Friends in high places

A young boy came down to a pier on the mighty Mississippi River where an old man was fishing. He began to ask the man a myriad of questions, and with patience, the old man answered him. Their conversation was interrupted, however, by the shrill whistle of the River Queen as she came paddling down river. Both the old man and boy stopped to stare in wonder as the gleaming ship splashed spray into the sunshine. Above the noise of the paddle wheel, the boy began to call across the water, "Let me ride! Let me ride!" The old man tried to calm him, explaining that the River Queen didn't just stop anywhere and give rides to little boys. The boy cried all the louder, "Let me ride!" The old man stared in amazement as the great ship pulled toward shore and lowered a gangplank to the pier. In a flash the boy scampered onto the deck.

As the gangplank was pulled aboard and the ship began to pull back into the mainstream, the boy called back to his newfound friend, "I knew this ship would stop for me, Mister. The captain is my father!" The young boy didn't merely think the ship would stop for him; he knew the ship would stop because of the confidence in his relationship with his father.

As we become more confident in our relationship with our heavenly Father we’ll listen to him and be better able to understand that He is listening as well.

Our conversation with God is a two-way street and it takes intentionality and practice on our part to engage it. Take some time this summer, call upon the Lord and listen for His still, small voice.

Grace and Peace,

Pastor Chris

2nd Annual Spirit of Giving Gala & Auction
Friday, November 7
6 to 9 p.m.
Introducing MaKenzie Ann Wilson

Hello Everyone,

I pray all is well with you and your families.

After over 24 hours of preparation from my induction which began Tuesday, July 1 at 8 p.m. MaKenzie Ann Wilson finally made her way. She was born on Thursday, July 3, 2014 at 4:06 p.m., weighing 7 lbs and 19 inches.

We arrived home Saturday afternoon. We are well and getting adjusted! I THANK ALL OF YOU VERY MUCH for your continued prayers, thoughts, phone calls and emails. I genuinely appreciate everyone’s patience, assistance, support and encouragement, professionally and personally during my entire pregnancy!

Thanks again from the bottom of my heart!!! I’ve attached a few pics! Plan to see us some time next month!

Take Care -Candice
Each month, milestone anniversaries are listed as well as all those over 50 years. While we can all benefit from knowing that marriages truly can exist for more than 5 decades, we want to recognize those milestone years (i.e. 5, 10, 15, 20) for all. **Congratulations!**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Name</th>
<th>Years</th>
<th>Date</th>
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<tr>
<td>Chris &amp; Suzanne Francart</td>
<td>5</td>
<td>Aug. 1</td>
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<tr>
<td>Jim &amp; Pamela Morrison</td>
<td>45</td>
<td>Aug. 2</td>
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<td>Don &amp; Joanne Marvel</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Aug. 10</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bob &amp; Joanne Bodwell</td>
<td>58</td>
<td>Aug. 18</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dana &amp; Jean Pyle</td>
<td>59</td>
<td>Aug. 20</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Don &amp; Bonnie Boyd</td>
<td>66</td>
<td>Aug. 22</td>
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<tr>
<td>Greg &amp; Pamela Korte</td>
<td>10</td>
<td>Aug. 28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Dick &amp; Lorraine Fleming</td>
<td>61</td>
<td>Aug. 29</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bob &amp; Beverly Melcher</td>
<td>51</td>
<td>Aug. 30</td>
</tr>
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</table>

If you are not sure we have your anniversary and would like it to be included in the future, please contact Betty Moore (302-478-2575 ext. 117) or betty.moore@aldersgatede.org.

All additions or corrections are gratefully accepted to keep our records up to date.

---

**United Methodist Women**

**Fall Potluck Dinner**

**Monday, September 22**

More details to come! Mark your calendars.

**Aldersgate’s UMM Resume Monthly Meetings**

**Tuesday, September 16 at noon**

From September through May, the UMM gather in Fellowship Hall on the 3rd Tuesday of each month, from noon ‘til 1:15 p.m. Each meeting includes your choice of sub sandwich lunch for $5 and a half hour program. We have great speakers joining us this year and in September our own member, Ferris Wharton, newly appointed Superior Court Judge will be with us for the program.

If you have questions about UMM or to sign up, you can contact one of the UMM Coordinators who are Bob Hawkins, George McKeown or Tom Short and you can easily reach them by sending an email to umm@aldersgatede.org.

