



Christmas Eve 2014 by Pastor Steve

One of my favorite moments of the year is when our community gathers on Christmas Eve for worship and we conclude the service by lighting candles and singing *Silent Night* together. The room warms from the fire of 400 candles and our hearts settle into this peaceful place where we deeply know that God is with us. Indeed, in that moment “all is calm, all is bright.” I wish it would never end.

Today, as I reflect on my past Christmas Eve experiences and look forward to what we will experience together in just a few days, I am also keenly aware that all is not calm and all is not bright in the world and in many of our lives. What about yours?

Just this past week, Taliban insurgents attacked an army-run school in Pakistan, killing around 140 students. I cannot imagine the horror, pain, and suffering experienced by the students and those who love and care for them. These events are simply mind-boggling and heart wrenching and they bring into sharp reality that the level of anger in our world that leads to this type of violence are unlikely to be curbed, because they always seem to repeat themselves, right? It’s easy to grow cynical isn’t it?

This Christmas Eve is the 100 year anniversary of the Christmas truce during the first year of World War I. There are many stories surrounding this truce that would be worth your time to read up on but in brief the German and the British troops began to sing *Silent Night* from the trenches to each other. In the midst of the “war that would end all wars” all was calm and all was bright for an evening and a day, for the next day, Christmas Day, the soldiers even left their trenches and spoke with each other and even played games of football together. Peace in the midst of war.

The calm I experience on Christmas Eve and the calm that the World War I soldiers experienced 100 years ago flow from the reality that God has worked decisively in Jesus to set the wrongs of the world to right. May your moments of “calm and bright” galvanize your soul for the long haul as God uses us to spread his peace to others. Things will certainly change beginning with us as we continue to walk in the light of the LORD! Merry Christmas.

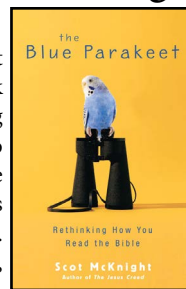
4 He will judge between the nations and will settle disputes for many peoples. They will beat their swords into plowshares and their spears into pruning hooks. Nation will not take up sword against nation, nor will they train for war anymore. 5 Come, house of Jacob, let us walk in the light of the LORD. Isaiah 2:4-5

Suggested Reading

The Blue Parakeet

by Scot McKnight is the next book that we are inviting you to read as we go through the whole Bible in 52 weeks here at Aldersgate. One reviewer says, “In this bold, examination of reading the Bible, author Scot McKnight proclaims a new ‘Third Way,’ one that walks confidently between two extremes.” The book is an easy read that helps us to really think through how we read the Bible. You may order a copy through the church office for \$10.00. Grace and Peace!

— Pastor Steve and Pastor Amy



Daily Bible Readings

Below you will find a list of sermon related passages and a list of passages that will take you through the Bible in a year. Please consider reading both each day as we continue in our ALIVE sermon series.

Sermon Passages

Sunday:	Luke 2: 8-20
Monday:	Matthew 1: 1-17
Tuesday:	Psalms 34: 1-18
Wednesday:	Deuteronomy 10: 14-21
Thursday:	Luke 9: 18-27
Friday:	James 4: 1-12
Saturday:	1 Peter 5: 1-11

Chronological Bible Readings

Sunday:	Ps. 56, Ps 120, Ps 140-142
Monday:	1 Samuel 25-27
Tuesday:	Ps 17, Ps 35, Ps 54, Ps 63
Wednesday:	1 Samuel 28-31, Ps 18
Thursday:	Ps 121, Ps 123-125, Ps 128-130
Friday:	2 Samuel 1-4
Saturday:	Ps 6, Ps 8-10, Ps 14, Ps 16, Ps 19, Ps 21

How sweet are your words to my taste, sweeter than honey to my mouth!

Psalms 119: 103



In Depth: The Aldersgate logo was inspired by the Love Sculpture in Philadelphia, PA., to remind us that God is Love and that Love is the Greatest Commandment.

Aldersgate *In Action*



In Depth: “ALIVE” is the name of the current 52-week sermon series, which has been designed to invite us into a deeper understanding of the Bible. “With Jesus” refers to the focus of this quarter of the church calendar. Today’s sermon, “The Fire of Love” is the seventeen in the series. You will find the order of worship for today’s service on Page 4.

Welcome to Aldersgate United Methodist Church, where the mission is to raise up deeply devoted disciples of Jesus. You have a place here. Regardless of who you are, where you have been and where you are in faith’s journey, you belong here. In *Aldersgate In Action*, you will find information about various ministries and opportunities. Please, feel no pressure. Just know that if you are looking to grow in your faith and in relationships with God and others, you are welcome and encouraged to do both here. Grace and Peace!

