

THE SQUEEK

FEBRUARY 2026 Volume 26, Issue 2

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*Open Hearts,
Open Minds,
Open Doors*



Aldersgate Church...United Methodist

Andy Gloor, *Lay Leader*

Jane Nihan, *Organist*

Mary Jensen, *Secretary*

Rev. Sarah Hong, *Pastor*

SUNDAY SCHEDULE 9:00 Worship, *Traditional yet informal*
10:15 Fellowship Time, *A relaxing time with friends*

CHURCH OFFICE HOURS 8:30 am – 12:30 pm

Check us out on Facebook: Aldersgate Church

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FEBRUARY 2026

February 1 Worship – 4th Sunday after Epiphany
Communion Sunday

February 6 Wesley Willows Meet & Eat 11:30 a.m.

February 8 Worship – 5th Sunday after Epiphany

February 15 Worship – Transfiguration Sunday
Noisy Can Sunday

February 18 Worship – Ash Wednesday
Combined Service at Aldersgate, 5:30 PM

February 19 Deadline for March Squeek articles

February 22 Worship – 1st Sunday in Lent

February 26 March Squeek to be sent out

January 22 – February Squeek sent out

Wednesday Fellowship Group continues Wednesday mornings at 10 am

Come pray with us.

3:00 P..M

Wednesday

Afternoon

Open to all.



PASTOR'S LETTER FEBRUARY, 2026



Therefore, since we are surrounded by such a great cloud of witnesses, let us throw off everything that hinders and the sin that so easily entangles.

And let us run with perseverance the race marked out for us, fixing our eyes on Jesus, the pioneer and perfecter of faith. (Hebrews 12:1-2)

Recently, I had a friend ask me what I'm going to "give up" for Lent this year. My first response was, "Lent is more than a month away." Then, my head started thinking of all the fun and delicious things I could put "on hold" during Lent: twizzlers, marshmallows, cotton candy, watching funny YouTube videos, etc. Then, I remembered that there was more to Lent than perpetual guilt and sadness. There is more to Lent than simply "giving up" certain parts of my life that I have no intention of "giving up" permanently.

Lent is forty-day season of discipleship that our ancestors of faith designated as a time of preparation for those seeking to be baptized. As time passed, Lent became a season in which the Church invited all believers to renew their focus and commitment to Jesus Christ. This year, Lent starts on Wednesday February 18 (Ash Wednesday). I hope that you can be part of the combined Ash Wednesday worship service (with Beth Eden UMC) at Aldersgate at 5:30 pm.

The writer of Hebrews offers an appropriate invitation for the season for Lent. On one hand, we're challenged to shed the layers of old sin ("Self-Inflicted Nonsense") that have entangled us. We're invited to "give up" everything that hinders us from following Jesus and becoming more like Him. So, if you're thinking of giving something up for Lent, then give up specific habits that harm your body, poison your mind, and undermine your ability to love God and others. If you're going to give something up, consider giving up unhealthy habits that serve as spiritual road-blocks and trip you up whenever you start gaining positive life momentum. Give up those habits that the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to "give up" long before this season ever began.

On the other hand, the writer of Hebrews also invites us to "run with perseverance the race marked out for us." This is an invitation to spiritual training. So, let's dust off our sneakers and hit the gym (spiritually speaking). If you're struggling to identify something to "give up," then "add on" daily disciplines like prayer, devotion, service for neighbors, journaling, and Scripture reading. Make it a priority to come and worship every Sunday. Join an existing small group or one of the Lenten Bible study groups on Wednesday at 10 am (in-person) or Sunday at 3 pm (Zoom). Find ways for you (and your family) to serve our neighbors in need. Renew your commitment to be a faithful steward of your finances. Consider adopting those holy habits that the Holy Spirit has been prompting you to "add on" long before this season ever began.

