 13
Shannon Forbes	December 16
Cassandra Blanchette	December 21
Cindy Roza	December 24
Carol Pearson	December 25
Fran VanKouwenberg	December 27
Iris Simonelli	December 30
Bobbie Eckert	December 31

### DECEMBER ANNIVERSARIES

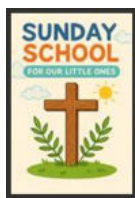
Brenda & Rick Donovan	December 3
Nancy & Terry Young	December 13
Roxana & Harry Muthersbaugh	December 22

# Christian Education

## Sunday School for Little Ones

**Sundays at 9:30 AM, Location:** Room 7

**Teachers:** Anna Simm, Julia Troiano and more to come!



A special class designed for young children who thrive with extra support, where God's love shines through every lesson. Join us as we nurture faith, joy, and belonging in every child—celebrating the unique way God made each one.

## Faith Weavers – Middle School Sunday School

**Grades 6–8 | Sundays at 9:30 AM**

**Location:** Room 3/4, **Teacher:** Rhonda Simonelli



Middle schoolers are invited to dive deeper into their faith journey with *Faith Weavers*. Through engaging discussions, activities, and scripture, students will explore how faith weaves into every part of life—school, friendships, challenges, and growth.

## Preschool Sunday School

**Ages 3–5 | Sundays at 11:00 AM**

**Location:** Room 7, **Teachers:** Nan Keller & Assistant



Our Preschool Class offers a joyful and nurturing environment where young children begin to discover God's love through songs, stories, play, and hands-on activities. This class helps little ones build a foundation of faith in a way that's fun and age appropriate.

## Big Faith – Elementary Sunday School

**Grades K–5 | Sundays at 11:00 AM**

**Location:** Room 3/4, **Teacher:** Rhonda Simonelli

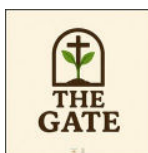


Join us for Big Faith, a dynamic and engaging Sunday School class designed just for elementary students! Through stories, activities, and meaningful lessons, kids will explore what it means to grow in faith and follow Jesus in everyday life.

## High School Sunday School

**Grades 9–12 | Sundays at 10:45 AM**

**Location:** Fellowship Hall, **Teacher:** John Simm



High school students are invited to a space where faith meets real life. Through thought-provoking movies and open discussions, this class sparks meaningful conversations about spirituality and everyday challenges.

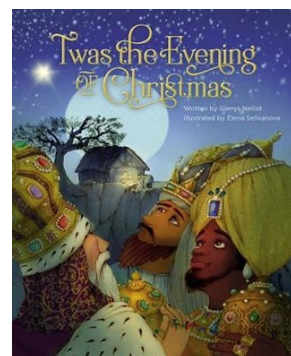


## Read with Miss Rhonda

By Glenys Nellist, Elena Selivanova

Celebrate the Christmas season with this beautiful and heartwarming nativity retelling from beloved, bestselling author Glenys Nellist. Told in the style of the classic *'Twas the Night Before Christmas* poem, make this read aloud your new holiday tradition.

*'Twas the Evening of Christmas* shares the glorious nativity story of baby Jesus, the King of Kings! Written in both prose and poetry, this beautiful picture book will engage children and adults alike and become a new holiday tradition for families everywhere! (Cokesbury)



## A Joyful Sunday of Christmas Creativity

During Sunday School classes on **December 7th**, children will decorate gingerbread houses, adding sweet touches to their holiday creations! Meanwhile, Middle School and High School students will paint a DIY ceramic Nativity Stable, bringing the Christmas story to life with their own creative touch. We'll also be watching *"The Best Christmas Pageant Ever,"* a heartwarming and hilarious movie that reminds us of the true meaning of Christmas.



## Thank You!

Thank you to all who have supported the education group's bottle and can drive! Donations can be placed in the marked barrels in the Gathering Space. Please keep them coming!



Let the children come—there's a place for every gift in our Christmas Eve service.

We're joyfully preparing new elements for this year's Christmas Eve service. Join us for our **Family Christmas Eve Service at 5:00 PM**. We're inviting children and youth to participate—by reading scripture, helping tell the story of Jesus' birth, and/or joining in a special worship dance.