---

**How Great is Our God!**

**1 Corinthians 12:27 (NRSV):** You are the body of Christ and individually members of it.

**Upper Room Devotional:**

My cousin gave me a beautiful beaded bracelet. Her friend had designed it, and I was fascinated by each of the individual beads, which were in shades of purple, pink, blue, and green. No two beads were exactly alike in color, size, or shape, and each bead made its own unique contribution; the omission of any one bead would have lessened the beauty of the bracelet.

This bracelet reminds me of Paul’s description of the church being like parts of the human body. Each individual part has a specific function to perform in the body of Christ, and every part is needed and special. Paul writes that God’s desire is “that there . . . be no dissension within the body” so that “the members may have the same care for one another” (1 Cor. 12:25). We are called to support one another and celebrate each person’s role in the church.

**GriefShare**

GriefShare, a grief recovery support group, welcomes all those who are grieving the loss of a loved one.

- **Tuesday mornings**—10 to 11:30 a.m. in room 236
- **Thursday evenings**—7 to 8:30 p.m.

Please call the church office at 302-478-2575. For more information: [http://www.griefshare.org/](http://www.griefshare.org/)

Like the beads in my bracelet coming together to create a beautiful whole, we in the church are called to use the unique gifts God has given us “for the common good” (1 Cor. 12:7). When we come together in appreciation and support of one another’s gifts, we are truly living out our role as members of the body of Christ.

**Thought for the Day:** Each one of us is an important part of the body of Christ.

**Prayer:** Dear God, thank you for giving each of us a special part to play. Help us to serve you faithfully each day. Amen.
Greetings from your Finance Committee Chair!
By Brett Landis, Finance Chair

Wow! August is just around the corner and soon the kids go back to school...and with any luck I-495 will re-open and New Castle County will get back to some predictable traffic patterns!

In the chart below, we see a financial comparison of similar 12-month periods for June 2014 versus June 2013. It shows that our income has increased $13,484, but our expenses have also increased $74,989 over the prior 12 month period. While initially this may seem alarming, I go back to what I mentioned in a few of the past articles. First, we are spending money on improvements to the church. We have an aging building and improvements and repairs are necessary. Also, we are into the summer months when our income is low but our expenses remain constant. There are cycles in our budget year and this is to be expected.

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<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Jun-2014</th>
<th>Jun-2013</th>
<th>Difference</th>
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<tr>
<td>Income</td>
<td>$1,157,817.79</td>
<td>$1,144,333.29</td>
<td>$13,484.50</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Expenses</td>
<td>$1,219,138.36</td>
<td>$1,144,148.66</td>
<td>$74,989.70</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Net Income</td>
<td>-$61,320.57</td>
<td>$184.63</td>
<td></td>
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Aldersgate is on a good path. Our congregation is engaged, our youth are strong and there is energy and excitement in the hallways every day. With every program and activity, we are evolving and growing, and to do so, we also have to keep pace with our missions and spaces. Repairs, updates and improvements are being made all around us and resources are needed to make it all happen. Unfortunately our finances cannot reflect the time, energy and enthusiasm our congregation donates to the cause, but your Finance and Lead teams are working to keep pace. Thank you all for the individual contributions you make to this place we call Aldersgate.

Thank you again for the vital role you play in the life of our Church!

Aldersgate is a significant place where disciples are made!

Support Neighborhood House
Save the Date
September 13—Registration begins at 7:45 a.m. In Bellevue Park—Event begins at 9 a.m.

Neighborhood House is delighted to be one of 17 local non-profits chosen to participate in and benefit from the first ever Highmark Delaware Walk for a Healthy Community that will take place on September 13 at Bellevue Park. More than 40 organizations applied so this is a great honor as well as an excellent opportunity to raise unrestricted funds for NH. Although this is the first Delaware walk, Highmark organizes several in Pennsylvania each year that have raised millions of dollars for the organizations involved.

See the Neighborhood House website for details – www.neighborhoodhse.org. Or visit the Neighborhood House page on Facebook. Submitted by Judy Morton

Aldersgate’s Altar Guild

The Altar Guild at Aldersgate is a group of dedicated women who strive to support the pastors and maintain the chancel and altar area of the Sanctuary. The group is seeking those who are interested in learning more about the group and what membership entails.