(Continued on Page 3)

A WORD FROM THE PASTOR – FEBRUARY 2026 (Continued from Page 2)

Lenten Worship Services - "The Way" (February 22 - March 29)

As you can see from the series title, *"The Way: Following the Footsteps of Jesus,"* our Lenten sermons will be a weekly reminder of our identity as followers of Jesus Christ. Each week, we'll focus on biblical stories focusing on the life and teachings of Jesus.

On the Sundays in February leading up to Lent, we will focus on the gift of love with marriage, family, and community.

I am grateful to our leaders for their faithful dedication to the ministries of our church like music, mission, finance, Trustee, SPRC, Christian Education, Vision team. I hope you grew healthier during our January sermon series, "The Daniel Plan: Getting Healthy."

Grace & peace, Pastor Sarah

The Way: Walking in the Footsteps of Jesus (Adam Hamilton)

Let's travel to retrace the life and ministry of Jesus Christ during this Lent (Feb. 18 to Apr. 4)! Using historical information, archaeological data, and stories of the faith, "The Way" follows in the footsteps of Jesus from his baptism to the temptations to the heart of his ministry, including the people he loved, the parables Jesus taught, the enemies He made, and the healing he brought. This 40-day focus will help you and your group grow deeper in their faith, learn more about the life of Christ, spend time daily reading and reflecting upon the Scriptures to grow together in their faith.

Join Aldersgate's 2026 Lenten sermon series and bible study groups. The sermon series will start on Sunday Feb. 22nd and the bible study will start on Wednesday 10am on Feb. 25th. There will be a zoom group (combined with Beth Eden UMC) on Sunday 3pm starting Feb. 22nd. You can sign up for the bible study group which works for your schedule. All study materials will be provided. Join and be blessed!

Lent Sermon Schedule

Date	Topic
Feb.22 (1 st Sun. of Lent)	Session 1: <i>Prologue & Ch 1 "Baptism and Temptation"</i>
Mar.1 (2 nd Sun of Lent)	Session 2: <i>"The Healing Ministry"</i>
Mar. 8 (3 rd Sun. of Lent)	Session 3: <i>"Proclaiming the Kingdom"</i>
Mar. 15(4 th Sun. of Lent)	Session 4: <i>"Calming the Storm"</i>
Mar. 22(5 th Sun. of Lent)	Session 5: <i>"Sinners, Outcasts, and the Poor"</i>
Mar. 29(6 th Sun. of Lent)	Session 6: <i>"The Final Week"</i>

LENT SPECIAL DAYS SCHEDULE -

* **Ash Wednesday** (Feb. 18) - the combined worship service at Aldersgate UMC Sanctuary (4055 N. Rockton Ave.) at 5:30pm (the Communion, imposition of ashes)

***Maundy Thursday** (Apr. 2) - the combined worship/fellowship at Aldersgate UMC Fellowship Hall (4055 N. Rockton Ave.) at 5:30pm (Handwashing, the communion & soup, salad & bread potluck)

***Good Friday** (Apr. 3) - the combined worship service at Beth Eden UMC Sanctuary (3201 Huffman Blvd.) at 5:30pm



FEBRUARY BIRTHDAYS

02 Mark Glasson
02 Cloe Sturner
04 Nick Swartout
06 Stan Miller
08 Donna Robey
09 Shelley Fridly

09 Deb Alms
11 Kearsten Haynes
12 Beth Boettner
14 Vanessa Alongi
17 Katie Bartolomei

20 Theresa O'Hea
21 Sue Sohner
24 Kaylee Libby
24 Jon Wenger
28 Gabby Roth



FEBRUARY ANNIVERSARIES

13 Thomas and Coralee Hardwick
24 Rich & Cheryl Thurman

Remember In Your Prayers

- Those in the congregation who are experiencing physical or emotional distress:
- Prayers for all who work outside in the cold winter season
- Prayers for those who are recovering from cold, flu, covid and respiratory infections
- Prayers for Mike (Jan & Pete Weller's neighbor)
- Alice Rice is grateful that her daughter, Carol had a safe and wonderful cruise trip.
- Monica Glennly asks Aldersgate congregants to pay attention to keep safety and extra care with their social media accounts.
- Brenda Westphal is grateful for all prayer support during her illness since the middle of December. She is recovering well and will start her therapy on Jan. 19th.
- Thank you to the Ensemble for offering the wonderful special music for Jan. 18th worship.
- Thank you to Jamie Weisse for leading exercise, meditation and reflection to promote our physical, mental and relational health on Jan. 11th, 18th and 25th at Aldersgate and Beth Eden.