It's a meaningful opportunity for our young ones to share their gifts and take part in a celebration filled with joy, reverence, and wonder. Stay tuned—and let me know if your child would like to be involved!

Please contact Rhonda Simonelli at [rsimonelli@greeceumc.org](mailto:rsimonelli@greeceumc.org)

### Family Christmas Eve Photo Request

We'd love to include your family (pets too!) in this year's Family Christmas Eve service at 5:00 PM! Please email one digital photo per family unit to [rsimonelli@aumcgreece.org](mailto:rsimonelli@aumcgreece.org) by December 15th. Your picture will be part of a special visual reflection on Christmas Eve. Thank you for sharing your smiles and spirit!



### Happy Birthday, Jesus!

Join us in Sunday School on **Sunday, December 28th** from **10–11 AM** for a joyful celebration of the true reason for the season.

We'll gather for a special birthday party for Jesus, with just one worship service that day. Come dressed in your cozy new flannel pajamas, sip hot chocolate, and enjoy a delicious new chocolate cake recipe I've just discovered.

Let's share in sweet fellowship as we honor His birth with warmth, wonder, and gratitude—celebrating together with hearts full of joy!



## Serving in Worship This Month

ndakizepeter@yahoo.com

**give.aumcgreece.org**

Dave Roza & Rich Keller

12/21 — Open





# The birthday cake for Jesus

A special cake to tell the story of  
God's love, from the darkness of sin  
to the light of our Savior's birth.

## THE CIRCLE (ROUND CAKE)

**Meaning:** A symbol of God's eternal love, with no beginning and no end.

**Verse:** "I am the Alpha and the Omega, the Beginning and the End." — Revelation 22:13

**Message:** God's love is endless. He always was and always will be, Jesus.

## CHOCOLATE CAKE

**Meaning:** Represents the darkness of sin that entered the world when Adam and Eve disobeyed God in the Garden of Eden.

**Verse:** "For all have sinned and fall short of the glory of God." — Romans 3:23

**Message:** Our hearts were darkened by sin, but God had a plan to send His Son to bring light and forgiveness.

## ANGEL

**Meaning:** Represents the angel Gabriel who brought God's message to Mary, announcing the coming of the Savior.

**Verse:** "God sent the angel Gabriel to Nazareth... to a virgin named Mary." — Luke 1:26-38

**Message:** God's promise was being fulfilled, Jesus was coming into the world to save us.

## WHITE ICING

**Meaning:** Symbolizes the forgiveness and purity we receive through Jesus.

**Verse:** "Though your sins are like scarlet, they shall be as white as snow." — Isaiah 1:18

**Message:** Because of Jesus, our sins are washed away, we are made new.

## GREEN GARLAND

**Meaning:** Represents everlasting life and the freshness of new life in Jesus.

**Verse:** "For God so loved the world that He gave His one and only Son, that whoever believes in Him shall not perish but have eternal life." — John 3:16

**Message:** Through Jesus, we are made new and promised eternal life, His love is everlasting.

## STAR DECORATION

**Meaning:** Represents the Star of Bethlehem that led the wise men to Jesus.

**Verse:** "We saw His star when it rose and have come to worship Him." — Matthew 2:2

**Message:** Just as the star led the wise men, God still guides hearts to His Son today.

## GOLD SPRINKLES OR CHOCOLATES

**Meaning:** Symbolize the gifts brought by the wise men, gold, frankincense, and myrrh.

**Verse:** "They opened their treasures and presented Him with gifts." — Matthew 2:11

**Message:** Jesus is the greatest gift of all.

## Ribbon or Linen Strip

**Meaning:** Represents the swaddling cloths that Mary wrapped Jesus in.

**Verse:** "She gave birth to her firstborn son. She wrapped Him in cloths and laid Him in a manger." — Luke 2:7

**Message:** The Savior of the world came wrapped in humility and love.

## SINGLE CANDLE

**Meaning:** Represents Jesus, the Light of the World.

**Verse:** "I am the light of the world. Whoever follows Me will never walk in darkness." — John 8:12

**Message:** His light still shines today — bringing hope to all who believe.

## PRAYER BEFORE CUTTING THE CAKE

"Jesus, this is Your birthday.

Thank You for coming to bring light into our darkness. Help us remember that You are the greatest gift of all. We celebrate You today and always."