We are a fun-loving cross-generational group of women who meet 1 time a month from September to May. We also take responsibility for decorating for Easter and Christmas—two of our favorite activities!

If you have a couple of hours a month and an interest in helping with the tasks named or would just like more information, please contact either Carolyn Reis, President at 302-654-7133 or candbreis@msn.com or Mary Jane Prince, Vice Pres. at 302-478-6268 or Maryjane.prince@verizon.net.
Aldersgate UMC Worship Space Survey 2014

*If you have not yet completed a Worship Space Survey, please complete this form and deliver it to the Gather Team Lead via one of the methods detailed at the end of the survey.*

Name: __________________________________________

(Optional)

Preferred service type: ________________________________

(Traditional or Contemporary)

We would like to enhance the physical aspects of ALL our worship experiences (e.g. regular Sunday services, special musical events, youth-lead services, etc.) Please complete this survey to help us prioritize what to enhance.

Rank the following items in order of their importance to you (1 to 12), with 1 being the most important and 12 being the least important. If you have comments, please use the back of the sheet. **Please return this survey by September 14, 2014.** You can put it in the specially marked box as you exit Sunday services. You can also put it in the Gather mail slot in the Hub.

- [ ] Comfortable seating
- [ ] Flexible space that can be changed according to service requirements
- [ ] Well-illuminated
- [ ] Easy to hear worship leaders and musicians
- [ ] Easy to see worship leaders and musicians
- [ ] Songs and readings projected on screen or wall
- [ ] Food & beverages allowed
- [ ] Child-friendly
- [ ] Ability to kneel at the altar
- [ ] Safe and easily accessible for all (including chancel and sanctuary)
- [ ] Bright, colorful, and airy space
- [ ] Other (specify here: ________________________________)

Comments...please write legibly and feel free to attach an additional sheet of paper.

If you would like to be contacted personally about this, please include your name on the front and provide your phone number and/or e-mail address here:

Phone: __________________________________________

E-mail: __________________________________________

_______________________________________________________________________________

**Please return this survey by SEPTEMBER 14, 2014 using one of the following methods:**

Put it in the specially marked box as you exit Sunday services.

Put it in the Gather mail slot in the Hub.

Scan it to a .pdf and e-mail it to gather@aldersgatede.org

Snail mail it to: Aldersgate United Methodist Church Attn: Gather Lead

2313 Concord Pike

Wilmington, DE 19803
Main Street Flea Market

When: Saturday, September 6
8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m.
Rain Date: Saturday, September 13

Where: Aldersgate United Methodist Church
2313 Concord Pike
Wilmington, DE
478-2575
www.aldersgatede.org

DON'T MISS THIS AWESOME EVENT IN THE HUB OF FAIRFAX!
VENDORS WANTED

$25/space (registration begins 7/1/14)
$35 returned check fee

Registration forms available at:
www.aldersgatede.org

Wide range of vendors will be on hand to provide garage sale items, antiques & collectibles at this outdoor event.

Breakfast & Lunch Available.

EVENT SUPPORTS LOCAL OUTREACH AND FACILITY MAINTENANCE

Vendor Registration Form

Main Street Flea Market @ Aldersgate United Methodist Church
Saturday, September 6—8 a.m. to 2:30 p.m., rain date Saturday, September 13

You can arrive to setup: 6 to 7:30 a.m.

Cost: $25/space (space approx. 8 ft. by 8 ft.) No tables provided.

To register: Fill out information requested on the Vendor Registration Form and read and sign the Rules & Regulations Form. Return both forms by mail or deliver to address below with cash or a check payable to Aldersgate United Methodist Church. Spaces will not be held until payment is received. Limited spaces are available.

Aldersgate United Methodist Church
Attn: Main Street Flea Market
2313 Concord Pike, Wilmington, DE 19803

Event Coordinator: Sandy Poplos

Please print clearly

NAME:____________________________________________________
ADDRESS:__________________________________________________
PHONE:_________________________________  EMAIL: __________________________________________

Want to be located next to someone? Plan on arriving at the same time and be in line with each other for check-in.

What are you selling?_________________________________________
What type of vehicle are you driving?____________________________
Rules & Regulations (Please Read, Sign Return)

Main Street Flea Market- Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Set up times are 6 to 7:30 a.m. Vendors will be checked in as they arrive.

When you arrive for set up, enter the main front drive. Drive around back to check in and parking attendants will guide you to your space. Parking attendants work with the property assigned for the event and do the best they can to provide generous spaces.