Note: After the printing of this *Squeek*, there may have been others hospitalized or ill. We need your help. Please notify the Church Office. Thank you.

SQUEEK DEADLINE: Thursday, February 19th is the deadline for the March Squeek. Please have your articles in by this date. Thank you.

Join the Prairie North District United Methodist Women's Lunch at Court Street UMC on Wednesday Feb. 4th 11:30am. (Lunch cost: \$10) - Contact Shary Stelter or Barb Stenger for more information.

You are invited to Beth Eden United Methodist Women's Valentine's Soup Lunch on Friday, Feb. 13th at Beth Eden UMC (3201 Huffman Blvd.). Contact Barb Stenger (815-218-7521) or Pam of Beth Eden office (Tues-Thurs. 9am-2pm) if you want to join. Delicious lunch, fellowship and games will bless you.



NEXT NOISY CAN SUNDAY will be February 15, 2026. Save your change to bring for local missions. Contact Sue Murr for any

questions. Thanks to all at AUMC who help Noisy Can Sunday make a difference for the Rock River Valley Pantry. **Our 2025 collections has totaled \$901.95.**



FEBRUARY HELPERS

Date	<u>Lay Readers</u>	<u>A/V Technicians</u>	<u>Greeters</u>
Feb. 1	Andy Gloor	Coralee Hardwick	Andy Gloor
Feb. 8	Theresa O'Hea	Jenny Graham	The Thurmans
Feb. 15	Jay Alms	Andy Gloor	Barb Pefley
Feb. 22	Deb Alms	Jay Alms	Sue Pedersen