Aldersgate United Methodist Church • 1741 Sayles Blvd., Abilene, TX 79605 • (325) 672-7893
www.aldersgateabilene.org



In the Works

Regularly Scheduled Services and Opportunities to Grow and Serve:

All are welcome! Please contact the Office (672-7893),

THERE WILL NOT BE A NEWSLETTER SECTION OF *ALDERSGATE IN ACTION* ON DECEMBER 28 AND JANUARY 4TH. REGULAR PUBLICATION WILL RESUME JANUARY 11.

Sunday:

9:00 a.m. Traditional Worship

10:05 a.m. Sunday School

11:00 a.m. Contemporary
Worship

No Evening Activities

Wednesday, December 24th

*Christmas Eve Service in the
sanctuary at 5:00 p.m.*

Church Holiday Closing:

Church and office closed from

Wednesday December 24th until

Monday December 29th.

Church and office closed

December 31 until Monday,

January 5.

Happy Holidays from the Staff!

In Depth: Sunday

School classes are offered at 10:05 a.m. for all ages. To learn more about Adult Sunday School classes, call Amy Wilson Feltz at 672-7893 or send her an e-mail to amywilsonfeltz@aldersgateabilene.org.

Children's Ministry: Children's Nativity Tale



Every theatrical production of any nature takes a lot of coordination and collaboration. Our children's show last weekend is no exception. A big shout goes out to Bobbie Johnson for all of her hard work behind the scenes for the children's program, A Nativity Tale. Her expertise in stage helped us get this production off the ground this year.

Also, many thanks to Elizabeth Moss for not only assisting with rehearsals, but filling in for a 'fallen angel' who got sick at the last minute. Also a big thank you to Ron Johnson for his carpentry skills in putting the stable together, and Tammie Werner, Abby Wallis, Eric Gillette and John Moss for their help with sets. A huge thanks and congratulations for the wonderful visual of our production goes to Alayna Brooks and helpers for all the work on costuming.

It was splendid. Lastly, I would like to thank Mr. Carey Kitts for his work with the children's choirs, the members of the worship band and the parent volunteers who helped make this program a success. It was a big plus to have your

assistance! I encourage anyone who took pictures to turn in some of your best shots so that we can post them for all to enjoy. We rejoice that our children can share the experience of Christmas in such a poignant and delightful way. He has come! David Wallis

In Depth: At Aldersgate, all are invited to practice faithfulness in our prayers, presence (attendance), gifts (offering of money), service (action in the community) and witness (sharing our faith). You will find information about service and witness throughout the pages of Aldersgate In Action. This page is dedicated to matters of prayer, presence, and gifts.

Prayers

Ron Bredemeyer	Delmon Wilson	Lou Adams
Emma Gene Gore	Carolyn Strain	Clinton Gayle
Clay Meadows	Military and Families	Addison English
Jean Shoultz	Launa Brand	Lora and Al Langford
Doris Ogden	Mary Gregory	Sara Queen
Dori Oiler	Ann Arthur	Bob Kuykendall
Lou Swindell	Mary Buckner	Sherli Aldridge
Alice Shaw	Leslie Kitchell	

The e-mail prayer list is coordinated by Barbara Owens. Please send prayer requests and requests to join the e-mail list to prayer@aldersgateabilene.org.

Aldersgate volunteers serve at the Methodist Food Pantry, located at 1102 N. Willis, on the second Tuesday of the month, from 3:30 p.m. to 8:00 p.m., and on the fourth Tuesday of the month, from 6:00 p.m. to 8:00 p.m. Free childcare is available. For more information call Susan Steele at 605-381-6322.

Facebook page: facebook.com/AldersgateUnitedMethodistChurch

Twitter: @AldersgateABI

Instagram: @aldersgateabi

There will not be a newsletter section of Aldersgate In Action on December 28th or January 4rd. Regular publication will resume January 11th.

Presence (12.14.2014)

10:05 a.m. Combined Worship Service=359

Total Worship Service Attendance=359

Sunday school=210

The Oaks = out for Holidays

Gifts

Budget for 2014 = \$754,631.00

Received This Week = \$10,372.67

Received Month-to-Date = \$37,246.11

Received Year-to-Date = \$ 741,174.92

2014 Faith Promise Pledge=70,859.00

2014 Faith Promise Contributions = \$142,381.50

In Depth: Aldersgate offers two forms of electronic giving: Online Bill Pay and ACH Direct Draft. EFT Authorization Forms are available in the office and on our website at www.aldersgateabilene.org. If you have additional questions regarding Stewardship, contact K.B. Woods (672-7893, kbwoods@aldersgateabilene.org).