Vendors will park in the space provided and must stay with the vehicle. Due to the safety of other vendors and volunteers, you may not drop off items and then leave. Vendors are required to stay until the end of the event due to the design of the selling area. Due to safety concerns, only foot traffic will be allowed in the selling space after the event has started.

Will you be using a trailer or have more than one vehicle at your space? Are you using a canopy measuring larger than 8 ft.? If so, you must rent 2 spaces.

Vendors are responsible for their own trash.

The rain date is Saturday, September 13. The decision to postpone due to weather will be made on Friday, September 5th after the 5 p.m. weather forecast. If we decide to postpone, it will be announced on the website and the church’s answering machine. We will do our best to contact vendors either by phone or email.

After Wednesday, August 27, no refunds will be given.

FYI—Our amazing breakfast sandwiches and coffee will be available for purchase as early as 7 a.m.

I have read the above rules and agree to comply; as well as have a wonderful time at this event!

Signed:____________________________________ Date___________________

Official Use Only: Date Received:_____________ Type of Payment:___________________________

Church Member Receiving Form & Payment:_________________________________________________

If you don't want to sell at the Main Street Flea Market, please come and shop!
Can You Spare One Hour Per Month?
By Kitty Lugar, Worship Lead for the Gather Team

Our Nursing and Retirement Home Ministry is in need of a few volunteers to lead worship and songs at local facilities. Leaders generally serve once per month at morning or afternoon services about 40 minutes in length, including scripture, prayer, and a short message. Devotions can be obtained from The Upper Room or you can create your own.

Everyone from youth through retirees are effective in this ministry! Individuals, couples or families will be great! If you can help as a worship or song leader (or both); or if you can substitute occasionally, please contact Kitty Lugar, Worship Chair, at kittyannlugar@msn.com or 302-656-3308. You will find that the residents are very appreciative, and you will be blessed by the experience!

Going Green Reminder
Sign up to receive the Messenger electronically via email. You can do this in the HUB, at the Information Booth or on the website (www.aldersgatede.org). Receiving the Messenger via email costs nothing! The Messenger is also available on the website on the home page as “News” and in the information areas at church.

If you’re receiving the Messenger now and wish to be dropped from the distribution, paper or electronic, please contact the church office at 302-478-2575 or send an email to messenger@aldersgatede.org.

2nd Annual Spirit of Giving Gala & Auction—Donations

If you are interested in donating time, services or items to the November 7 fund raising event, please contact anyone on the planning committee. Planning members and their areas are:
- Co-chairs—Bob & Carolyn Reis
- Food—Sandy Anderson, Mary Jane Prince & Kathy Daum
- Decorations—Christy Pennington & Joanne Smeltz
- Logistics & Donations—Barbara Buckley, Kathy Daum, Pam Wright
- Finance—John Prince
- Entertainment—Linda Moore
- Everything else—Royal Lowthert & Pastor Chris

It is by giving that you receive....

Aldersgate UMC is A Caring Community
Intentionally ministering to persons with mental illness and their families.

Appreciation for You!
With your help—volunteering, financial contributions and item donations— we continually move families from homelessness into sustainable housing. Here are unsolicited words from a recent graduate mom on the day she moved into her new place:

"Thanks a million times for everything. God is awesome. You are awesome. Family Promise is awesome. Apartment is awesome. Everything is new, clean, shiny, sparkling. We are maybe in shock but very grateful."

This mom and her son were one of three families who transitioned from temporary homelessness to a place to call home in the month of June alone. We continue to transition over 80% of families to permanent, sustainable housing in an average of nine weeks. Wow! This is because of your support, encouragement and contributions!

Thank you for "building community, strengthening lives".

Aldersgate’s Friendly Visitors Meeting
Tuesday, September 16 at 6:30 p.m. in Room 236

As we press forward this summer I am aware of our many shut-in members who are receiving regular monthly check-ins by our friendly visitors. You may be aware of some members who need a visit by one of our visitors or by me. If so, please feel free to call me directly (302-562-4711) if you have a referral to make or know someone who needs a call or pastoral visit.

I will be on vacation from August 10-20 this summer. We are going to visit Margaret's brother in Seattle who is a retired Presbyterian minister and has some health challenges.

If you would like to be a part of our friendly visitors group please plan to attend the next meeting.