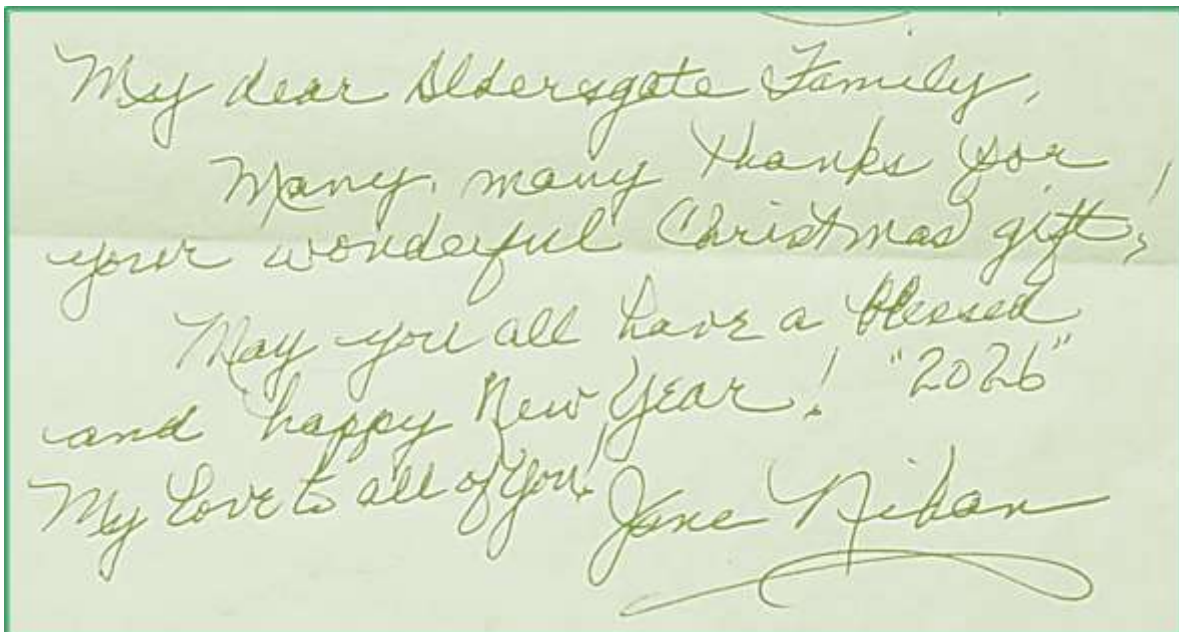


THE NEXT PRAYER MEETING will be Tuesday January 27th 10:30am at the conference room. Hope you can join to pray for the future of Aldersgate.

WEDNESDAY FELLOWSHIP TIME - - the Wednesday Fellowship Group meets at 10 am on Wednesday. There is a NOOMA lesson repeated from 2 1/2 years ago, prayer, Bible study and maybe even praise songs. If you still want to sign up, please contact our secretary Mary or Pastor Sarah. Wednesday

WESLEY WILLOWS MEET AND EAT GROUP - The Wesley Willow Meet and Eat will have our next luncheon on Friday, February 6 at 11:30 in the Town Center. Reservations can be made by contacting Alice Rice (815-624-7029) or by calling the church office by the evening before.

Thank you Note from Jane Nihan



ALDERSGATE TOY MINISTRY
Finished a successful Year 2025
Looking to a successful Year 2026

This is now month 2 of 2026 and it is time to start this year's 1400 cars. Andy and helpers did a great job delivering cars in December. Thanks to all of you.

The wheels that we will need for this year have been delivered, so no we need painters for all of the wheels as well as the cars. The Wesley Willows Wood Shop is still in need of wood to make cars for 2026. Contact Beth Boettner with any offers or suggestions for wood.



Thanks to all of the helpers. We can always use more helpers if you know anyone who is interested.

THANK YOU NOTE TO THE TOY MINISTRY

Aldersgate Toy Elves,

Thank you so much for another amazing toy donation! We appreciate all the time, creativity, resources and mostly love you put into each and every toy.

You will certainly brighten the season for so many patients and families spending the holiday season in the hospital.

Thank you for all you touch every year with this special program!

Sincerely, Stacy, Child Life
UW Health Swedish American

JAY ALMS IS ELECTED TO BE THE CHAIR OF TRUSTEES for 2026. The Book of Discipline of the UMC requires electing the chair of trustees among Trustee members at the beginning of every year.

2026 ALDERSGATE LEADERSHIP TEAM



WORSHIP HIGHLIGHT: ADVENT NATIVITY FIGURINES

You may have noticed the figurines on the ledge at the front of the Sanctuary that make their appearance during Advent, starting with the Angel on the first Sunday. Each Sunday adds more figures, following the Christmas story timeline.

A little history: a long-time member of Aldersgate, Wallaburga (Wally) Francis painted these ceramic figurines back in 1979, and gifted them to Aldersgate, and we have been using them every Advent since.

For more information about nativity scenes: <https://www.umc.org/en/content/nativity-scenes-more-than-meets-the-eye>



February 2026

Sun	Mon	Tue	Wed	Thu	Fri	Sat
1 4th Sunday after Epiphany Communion Sunday	2	3	4 Wed. Fellowship 10am Rkfd Clergy Meeting Conf Rm Noon - 1:30	5	6 WW Meet & Eat	7
8 5th Sunday after Epiphany	9	10	11 Wed. Fellowship 10am Christian Ed Meeting 3:00pm	12	13	14
15 Transfiguration Sunday Noisy Can Sunday	16 Presidents Day	17 Church Council 5pm	18 Wed. Fellowship 10am Ash Wednesday Combined Service at Aldersgate, 5:30pm	19 Squeek Deadline	20	21
22 1st Sunday in Lent Zoom Bible Study 3pm	23	24	25 Wed. Fellowship 10am Lent Bible Study 10am	26 Squeek goes out	27	28