Ministry Leaders

Pastor: Steve Brooks (325) 660-4415

Associate Pastor:

Amy Wilson Feltz (325) 660-5017

Finance: K. B. Woods

Music: David Wallis

Children: Alayna Brooks

& Mackenzie Corbett

Youth/Contemporary Worship:

Daniel Mathis

College/Young Adults: Kyle Watson

Connections: Jessica Watson

Academy: Carol Rogers

Reception: Susan Acosta

Administration: Carolyn Estes

Custodial Services:

Robert Sandoval

Staying Connected:

Address: 1741 Sayles, 79605

Phone Number: (325) 672-7893

Office Hours:

Mon. - Thurs. 8-12, 1-5

Fri. 8-12

Web Site:

www.aldersgateabilene.org

Facebook: Aldersgate UMC

Text Message Reminders:

gracepeace to 313131

E-mail Reminders:

news@aldersgateabilene.org

Mission Update: Domestic Mission Trip July 19-25



Slide into Slidell, Louisiana, for hurricane recovery work with Aldersgate UMC from July 19 -25, 2015. We will be fielding a 15 -20 person multi-generational team to work on houses that were damaged by hurricanes Katrina and Issac.

This trip has been designed to offer people from Aldersgate in a wide variety of ages to travel together, work together and share God's love together in an area of great need. This would be a great trip for single people, couples and families. Older elementary children are welcome to attend.

We will be working with the Epworth Project, which provides all-inclusive mission opportunities.

"Our experienced staff and comfortable facilities offer your team housing, food, tools, project assignment, project funding, site management and limited transportation all under one roof," the web site says. "Our projects range from building handicapped ramps to complete home rebuilds." More information may be found at www.epworthproject.com.

The approximate cost for the trip per person is \$250.00, but please don't let the cost keep you from signing up. Assistance will be available from the church, if needed. The deadline is coming up, so please consider communicating your interest soon by writing a note on the back of your Welcome Card, signing up on the list in the Welcome Center or contacting me at feem6780@gmail.com or (325) 669-8208.

— David Feemster

10 Reasons to Join a Growth Group

1. *Community*: God created us for community. We need you, and you need us!

2. *Connection*: Joining a Growth Group not only helps you connect with your group, but it also helps you feel more connected to the church family as a whole.

3. *Service*: Each Growth Group participates in a service project together. Dream big, and serve with your Growth Group!

4. *New Relationships*: You have an opportunity to meet new people that you might not normally spend time with.

5. *Personal Growth*: As you meet with your group, our hope is that you would be transformed into a deeply devoted disciple of Jesus.

6. *Food*: Every week you can count on a tasty treat and beverage.

7. *Family*: Growth Groups benefit the whole family. Children's Sunday morning activities are based on the weekly sermons, so your whole family can grow and learn together.

8. *Bible*: Let's be real: the Bible can be confusing. We learn so much more when we study scripture together.

9. *Prayer*: Growth Group members commit to praying for each other each week.

10. *Fun*: You will have so much fun in these groups! You might even get to take a few selfies like the group that is pictured above.



College Ministry: Christmas Break

As you know, students have returned to their homes for the holidays, and our college ministry will not reconvene until the week of January 11th. This is great news, because the students are in need of some much needed rest and relaxation with their families and friends, and our college ministry is in need of some time to regroup, prepare, and focus on the next ministry season.

I hope to use this down time to intentionally read up on what God is doing through other college and campus ministries across the nation, too, think about the ways in which our church can learn from these other ministries, and even to have some conversations on how our college ministry can learn from these other ministries, and continue to grow in depth and influence. In all of this, I hope that to evaluate the unique gifts and calling of Aldersgate and the needs of college students in Abilene.

I know that God has trusted us with an abundance of resources. I am praying about the ways in which we can invest those resources faithfully in the lives of these college students, for whom we care and whom we love so much, so that they too may better receive God's transforming grace in their very own lives.

I hope to share with you some stories from students in our ministry soon. Look forward to that!
— Kyle Watson



Youth Ministry: Closed for the Holidays



What a wonderful semester we have had! We have not only seen growth in numbers, but we have grown in relationship and discipleship as each week we seek after the face of God.

Our weekly Sunday evening youth activities will resume on Sunday, January 11th and will be kicked off with a Parent Meeting at 4:00 p.m. Sunday School will continue through the holidays. Also, don't forget the Winter Retreat coming up on January 2-3.

We will be joining St. Paul UMC's youth as we head to Camp Butman for 2 days of worship, fun, and fellowship! The cost is \$40, which includes meals, travel, lodging, and worship/activities.

The Ski Trip also is quickly approaching, and if you haven't reserved your spot, time is running out. The first deposit of \$150 to lock in your trip is due January 11th. Please visit www.skidaddy.com/aldersgateabilene to sign up officially!

For any details, feel free to call or text me at 370-5223 or email me at youth@aldersgateabilene.org.
Grace and Peace! — Daniel Mathis

ALIVE With Jesus: The Fire of Love
Luke 2: 8-20 with Matthew 1: 1-17
Sermon Notes
Raising Up Deeply Devoted Disciples of Jesus

The Ladder and the Gospel

The Caesar Shepherd Paradox

The Women of Jesus Genealogy

The Narratives of Exclusion

- 1
- 2
- 3

The Narrative of Vulnerable Inclusion – “His Favor Rest”

The path of the Gospel will always lead us on the downward road of humility only to be led upward on the road of Love.