I continue to be excited to get to know more of our church family members as we grow our church together. God does love us all.

Blessings,
Pastor Don
Children’s Update

Sharon Jennelly, Director of Children’s Ministry & Aldersgate Preschool
302.478.2575 ext.118
sharon.jennelly@aldersgatede.org

Sunday School Teachers

We are always looking for members who are interested in serving as teachers for children’s classes. In September, we have a special need for the Christian Friendship Class, teaching with Susan Mammele. Please contact Sharon about blessing others with your gift of teaching and sharing the love of Jesus.

Childcare

We are in need of childcare workers during the worship services each Sunday, and in the fall for Wednesday night choir practice and Thursday night bell choir practice.

Please contact Sharon for an application. Background check is required and training in Safe Sanctuary, CPR, and First Aid are required. $10 per hour.

RALLY DAY

Sunday, September 7 at 10 a.m. service plus a picnic to follow! 3rd grade Bibles plan will be presented on Sunday, September 14. Please contact Sharon if your family has a 3rd grader this fall.

Support Aldersgate’s Mission & Ministries!

Remember to use the link below to get to Amazon and sign on with your account credentials.

http://smile.amazon.com/ch/51-0076387

Enter Aldersgate Delaware and select Aldersgate United Methodist Church. From that moment on, for all of your purchases made via that link Aldersgate will receive .05% of the total purchase!

The funds will go to benefit the mission trip until July and then will be directed to the general church budget. Remember to use this link to Aldersgate as a charity on Amazon: Smile.amazon.com

Be sure to look for “Supporting: Aldersgate United Methodist Church” above your name (upper left of the page) or your purchases will not be counted.

Aldersgate United Methodist Church

Student Ministry News

Adam West
Director of Student Ministry
Adam.West@aldersgatede.org
302.478.2575 ext. 115

A team of dedicated, able-bodied and adventurous Aldersgate youth and adults set out on Saturday, July 12 returning Saturday, July 19 to be the hands and feet of Jesus at a Native American Indian reservation in North Dakota, serving alongside UMC missionaries. Your support of this mission trip through your prayers, donations, volunteering, and even flamingo flockings was key to their success! We look forward to hearing stories of how those who attended were impacted, as well as how those met along the journey were impacted. For now, here’s a list of those who made the journey:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>YOUTH:</th>
<th>Connemara Pennington</th>
<th>Zack Pendley</th>
<th>Ben Pendley</th>
<th>Cory Ruggiero</th>
<th>Ben Ruggiero</th>
<th>Daniel Smith</th>
<th>Lauren Smith</th>
<th>Genevieve Sorenson</th>
<th>Ashley Swanson</th>
<th>Tori Swanson</th>
<th>Allison Temme</th>
<th>Melissa Wood</th>
<th>Nickole Xenakes</th>
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<td>Elizabeth Donovan</td>
<td>Brittney Doughty</td>
<td>Samantha Doughty</td>
<td>Ethan Dunlap</td>
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<td>Grace Ellis</td>
<td>Olivia Ingman</td>
<td>Rachael Jennelly</td>
<td>Grace Lardear</td>
<td>Sam Owens</td>
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<tr>
<th>ADULTS:</th>
<th>Boe Harris</th>
<th>Jamie Hayman</th>
<th>Nancy Hough</th>
<th>John Jennelly</th>
<th>Jim Lardear</th>
<th>Judy Morton</th>
<th>Ethan Owens</th>
<th>Sharon Owens</th>
<th>Will Owens</th>
<th>Rex Palmer</th>
<th>Chris Pennington</th>
<th>Sandy Poplos</th>
<th>Kim Provo</th>
<th>Chris Ruggiero</th>
<th>Taber Smith</th>
<th>Adam West</th>
<th>Gregg Xenakes</th>
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Share the Journey 9 August 2014
Are You A Veteran?

On Friday, November 7 at 6 p.m. we will hold our 2nd Annual Spirit of Giving Gala and Auction and this year’s theme is "Honoring Our Veterans". If you served in any branch of the armed services at any time, we would like to include your service photo or a photo of you in uniform in a presentation that will be shown that evening. We promise that your original photos will be returned in their original condition and will even provide a few Sundays this fall when we will offer a “scan as you wait” service so you will not have to leave your photos with us! We’ll let you know when the “scan while you wait” service will be available.

We do ask that you provide us with some basic information:
1. Your name
2. The branch of service
3. The years of service

If a former deceased member of Aldersgate served, we’re more than honored to include their photo as well. Please contact Bob or Carolyn Reis if you have questions regarding the photos at 302-654-7133 or candbreis@msn.com.

Meet Our New Weekend Facilities Manager

The Staff Parish Relations Committee is happy to welcome Aldersgate member Bill Elliott to the position of Weekend Facilities Manager.

The next time you see Bill, please thank him for his willingness to provide this badly needed service!

Monthly Rummage Sale Pickups Resume In September

If you are moving, downsizing, cleaning out or know someone who is, please remember Aldersgate’s Annual Rummage Sale! Beginning in September, monthly pickups will resume and you can arrange a pickup by contacting either Chris Burket (609-504-3107 or cburket@gmail.com) or Don Moore (610-558-6817 or lndmoore@comcast.net). Specific dates will be in the September Messenger.

Another way that you can support our church is to “donate” the use of unused garage space. If you are not using all of your garage space, and can live without that space until next spring, please let Chris or Don know that you have storage space available. Our recent sale was very successful due to the amount of “stuff” we gathered, sorted, cleaned, polished and priced. By beginning collections earlier this year, we hope to raise even more money for Aldersgate’s ministries and missions. It can’t be done without you!

Sale date is Saturday, April 11, 2015!

Articles and pictures for the September Messenger are due by Friday, August 15. Please leave your submission in the Communications mailbox # 53 (upper right hand corner) or email to: messenger@aldersgatede.org
Another VBS Success at Aldersgate!

We experienced 100 “Weird Animals” and 40 awesome, dedicated volunteers for the week of June 16 to 20.

What an outreach for the children and families of the community! We are so grateful for all the hard work and effort of all the volunteers, both adult and teens, making VBS such a success each year.

A special THANK YOU to:

Pastor Chris Pennington and puppeteers – Chaily Derecskey and Keila Pennington, plus Conner Pennington, Ashley Swanson, and Tori Swanson with opening, closing and music.

Jeff Manns -Dir. of Music Ministry on sound board.

Preschool Teachers - Brenda Herr, Shirley Herr & Savannah Manns.

Bible Adventures – Bennett Atwater, Ashley Swanson & Adam West-Dir. of Youth Ministry.

Photographer & Spotlight Drama – Darryl & Kris Saienni.

Kid Video – Chaily Derecskey, Tana Hinman & Zachary Pendley

Games - Gabby Manns, Conner Pennington, Spenser Sorenson & Melissa Wood.

Imagination Station/Crafts – Rachael Jennelly and Cory Ruggerio.

Snacks - Kate Giardinelli, Beverly Melcher, Judy Morton, Linda Quinney & Victoria Takvorian.


Most importantly families were blessed in such a powerful way because Jesus’ Love Is One-Of-A-Kind! A huge thank you for John Walker, Chick-fil-A and the 9 a.m. and 10 a.m. congregations who helped us collect enough money to build 4 wells for the Marion Medical Mission which will provide shallow wells for clean water in Africa. The children really do understand that Jesus does love them! We just adore the VBS music as it keeps us spreading the LOVE of Jesus Christ!
Are We Connecting But Not Communicating?
1 Chronicles 16:11 (NIV) - Look to the Lord and his strength; seek his face always.

A devotional for the day:
“IT’s good to hear your voice, Kathleen,” my friend said. “I’m so glad you took the time to call me.” That simple statement made me realize that too often I use fingertip technology, and not meaningful conversation, to stay in touch with family and friends. Facebook, e-mails, and texting allow me to post photos or send short blasts of information to people I care about but don’t see very often. We may be staying connected, but I’m not sure we’re really communicating.

This experience made me wonder how well I’m staying in touch with God. Busy with chores and responsibilities, I try to remember to thank or praise God when particular blessings come during the day. But often I feel that even though I’m connected to God I’m not really communicating because I’m not setting aside the quiet prayer time that keeps me mindful of God’s word in my life.

Prayer is our direct line to God who longs to hear our voices. Technology has its place in connecting us to others, but we need real conversation to strengthen and maintain any relationship — especially with God.

Prayer: Dear God, slow us down so that finding prayer time with you becomes a priority. Keep us focused so that our conversation builds a stronger relationship with you. Amen.